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QUALITIES OF AFRICAN BUSINESS LEADERS

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Business Administration, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (Human Resources).

1994

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to investigate the perceived qualities of African Business leaders and develop a tentative model of African leadership. In-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of branch, regional and senior managers of The African Bank Limited.

The results of the data analysis indicated that there are significant differences in the approaches to management and leadership that exist between adherents to conventional western management paradigms, and those that adopt a more traditional Afrocentric approach. In addition, the themes and constructs that emerged were cross-referenced with those that emerged from the literature study.

Findings in the total sample were not mirrored in the findings for each regional group. Furthermore there were marked differences in findings between urban and rurally based managers. This pattern was further evidenced between urban and rural managers based within the same regions. However, there emerged certain themes which were common to all the managers and which differed markedly from traditional Eurocentric management paradigms.

The results of the research indicated that there are perceived unique qualitites that are inherent in the leadership styles of African business leaders. Furthermore, this research has been able to establish a tentative model for African business leadership from which specific propositions and hypotheses may be generated.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (Human Resources Management) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before any degree or examination in any other University.

SIGNED: 

_____ day of _____, 1994

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to the following:

The African Bank Limited senior, regional and branch management for allowing me to do the research at the bank and for their support given to me in conducting this research.

Mr Jack Theron, Chief Executive Officer, for his guidance, insight and understanding.

Peter Christie, my supervisor for his support, vision, encouragement and willingness to support me in my venture into unknown territory.

My colleagues, Pindi Yalo and Clifford Modiselle, for their valuable discussions and debates that helped shape my thinking.

Linda, my comrade in arms, for her guidance, direction and support.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ORIENTATION

The purpose of this research is to identify the qualities of African Business Leaders and develop a tentative model of African leadership behaviour within an African context. Conventional western leadership paradigms, as well as more Afrocentrically based research writings, were used as a basis for the research within the African Bank Limited in order to assess the relevance and validity within a truly African context.

The concepts and practices of western leadership were studied and analysed with the aim of determining the nature of global leadership teachings within a rapidly changing and unstable global marketplace. These conventional models were used as a basis for determining the relevance and applicability of western oriented schools of leadership practice within non-western contexts.

1.2 The African Leadership Challenge

Effective business leadership is critical to the development of sustainable economic activity in South and Southern Africa. Business leaders themselves will require specific qualities, particularly leadership qualities, in order to successfully lead and manage their organisations in the turbulent times ahead (Bennis, 1983 & 1989; Charlton,1991; Christie,Lessem & Mbigi,1993; Kotter and Heskett,1992; Maynard and Mehrtens,1993; Nolan, Goodstein & Pfeiffer 1993; Jaques 1989; Vaill,1993).

Charlton (1991, p.14) argues that "there is widespread agreement that the successful organisation has one major attribute that sets it apart from the unsuccessful organisation: dynamic and effective leadership".

Increasingly, academics and business people are beginning to study how business leadership can best be developed, particularly within the context of African organisations (Christie et al,1993; Mbigi,1993; Lessem,1989; Koopman,1991; Blunt and Jones 1992; Jones and Mann, 1992).

Current thinking attempts to locate African organisations within a dominant western leadership paradigm. Recent studies (Safavi,1981; Hofstede,1983; Hyden,1983) have attempted to apply prevailing leadership models within an African context in order to understand African leadership behaviour. Writers such as Blunt and Jones (1992) have however, observed that conventional leadership paradigms appear not to be relevant within an African context.

Choudhry (1986), Montgomery (1988), Kiggundu (1988) and Leonard (1987) have all drawn conclusions from their research, that African leadership styles are rooted in highly authoritarian practices. However, these practices would appear to have strong foundations in the colonial administrations that have prevailed in most African states.

Nzelibe (1986,p.184)[1] states that there appears to be a

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[1]In Blunt and Jones. *Managing Organisations in Africa.* (1992).

fundamental conflict between Western and African management thought. He is further quoted as saying that "whereas western management thought advocates Eurocentricism, individualism and modernity, African management thought emphasises ethnocentricism, traditionalism, communalism and cooperative teamwork".

Given that western leadership models do not appear to be appropriate for understanding African leadership, it may be questionable as to whether the qualities of business leaders are universal. On the contrary studies seem to suggest that these qualities are contextually or culturally specific (Christie,1993; Lessem,1989; Blunt and Jones,1992; Jones and Mann,1992).

The above submissions seem to suggest that little or no cognisance is taken by business' or development practioners of the possibility that alternative paradigms to conventional leadership models may exist. These alternative paradigms, if they do exist, have the potential to redefine business leadership in a more culturally and contextually relevant manner that is particular to Africa.

The question of change is thus a critical one for Africa at this time given the changing nature of global relations, particularly economic relations, and the interconnectedness of international markets. Thus, the change in African business leadership practice will have to be one that is enabling and one that promotes more effective and impactful business practices in general.

A critical ingredient for organisational success in the coming decades will be the capacity of leaders at all levels of society, particularly in the business sphere, to master the process of continual change (Vaill,1993; Senge,1991; Jaques and Clement,1991; Nolan et all,1993).

This will require leaders to posses and display certain qualities, behaviours and competencies (Charlton,1991). Koestenbaum (1991,p. 49) asserts that leaders must "work smarter, not only harder, differently, not only better; in breakthrough ways, not only incrementally. Develop a leadership mind".

Jones (1992, p.120) states that in most of the literature about the transfer of Western management concepts and practices, one can detect a dichotomy. He argues that some writers assert that "the imperatives of organisational life are so powerful, so pervasive, that the culture of production will sweep aside local variations in culture, values and behaviour. Others claim, on the contrary, that in some countries the culture is so distinctive and so enduring that imported notions about organisations and their management will be radically modified or even rejected".

Jones (1992, p.108) asserts that "until we know if and how African Organisations function differently from those elsewhere, how African managers see their roles and how they do their work, we have no firm basis on which to design appropriate management development strategies".

It would thus be necessary to investigate the perceptions of

African leaders and capture qualities that these leaders may possess and deem relevant to successful African leadership.

The specific question asked by this research is:What are the perceived qualities of African Business leaders?

Thus this research has the aim of formulating a tentative model of African Business Leadership arising from which specific propositions and hypotheses may be generated.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Leadership in Context

The paragraphs in this chapter will address the various contexts within which leadership is being practised. The varying theories and perceptions presented in this chapter are aimed at contextualising the field of leadership study and practice, as well as elaborating on the necessity to develop existing theories further in order to adapt these theories to changing global circumstances.

In addition the changing nature of the global economy is set to increase the competitive demands being placed on organisations and will demand from them the ability to react more quickly than their competitors (Vaill,1993; Maynard and Mehrtens,1993; Koestenbaum,1991). The success and fortune of companies and industries will to a large extent be "driven by the ability of key decision makers to creatively respond to environmental changes" (Binedell 1993, p.3).[2]

The changing nature of world economics and business practice are being influenced by the process of globalisation, changes in manufacturing processes and the move toward a knowledge based society (Binedell 1993, Vaill 1993, Maynard and Mehrtens 1993, Drucker 1993).

Maynard and Mehrtens (1993, p.1) argue that in order for

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[2]In Christie et al. *African Management: Philosophies, Concepts and Applications. (1993).*

individual business organisations to survive, they will have to undergo a major shift to address "individual and societal needs and become more democratic in their processes". Business, as well as other leadership, will have to take cognisance of seven trends that are sweeping the world, namely:

- shift in consciousness
- disenchantment with scientism
- inner sources of power and authority
- respiritualisation of society
- decline of materialism
- political and economic democratisation
- bioregionalism.

Maynard and Mehrtens (1993, p.6) summarise the impact of this thinking by challenging the leadership process in stating that:

"Globalisation comes down to facing the challenge of reworking our contemporary value system, which assumes that information is proprietary; that bigger is better; that material growth leads to happiness; that the world is one vast 'global shopping centre' and the Earth 'a gigantic toolshed': and that central planning, efficiency and the rationalisation of power are natural and appropriate, regardless of locale or culture".

The necessity to adapt rapidly to these imminent changes is summarised by Senge (1991) who states that the rate at which a company learns will be the only source of competitive advantage in a turbulent society. This is supported by Sunter

(1991, p.86)[3] who states that economic power will accrue to the organisation that applies intelligence to the front line. Charlton (1991, p.12) believes that this will necessitate a learning culture where people will be willing to perform to their full potential. This proposition argues for the optimal development of a nations human resources.

Charlton (1993, p.12) further states that the current hierarchical models of organisation still predominant in the western world are not suited to meet the current challenges of modern economies. These current systems and methodologies are based on a control orientation which negate the pursuit of conditions necessary for creating learning organisations.

Charlton (1991) further argues that given the leadership and management crises at every level of society, the role of leadership within organisations takes on a new meaning.

This argument is supported by Senge (1991) and Peters (1988) who argue that a leader must of necessity transform and empower followers in such a way that ordinary people are enabled to do extraordinary things.

Spies (1991) and Tucker (1991)[4] are quoted as stating that if South Africa wants to survive politically and economically, the road to success will lie in the manner in which our human resources are managed and developed. They argue that South Africa's future growth will depend on the marriage between

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[3]In Charlton. *Identifying Leadership Competence.* (1991).

[4]Charlton. Ibid.

applied technology and the quality of human competence.

Leaders will have to adapt their practices in order to meet the challenge of change in such a way that their organisations will survive. Kouzes and Posner (1988) argue leaders must achieve this via a unique legacy which is the creation of new institutions that survive over time, through constant organisation growth and renewal.

Koestenbaum (1991) and Lynch (1993) argue that in the current context of issues that define the environment of business in the 1990's and beyond, a fresh look needs to be taken at leadership and the development of a leadership mindset that will enable individuals, work teams and organisations to create conditions conducive to innovation, flexibility and continuous improvement. Koestenbaum (1991, p.17) supports this argument by asserting that "it is in the context of issues like these that we must view the complaint that leadership skills are notably absent from business peoples' education and training". Koestenbaum argues for the development of "leadership intelligence" that must be exposed, nurtured and rewarded in order to create an environment that will in itself lead to the development of a total leadership mindset within the organisation.

As the power of position is further eroded, it is argued that corporate leaders will resemble candidates running for office, not merely captains of ships.

Huey (1994, p.20)[5] argues that leaders are being faced with two fundamental tasks: "first, to develop and articulate exactly what the corporation is trying to accomplish, and second, to create an environment in which employees can figure out what needs to be done and then to do it well".

These challenges will require leaders to possess unique qualities and values that will enable them to master the rapidly changing environment.

2.2 Leadership Qualities Defined

Charlton (1991) states that numerous authors comment on the difficulty in defining leadership. Kouzes and Posner (1988), Yukl (1989), Williamson (1986), Bennis (1989), Cohen (1990) concur that it is easier to define what leadership is not. For the purpose of this study Charltons (1991, p.8) definition is used as a departure point, namely: "The competencies and process required to enable and empower ordinary people to do extraordinary things in the face of adversity, and constantly turn in superior performance to the benefit of themselves and the organisation".

Kouzes and Posner (1988) state that the domain of leadership lies in creating the future. This is supported by Frankl (1991, p.88)[6] who states that a leader has a clear vision of the future and is active in influencing and guiding people while creating

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[5]Fortune International. *The New Post-Heroic Leadership*. February 1994.

[6]In Charlton. *Identifying Leadership Competence*. (1991).

a context that is meaningful for others. Lynch (1993, p.26) asserts that "leadership is the act of influencing others to follow".

The foundations for these models of effective leader behaviour and characteristics are essentially found in the writings of academics and business leaders such as Kotter (1988), Fiedler (1967), Mintzburg (1989), Covey (1990), Senge (1991), Cohen (1990) and Charlton (1991).

Mintzberg (1989, p.51) argues that "despite an immense amount of research, managers and researchers still know virtually nothing about the essence of leadership...". Kotter (1988, p.25) states that in his opinion "leadership is a murkey subject where opinions abound".

Despite the concerns raised above, research around the topic of leadership has produced certain conclusions that form the basis for leadership models and leadership development around the world.

Charlton (1991) elaborates on the development of leadership theory and focus on leadership competence which is summarised in the accompanying tables on pages 12, 13 and 14.

TABLE 1. EVOLUTION of LEADERSHIP THEORY (Charlton 1991)

THEORY	FOCUS	CRITIQUE
Personality Trait Theory * Allport (1924) * Bird (1947)	* Assume leaders have distinct "superior" personalities from followers (Kelly 1936) * Born Leaders, "great man" theory	* No consistent patters (Schein 1980) * Traits are to mature or nurture? * Leadership a fixed sum - a developmental application * Leadership - a relationship between "man and context" (Stogdill 1974) * Mystical properties - difficulty in measurement * Move toward specific skills and competencies
Leadership Style Ohio sity Studies) * Likert 1961 * Vroom and Mann 1960	What effective leaders did * Assume "ideal" leadership style Classification * Laissez-faire * Autocratic * Democratic	* No difference between the effects of different styles (Limerick 1970) * Focus leader behaviour - ne task/situational considerations (Schein 1980, Katz and Kahn 1978) * Move in 1970's - leader as a product of the situation (Vroom 1976)
Situational Theories Leader Focus * Fiedler (1967)	* Variables - critical determinants of leader effectiveness * Fiedler's contingency model - quality leader - member relations - degree task structure - position power of leader	* Critique of one person, officially responsible to direct/co-ordinate/motivate rather than (has informal/group leaders) (Limerick, 1970) * No diagnostic criteria for subordinates * Limited training application - modifying situation to suit managers style (Kelly 1986)

Table 1 Cont.

THEORY	FOCUS	CRITIQUE
* Subordinate Focus (Hersey & Blanchard 1982)	Leaders taks and relationship orientation analysed in conjunction with followers maturity (Hersey and Blanchard 1982) *Hersey Effective Leadership demands flexibility of style: - Telling (High task/Low relationship) - Participating (High relationship/Low task) - Delegating (Low task/Low relationship)	* Strength - developmental aspect * Critique - simplistic leaders ability to display flexibility? (Schein 1980) * Gap between identifying and applying leadership styles. * Conceptual weaknesses - ambiguous constructs oversimplifications, death of exploratory processes (Blake and Mouton 1982, Yuki 1989)
* Leaders Attitudes (Argyris 1976)	Differences between espoused theory and theory in use. Theory in use based on assumption and behaviour which controls, maximises safety and avoid emotionally charged issues. * Organisationally beneficial behaviour should be based on: - valid information - free informed choice - internal commitment and monitoring of the implementation of choice (Argyris 1976)	* Approach highlight importance of identifying and challenging peoples basic assumptions - and choice is experimenting with new assumptions (Schein 1980) * Requires highly skilled trainer to implement
* Focus on Task/Situations (Vroom 1976)	* Highlight importance of context * Analyse situation and select appropriate behaviour	* Specific criteria do not allow for complexity of managerial decisions. * Questionable assumptions of flexibility toward situational variables (Schein 1980).

Table 2. NEW THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP (Charlton 1991)

THEORY	FOCUS
New Theories of (Transformational) Leadership * Burns (1978) * Bennis and Nanus (1985) * Senge (1990) * Kouzes and Posner (1988) * Carkhuff (1988) * Peters (1988) * Boyatsis (1982) * Manning (1988) * Falkenberg (1990) * Ball and Ashbury (1989) * Kelly (1986)	Transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of both the leader and the led, and thus has a transforming effect on both - transforming leadership is dynamic leadership in the sense that the leaders show themselves into a relationship with followers who will feel elevated by it and often become more active themselves, thereby creating new cadres of leadership (Burns 197-; * Arises out of dissatisfaction with previous theories and changing organisational and serve commercial conditions. * Focus on what effective leaders DO (Competencies) * Importance of transforming followers to leaders by building on man's need for meaning thereby obtaining commitment (Burns 1978) * Fundamental shift to including followers and the start of the divergences between management and leadership. The new leader is one who commits people to actions, who converts followers to leaders and who may convert leaders into agents of change. This is transformational leadership (Bennis & Nanus 1985 : 17)

Fiedler (1967, p.261) argues that leadership performance depends as much on the organisation as it depends on the leaders own attributes. Cohen (1990, p.9) argues that leadership and management are not the same and that one of the key qualities of a leader is the ability to influence people to perform to their maximum capabilities. He argues that qualities such as perseverance, vision building, self confidence, achievement orientation and direct persuasion are key attributes of successful leaders. However, he does acknowledge that there are situational factors such as "positional prestige due to position, birth, money and accomplishments that will greatly strengthen" the influence of a leader (1990, p.188).

Whilst Cohen (1990) argues for charismatic leadership, Mant (1983, p.20) asserts that "their great virtue is that they (leaders) do not exercise charismatic influence at all; they simply keep their eye on the ball, and with a certain humility, they grow in the fullness of time...". He thus asserts that humility and patience are key qualities of leaders.

However, certain key qualities define great leadership according to Koestenbaum. He places this into context by further arguing that "the organisations that first break through the inner-side-of-greatness barrier will clearly have the competitive advantage as company structures, employee populations and economic environments change drastically within the next few years. Breaking through this barrier means to combine results with heart" (p.21).

Christie (1993) support Koestenbaum's assertion that combining heart with results leads to organisations developing an internal leadership capacity that is able to deal with performance barriers.

Christie (1993, p. 195) sites the three elements of the human model of organisation as being those of thinking (goals), feeling (relationships), and acting (tasks). In arguing for an integrated form of organisation that takes all these elements into consideration at all levels of organisational life, Christie (1993) is proposing that the hard, cold aspects of organisational life must be combined with the heart and soul of the organisation in order to develop the organisation to a level of sustainable, superior performance.

Huey (1994, p.18) quotes Kotter in defining new parameters for leadership practices which he articulates as Post-heroic Leadership. Kotter postulates that "post-heroic leaders don't expect to solve all the problems themselves. They realise that no one person can deal with the emerging and colliding tyrannies of speed, quality, customer satisfaction, innovation, diversity and technology". Virtual leaders, he argues just say no to their egos and are confident in their vision to delegate true responsibility, both for" ...the tedium of process and for the sweep of strategic planning".

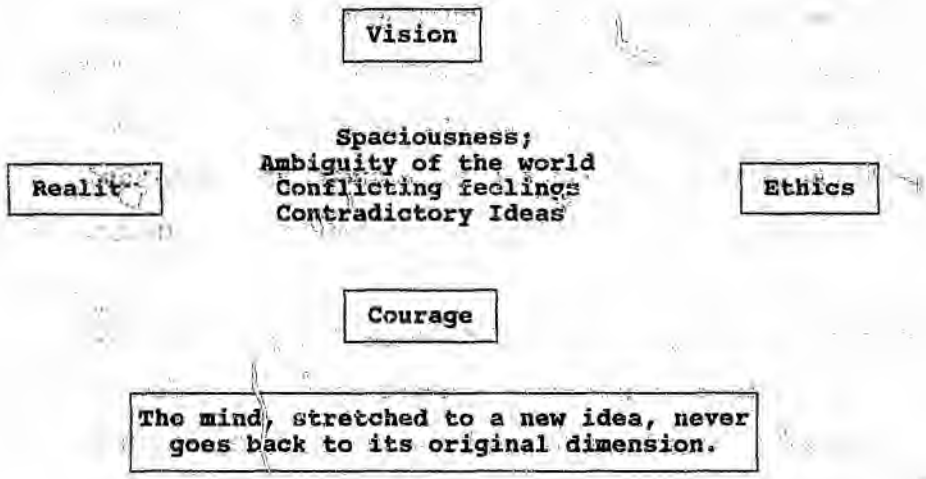
Koestenbaum (1991) concurs with Morrison (1992) and Lynch (1993) in defining key leadership qualities which they believe must be present in order for a leader to develop the conditions necessary for a learning culture to emerge. These are defined as:

- Commitment: ownership, loyalty, and willing assumption of personal responsibility.
- Communication.
- Creativity and initiative.
- Motivation, which he defines as love and validation.
- Self respect, self-motivation and self-direction.

These qualities are further expanded upon by Koestenbaum who adds four additional qualities to his model, namely vision, reality, ethics and courage. However these are defined also as being strategies that the leadership mind must employ. These four strategies are further designated as four clusters of attitudes and values and therefore stretch the meanings. He argues that these become "four compass points of the leadership mind" (p.34).

Koestenbaums Leadership Diamond and qualities, as displayed in figure 3 below, also provide a framework for comparison within the African context.

Figure 3. Koestenbaums Leadership Diamond



The discussion contained in these paragraphs highlights the fact that there appears to be disagreement about the qualities necessary for leadership success. Discussion thus far, further implies that the development of leadership theory and practice is incomplete and is, in fact, a complex task. Furthermore, it may be argued that new, more integrated forms of leadership theory may be developed as the need for more integrated forms of organisation is experienced.

2.3 Reviewing Eurocentric Paradigms

Models for effective leadership and leader behaviour have essentially been developed according to research conducted in industrialised Western nations. This assertion is supported by Blunt and Jones (1992, p.71) who state: "As usual in organisation and management sciences, the research evidence emanates from preponderantly the industrialised nations of the West". Thus the assertion is made that models for effective leader behaviour have essentially been modelled around the behaviour and notions of leadership practices in these industrialised settings.

Mant (1983) further argues that there are critical issues that are relevant to the development of leadership potential. These, he believes, are rooted in the "fruits of our formative institutions namely the family and school" (1983, p.139). He further goes on to quote research conducted by Gert Hofstede (1983, p.184) where Hofstede asserts that most management theory is American.

Although Hofstede (1983) and Mant (1983) identify the ability to manage power relationships and the ability to nurture as qualities vital to leadership success in various cultural and contextual settings, n ither of the writers extend their research into an African context. The key emphasis being research conducted in American, Scandanavian, European and Eastern countries.

Bass (1981) recognises the critical link between values, needs and satisfactions of leadership, and believes these play a crucial role

in determining leadership effectiveness. His focus is essentially on American values.

Although Bass (1981) goes on to examine leadership in different cultures, the focus remains confined to Europe, the Americas, Japan and India. Although he quotes certain research conducted in South Africa and Botswana, there is very little that this research contributes to his findings with regard to cross-cultural differences and perceptions about leadership and competencies.

More recent writings in leadership and management (Vaill, 1993; Drucker, 1993; Wheatley, 1993; Maynard and Mehrtens, 1993) begin to recognise the relevance of culture and context as having a significant influence on the development of these two concepts and practices.

Binedell (1993, p.8)[7] argues that "the concept of South Africa as a developing country has far more in common with Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia or Malaysia than with the United States or Britain. This creates conflict in the minds of management, particularly those whose subconscious connection is an European orientation". Ramphele (1993, p.12) supports this assertion from a more Afrocentric approach by stating that the conflict between two world values affects leaders and potential leaders in that "people are turned into schizophrenics by trying to be like white men during the day and being like the boys in the township in the evening".

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[7] In Christie. *Managing Organisations in Africa: Philosophies, Concepts and Applications.* (1993).

Vaill (1991, p.148) argues that understanding culture and culture change (which he defines as attitudes, actions and artifacts) are essential qualities of the successful leader and the successful organisation of tomorrow. However, his analysis, whilst being relevant in terms of global leadership practice, is essentially focussed on the American and European company.

Whilst Vaill (1991) argues for a post-industrialist society and the leadership qualities necessary in this society, no thought is given to the situation in industrialising countries of the South.

Khoza (1993)[8] argues that the business world as currently conceptualised and structured in most South African corporations is generally cast in a Eurocentric mould. Little or no account is taken of what contribution indigenous world-views can make in better shaping the world of work. In arguing for a more Afrocentric approach to corporate South Africa's problems. Khoza argues that Afrocentricity entails authentic Africa-based behaviour in the socio-cultural, economic and political arena.

In critiqueing the Western notion of management and organisational theory, Jones (1992) observes that organisations in Africa tend to be viewed by society as a whole as having a wider mission than is generally understood in the West. The conflict between Western and African expectations, value systems and the understanding of organisations role, it is argued,

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[8]In Christie. *African Management : Philosophies, Concepts and Applications.* (1993).

is seldom taken into account in determining the nature and content of leadership frameworks and the qualities needed by business leaders in varying contexts.

In a world-wide study on leadership and culture, Kanter is quoted as concluding that "managers views tend to correspond more to their country's cultural heritage and less to its geographic location or its regional economic affiliations" (Blunt and Jones 1992).

In their study of Malawian leadership practices, Jones and Mann (1992) state that data from this study appears to confirm that the demands of formal organisation create tensions and conflicts for Malawian managers. In critiqueing the notion that western forms of leadership practices may be universally applied, as is espoused by Bennis (1983), Kotter (1988), Cohen (1990) and others, it is well understood that the processes of industrialisation, according to the Western model, demand the utilisation of technical and scientific knowledge, but it is perhaps less clearly recognised that the use of such knowledge depends somewhat on "the acceptance of the values and "worldview" that are its socio-cultural foundations" (Jones and Mann 1992, p.114).

Nzelibe (1992)[9] believes there is a fundamental conflict between Western and African management thought and argues that whereas western management thought advocates Eurocentricism, individualism and modernity, African management thought emphasises a more ethnocentric, traditional, communal and

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[9]In Blunt et al. *Managing Organisations in Africa.* (1992).

co-operative teamwork approach to organisational life.

However, Leonard (1987) provides a motive for pursuing an alternative leadership paradigm rather than bemoaning the current predicament of Western leadership theory:

"To summarise, leadership is an art rather than a science, the most political of the management skills. Most of its requisites are abundant among African managers...". (Blunt and Jones 1992, p.84).

On completion of the data analysis, it is the intention of the researcher to develop a tentative model of African business leadership and qualities of African Business leaders, from which specific propositions and hypotheses may be generated.

CHAPTER 3. THEORIES OF AFRICAN LEADERSHIP

3.1 Introduction

Though the models and theories described in the previous chapter are aimed at defining leadership qualities, little attention is paid to alternative theories that may bridge the divide between Northern and Southern perceptions and practices of leadership that are relevant within an African context.

Mtombe Mpana (1993)[10] in reflecting the disillusionment with western leadership and cultural paradigms is quoted as stating that "the American dream has become the worlds nightmare". Blunt and Jones (1992), Jones and Mann (1992), Lessem (1989) and Christie (1993) propose that alternative paradigms, relevant to the cultural, geographical and regional dynamics of the African continent need to be considered as a framework for developing a relevant, practical and applicable leadership model.

Lessem (1993)[11] supports this argument by stating that there is a need for pragmatic approaches to Southern Africa's problems, but it is also important to evolve management practices and principles based on the African, or southern, cultural realities that exist. He therefore argues that there needs to be an underlying philosophy to African Management and its practice.

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[10]In Maynard and Mehrtens. *The Fourth Wave.* (1993).

[11]In Christie et al. *African Management: Philosophies, Concepts and Applications.* (1993).

Mbigi (1993, p.13) concurs with this statement by asserting that for the transformation of management in Africa to take place, there "is a need for African organisations to uncover the dominant spirit of both their society and organisations". He further argues for the need to focus on the development of authentic (African) theories, philosophies and values to guide business practices, processes and techniques.

Vaill (1992) and Davis (1982) both raise a critical element, which they argue, has been neglected in traditional western philosophies of leadership, namely spirituality. Vaill (1992, p.223) states that "all true leadership is indeed spiritual leadership".

This element of spirituality and its relevance to leadership competence, particularly in Africa, has been cited by writers such as Lessem (1989, p.54) who argues that "the spirit of the ancestors and the energy of the material resources contained within the land form a potential and managerial continuum whose two ends need to be linked".

Bennis and Nanus are quoted by Lessem (1989, p.55) as recognising that "by focussing on a vision, the leader focusses on the emotional and spiritual resources of the organisation..". Lessem argues that spirituality is an inherent part of African life and that leaders need to create an organisational spirituality that will blend organisational life with the essence of African spirituality.

Lessem (1989, p.58) further argues that whereas Japan has drawn on the West for technology and Africa has drawn on Europe for forms of education and organisation, the difference between the two (and subsequently the reason for Japans success) is that "Japan has relied on its own cultural traditions as a unifying force".

Lessem (1989) further elaborates on his "Four Worlds" theory as a means of establishing the unique identity that each part of the globe has, and how this impacts on the development of relevant and applicable business theories and practices within that "world".

The western world, he argues, operates largely from an empirical base. Business in this world relies on factual information, experience or observation rather than on system or theory, sensation rather than intuition, induction rather than other rationalistic means in the pursuit of knowledge.

Northern rationalism is based on the notion that reason is in itself a source of knowledge superior to and independent of sense perceptions, as contrasted against sensationalism and empiricism.

Eastern idealism, he argues, has the ability to unite matter and spirit, real and ideal, and has in essence, been the driving philosophy behind the success stories emanating from Japanese companies. The ability to look beyond the empirical and rational and to create a holistic, binding force that operates at an integrative level is in essence the cornerstone to Eastern idealism.

Southern humanism, in contrast, is devoted to the social life or collective relations of humankind. The southern way is devoted to realising the fullness of human being; a philosophy that asserts the essential dignity and worth of humankind, relating to the arts and humanities, to the "good" things of life. He further argues that only in the humanistic way, (communal and convivial) as described above, will Southern African business and management truly come into its own.

Lessem (1989) asserts that business in Southern Africa has not developed in a vacuum, but has rather evolved out of one particular cultural heritage and duly ignored its others, each one of which is present in one form or another in Southern Africa.

The above arguments are the basis for the need to review the way organisations in Africa perform, and are managed and led.

This assertion is supported by Blunt and Jones (1992) who argue that the drastic nature of organisational performance problems need to be addressed urgently and in a meaningful way if Africa is to pull itself out of the current mess it finds itself in.

Blunt and Jones (1992) echo the research conducted by Bass (1981), Jaques (1989), Handy (1988), Koestenbaum (1992) and Kotter (1990) that certain leadership qualities are essential to organisational survival. They go further to state that these qualities are as essential in African organisations as anywhere else.

However, Blunt and Jones (1992, p.39) raise the concern that a perceived problem is the indigenous morality of African societies - "that many managers are deeply ethical, holding deep feelings of attachment and responsibility to their families and villages of origin" and that this does not accord with the bureaucratic impersonality or universalism found in Western societies.

Jones (1992, p.108) further asserts that "until we know if and how African organisations function differently from those elsewhere, how African managers see their roles and how they do their work, we have no firm basis on which to design appropriate management development st ategies".

Jones (1992, p.118) further analyse results obtained in a survey conducted amongst Malawian managers and a critical element is the focus on values and qualities that are uniquely African as opposed to European or American. He stresses "that learning strategies should reflect the collectivist nature of Malawian society". Whether collectivism is a factor that impacts on leadership remains a point of debate.

Blunt and Jones (1992, p.41) sum up their concern with regard to leadership development and the necessary qualities of African leaders by stating "in Africa much closer attention needs to be paid - in the development of both effective leaders and managers - to values, especially, especially those of integrity and commitment to organisational objectives".

Blunt and Jones pose the question on completion of their research into African organisations: "Does it also confirm the

view that management is generic, and that Western management (and leadership) can be applied in different cultural settings?". Given the research findings as highlighted in their work, Blunt and Jones concluded that Western forms of management cannot be applied to different cultural settings without taking into consideration the cultural and contextual dimensions of the business setting.

In his plea for a more Afrocentric approach to Africa's problems, Van Niekerk (1993, p.3) argues that "as the intrinsic value of traditions, such as for example the native American, is recognised again, Western culture is fast losing its privileged status as the ideal or model toward which all "backward" cultures have to "develop". Indeed the realisation is fast dawning at last that our future - also ecologically - does not depend on global westernisation, but rather on our ability to establish a creative interaction between different world-views, and a re-exploration of more reverend ways of interacting with our environment".

These arguments provide the focal point for developing a leadership paradigm which must take cognisance of the complexity of the African organisational dynamic.

3.2 Indigenous African Contributions to Leadership Theory.

It would be difficult to dispute the view that strategies to educate and develop African managers have generally been based on Western theories and practices, with little, if any, consideration of the environments in which African organisations function.

This view is supported and elaborated on by Mbigi (1998, p.14) who states that "business success remains elusive if it is not rooted in the cultural realities and the spirit of the people. In essence, there is a need to understand the context and generate appropriate cultural concepts to capture the evolving business reality in the process of business transformation".

Safavi's (1992, p.87)[12] study on management education and development in fifty-seven African countries, paints a "gloomy picture of a number of areas of conflict between classroom and culture, and between Western theory and African reality". Hofstede supports this by stating that there is not a single formula for management development to be used in different cultures. Hyden (1983) motivates the need to examine the nature of indigenous philosophy and values by stating that: "The African personality is full and wholesome in a sense that it does not tally with the demands of systematic reality. African managers have been moulded in a type of management thinking that makes them strangers in their own environment" (p.110).

Hofstede (1992)[13] further supports these statements by claiming that although western management theories are taught widely, they are not practised by non-western managers. He proposes that "successful managers perform a cultural transposition of ideas and it is important to ascertain what constitutes 'success' in a particular culture".

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[12]In Jones and Mann. *HRD: International Perspectives on Learning and Development.* (1992).

[13]Jones and Mann. Ibid.

It is argued by Jones and Mann (1992) that organisations operating in an African context are expected to provide socially desirable benefits such as employment, housing, transport and assistance with important social rituals and ceremonies. Considerations of profit maximisation and efficiency appear to be viewed as secondary or incidental. Thus the cultural and contextual setting, it is argued, play an important role in determining the leadership qualities and techniques employed by African business leaders in striving to develop organisation effectiveness.

Mbigi (1993, p.78)[14] supports this approach to the question of cultural relevance in management and business practice by stating that he found the..." conventional western management practices inadequate. I had to rely more and more heavily on instinctive indigenous, tribal African wisdom and leadership techniques".

Khoza (1993, p.118)[15] argues that Afrocentricity is about Africans putting Africa at the centre of their existence. He states that "...it is about Africans anchoring themselves in their own continent; its history, traditions, cultures, mythology, creative motif, ethos and value system, ...nplifying the African collective will".

Accepting that organisational behaviour is influenced by a complex set of interrelated factors, it is then possible to conclude

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[14]In Christie et al. *African Management: Philosophies, Concepts and Applications*. (1993).

[15]Christie. Ibid.

that the Western notion of rational behaviour is itself the product of such factors. However, as is argued by Jones (1992), Jones and Mann (1992), Mbigi (1993) and Lessem (1993) that this behaviour is not automatically applicable in other contexts. According to Jones and Mann (1992), what appears to a Western observer of African organisations to be irrational, on closer examination can be seen to reflect "a set of values that are different from, but no less valid than, those of the West" (p.114). Jones (1992) further supports this by adding that there is a need to acknowledge the collectivist values that inhere in contemporary African society and to consider which Western management practices and techniques might tend to contradict them. Furthermore, he argues that the contradictory nature of African value systems and western management paradigms hold serious implications for organisations.

Table 4. **Organisational Outcomes of Work-Related Values in Africa**
(Blunt & Jones, 1992).

Present Study's Profile of Africa	Bate's Corresponding Cultural Orientations	Associated Organisational Outcomes
High power distance	Subordination Antipathy	Low commitment to, and involvement in, change Disowning of problems and an abdication of responsibility for the search for solutions
Strong uncertainty avoidance	Conservatism Depersonalisation Isolation Subordination	Lack of openness confronting and dealing jointly with issues with issues
Low individualism	Unemotionally Subordination	Overcaution and lack of decisiveness and creativity in problem solving
Medium masculinity	Elements of subordination	Taking of adversary positions on all issues regardless of whether any potential measure of agreement between the parties exists.

3.3 A Framework of African Value Systems

3.3.1 African Contextual Realities

Van der Post (1957, p.47) encapsulates the crisis that has befallen Africa and its indigenous way of making sense of the

world : "The European has discredited the African way of living and dealing with the forces of nature about and within, and then obliged him increasingly to live in a way which rejects the institutions, customs and initiation rites and rituals whereby for centuries he has struck a balance with those overwhelming aspects of nature which are incomprehensible to reason and quite beyond rational control and conscious articulation. Having discredited this ancient way of living we have not put an honourable alternative in its place. No human being or society, however self-sufficient and rational it may appear, can live without institutions which deal with those aspects of life which cannot be explained rationally".

Omotoso (1994), Van Niekerk (1993) and Brandel-Syrier (1988) support the notion that Western value systems, ideologies and societal practices have negatively influenced the manner in which Africans have attempted to create a new meaning that makes sense of the conflict between two world views.

Omotoso quotes the African proverb from Jeremy Hardings 'Small Wars, Small Mercies':

To The West is the house of fortune.
To the East is the house of fire.
You must journey South from time to time.
As for the North, it is best forgotten.

The crisis within African leadership was seen within this context by the Africa Leadership Forum. General Obasanjo, military leader of Nigeria is quoted by Omotoso as saying that :

"African leaders have frequently come to their positions with limited experience". He further goes on to argue that Africa cannot afford to continue with ill-prepared and unassisted leaders.

In assessing the conflictual framework within which African value systems have developed over the last century, Omotoso (1994, p.84) argues that African leaders who attempted to introduce Western values into an African context "refused to see that the European model, based on a homogeneous, equally educated population sharing one language, culture and religion, could not simply be transferred to Africa with its multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious background".

Thus the argument for a culturally and contextually relevant framework for leadership and organisational practice gains strength. The notion that western values and practices have a global application appear to be severely challenged. However, the alternatives and ideal profiles for leader behaviour and qualities that are applicable within an African context remain in their formative stages.

3.3.2 The African Spiritual Reality - Foundations for New Theory.

In order to lay the foundations for a model that will encapsulate the qualities of African business leaders, it is necessary to examine key concepts and look beyond the appearances that inform the western leadership mindset.

Van Niekerk (1993, p.35) quotes Anyanwu who states that "pure reason is always uncomfortable with contradictions, and nothing

is as contradictory as the African beliefs and behaviour". Soyinka of Nigeria is also quoted by Van Niekerk (1993, p.87) as talking of a "recognisable Western cast of mind, a compartmentalising habit of thought, which is in contrast to the assimilative wisdom of African metaphysics, which recognises no difference between the scientific use of electricity and the magical techniques applied to, for example, manipulate the power of lightning". Westerners, argues Van Niekerk think analytically. Not so in African tradition - opposites are not mutually exclusive.

The collective nature of the African spirit sees the individual as the pawn of unseen powers that can be manipulated. This is quite alien to the concept firmly held by most westerners that the individual is captain of his/her fate, and as such, be held responsible for it.

Van Niekerk also identifies the cyclical tradition of Africa, as opposed to the linear thinking of the West, where death and destruction "actually become prerequisites for new life". This would appear to coincide with Mbigi's argument that before any process of organisational renewal can occur within an African context, the negative spirit must be purged or exorcised form the organisation. The foundations for a spiritual realm within the workplace are firmly laid.

Van Niekerk (1993, p.78) argues that at the centre of the quest to understand Africa and its people lies a comprehensive and complex task: "Finding a relationship between two spirit worlds - that of Africa and that of the West".

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Africa and its mysticism holds the key to many of the spiritual dimensions that play a meaningful role in creating the overarching context for the synergy between African thinking and the West. Jung confirmed this in an address to the Basle Psychology Club prior to his death by indicating that amongst the various experiences that had shaped his thinking, Africa had left an indelible impression on him.

Jung is quoted by Van Niekerk (1994, p.79) as saying that: "You must not forget my travels to Africa and India! There you meet people from another epoch. By observation you discover connections and apparently coincidental similarities between what you find there and the spiritual experience of your own civilisation". This is the source which Jung termed the collective unconscious, and which he argued provided a galvanising force, unseen and inexplicable to most rational thinking westerners.

Given all the above reservations concerning western generated leadership theory, it is important to consider whether there are different sets of leadership qualities that need to be generated. Thus the question remains as to what the qualities of African Business leaders are?

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The content of the literature review, and the limited contributions to developing a framework for African leadership behaviour that exist, necessitate that this research is essentially of an exploratory nature. The research is descriptive and qualitative in nature with the objective of generating theory. Thus, it aims at generating a theory base as opposed to testing a theory, which may be exposed to further research and testing at a later date. The aim is to build a model rather than test a specific existing model (Glazer and Strauss, 1967).

The basis for the research is to develop a grounded theory for African business leadership in South Africa in order to generate constructs which may be thematically interpreted. Theory is therefore directly derived from the experiences of the people to whom it is most practical, relevant and applicable (Leedy, 1989).

The experiences, views and perspectives of African business leaders must be examined and it is the intention of this research to elicit these perspectives and experiences through in-depth interviews.

In-depth interviewing have been chosen as a technique, as opposed to structured interviewing, in order to elicit the issues that the interviewee may perceive as relevant to the topic. Structured interviews assume a pre-determined set of questions that may lead the interviewer to focus on certain areas that

s/he deems relevant, and thus may exclude areas of importance to the interviewee.

Thus during the course of in-depth interviews, the researcher seeks to elicit the perspectives and views of the participant. This methodology is a dynamic process which, due to its flexibility, allows the researcher to utilise appropriate lines of enquiry.

The in-depth interviews will be structured to the extent that a standardised introduction together with a set of broad questions will be used for reference purposes.

Responses to each theme identified in the literature review, which constitute specific questions in the interview outline, will be analysed back to the original source.

A feature of exploratory research is that it uses grounded theory as a means of generating constructs which can be thematically interpreted.

The statements and questions that were used as a basis for generating the constructs referred to above are justified by referring to the appropriate sources in the literature review. These questions are justified on the following basis:

Questions 1,7 & 9.	Blunt and Jones (1990); Jones and Mann (1992); Christie (1993); Lessem (1987); Koopman (1991).

Question 2. & 3.	Nel (1993); Vaill (1992); Lessem (1987).
Question 4.	Kouzes and Posner (1988); Bennis (1983); Nel (1993).
Question 5.	Kouzes and Posner (1988); Berlew (1974); Cohen (1990); Christie et al (1993).
Question 6.	Bennis (1989); Kouzes and Posner (1988); Cohen (1990); Kotter and Heskett (1992).
Question 8, 10 & 11.	Christie et al (1993); Lessem (1987); Mbigi (1993); Kouzes and Posner (1988).

For a full copy of the discussion outline, refer to Appendix A.

4.2 Sampling

4.2.1 Setting

The sample was drawn specifically from The African Bank for the principal reason that The African Bank is in essence an African organisation given its staff composition, locality, ethos, and the mission of the organisation.

The African Bank was founded in 1975 by Dr Sam Motsuenyane and a number of other black business people in response to the

unwillingness of mainline financial institutions to supply black entrepreneurs with capital and loan facilities in order to set up their business' (Enterprise, no. 70, October 1993). This initiative was supported by the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce (NAFCOC), which is in itself an African organisation.

One of the prime goals of the organisation, and the principal reason for its existence, is black economic empowerment. This it has set out to do by focussing its activities in areas that the mainline banks have regarded as too risky. The outlets of the bank are sited in mainly rural areas and the main townships of South Africa. The clientele is essentially drawn from these areas although corporate investors are attracted from the mainstream of the corporate world.

In order to service the clientele effectively, the management and employee base of the organisation is overwhelmingly African (94%) and I would argue that a representative sample of African managers was drawn for this study. The African Bank has a particular identity in that it is an African organisation, which I would argue is fairly unique given the current profile of many of the mainline corporate institutions in the South African economy.

4.2.2 Subjects

The sample is 25 African bank branch, regional and senior managers selected for a Leadership Development Process on the basis of post record of achievement, structural seniority and development centre results.

The rationale for adopting these criteria, and choosing these levels in the organisation, is that these people form the nucleus of leadership and decision-makers in the organisation.

They have also been selected on the grounds that they form the core of management that are to lead the change and renewal process in the organisation.

4.3 Data Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data is a process of making sense, of finding and making a structure in the data and giving this meaning and significance for ourselves, and for any relevant audiences (Jones, 1985).

Data was interpreted into potential categories and the researcher attempted to develop his conceptual categories from the base of categories and concepts of the research participants. The key purpose was to make certain connections with the concepts and theories that have already been drawn from the literature reviews.

Themes and dynamics were drawn from the initial analysis of the data, which was followed up by a second analysis in which further constructs were developed. Constructs that emerged from the in-depth interviews were subjected to frequency counts.

Themes and constructs emerging from the interview data were again cross-referenced with those that emerged from the literature study in order to place together topics that illustrate

a particular conceptual theme.

The constant comparative method of analysis is one which leads to ideas about the dimensions and properties of categories, including relationships with other categories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This method was also aimed at highlighting similarities and differences between peoples constructions. Exploration of the relationships between concrete categories perceived by the individuals was important in order to further add substance to the analysis.

4.4 Limitations of the Research

The dynamic nature of the process may be a limitation in that it may preclude standardisation of the data.

The data may be open to misinterpretation by the researcher due to cultural interpretations of specific issues or events. Furthermore the ability of the researcher to be resourceful, honest and control the bias of data may be a limitation. The process is also dependent upon the co-operation of a relatively small group of interviewees. The process is further subject to obtrusive and reactive observer effects.

The limitations are however, offset by positive points such as the ability of the process to generate large volumes of contextual data fairly rapidly.

Furthermore the process facilitates co-operation from the subject being interviewed.

A further limitation might appear to be the generalizability of the data. However, this may be somewhat offset by the sample population setting which is being used which is The African Bank.

In addition, a limitation is the absence of any triangulation of the data. In other words, the model generated will not be further empirically validated through quantitative survey research.

The methodology adopted relies on the researcher to identify themes and concepts which emerge from a large volume of unstructured data. The results of the analysis of the data will rely heavily on the ability of the researcher to interpret the data accurately and effectively.

The data obtained also relied heavily on the abilities of the participants to articulate their thoughts and experiences with particular reference to the specific topic.

Given that this area of research is relatively new, the availability of literature on the subject, specifically African management theory, is limited. That which is available has been exposed to limited field testing.

CHAPTER 5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

Consideration was given to regional geographic location, rural versus urban responses and variations in response between genders. These comparisons are laid out in the tables in this chapter.

The respe[illegible]t a national level were not mirrored at a regional level. [illegible]ificant differences between the perceptions of rural [illegible]gers [illegible]within the same regions.

Attention was [illegible]terpretation of questions by the respondents as this ind[illegible]o the interviewer the particularly sensitive nature of certain of the questions. A number of respondents (65%) interpreted the assertion that differences exist between managers as an inference suggestion the inferiority of African values and practices. A significant number of managers considered the socio-political influences to have played a significant role in shaping the qualities required of African business leaders.

Respondents expressed the feeling that the educational background played a meaningful role in determining the adoption or rejection of western values and practices by business leaders. A number of respondents felt that business leaders were losing touch with the values held dear by their communities and this was affecting their ability to lead, both within those communities, and within the workforce in general.

This sentiment was more prevalent amongst rural respondents than with the urban respondents.

5.2 Rural Versus Urban Respondents

Table 5. Respondents Profile

REGION	URBAN		RURAL	
PWV	Johannesburg :	Messrs D Ntshona (BranchManager); W Amos (Assistant General Manager); T Mashabana (Chief Internal Auditor)	Nelspruit :	Mr Q Magagula (Branch Manager)
	Pretoria :	Mr A Baloyi (Regional Manager)		
	Mamelodi :	Mr H Mangwedi (Branch Manager)		
Border/Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth :	Mr M Yabo (Branch Manager)	Queenstown :	Mr A Mkhize (Branch Manager)
	East London :	Mr C Blayi (Regional Administration Manager)	Umtata :	Mr D Nkonki (Branch Manager)
		Mr L Cakata (Assistant Manager)		Ms N Nkwaba (Assistant Branch Manager)
			Bisho :	Mrs P Rasmeni (Branch Manager)
Northern Transvaal	Pietersburg :	Mr C Luvhani (Branch Manager)	Thohoyandou :	Mr P Manenzhe (Branch Manager)
		Ms D Seakamela (Branch Manager)	Potgietersrus :	Mr A Rampola (Branch Manager)
		Mr B Mphahlele (Regional Manager)	Giyani :	Mr K Mamphoke (Branch Manager)
			Tzaneen :	Mr A Manyepao (Branch Manager)

5.3 Geographic Trends

The themes and constructs that emerged were also examined on a regional basis divided along the lines of the Banks regions. This ma[illegible]d certain rural respondents with urban respondents and this was then used as a basis for comparison between regions.

The specific behaviours that African leaders and western leaders display in relation to one another as perceived by the interviewees are tabulated in the accompanying tables below.

5.4 Tabulation of Results

TABLE 6. QUESTION 1

QUESTION 1 : DO YOU BELIEVE THAT AFRICAN BUSINESS LEADERS ARE DIFFERENT TO THEIR EUROPEAN, AMERICAN OR JAPANESE COUNTERPARTS.

Frequency	African Business Leaders	Other Leaders
Yes : (85%) No : (15%)	* Differing value systems in-house and community	* Western, European outlook
	* Educational backlog	* Superior education and different work ethnic
	* Different life experiences	* Individualistic
Note : of the 85% who stated there were notable offences between the two categories of leaders, 60% were rurally based.	* Community expectations	* Competitive
	Rigid and compliant	* Risk takers, adventurous
	* Security conscious	* Better guidance in youth
	* Concerned with inferiority	* Clearer business value framework.
	* Communally oriented.	

TABLE 7. QUESTION 2

QUESTION 2: WHICH VALUES DO YOU BELIEVE SORT AFRICAN LEADERS APART FROM OTHER BUSINESS LEADERS?

African Business Leaders	Other Leaders
* Communal	* Aggressive
* Participative and sharing culture	* Individualistic
* Nurturing and developmental	* Highly competitive, destructive
* Forthright	* Conflictual by nature
* Compliant	* Challenge authority
* Accommodating	* No respect for people; erosion of dignity and caring
* Recognition and implementation of UBUNTU is important value.	* No adherence to traditional values.

TABLE 8. QUESTION 3

QUESTION 3 : COULD YOU COMMENT ON THE ROLE SPIRITUALITY IN DETERMINING A BUSINESS LEADERS'S SUCCESS OR ABILITY TO FULFIL HIS/HER ROLE ADEQUATELY

Frequency Count	African Business Leaders	Other Business Leaders
Spirituality is important 90% Spirituality not important; 10% (both urban based managers i.e. in PWV) 94% of respondents who felt spirituality is important were concerned that UBUNTU was being eroded. (89%) were rurally based managers.	* Vital part of African life * Myths, rituals of community life are an integral part of business life * All aspects of life are interwoven * Critical to leadership success * Collective spirit is important * Develop togetherness, common purpose * Unseen, inexplicable source of energy and power * Leader must harness collective spirit * African Business Leaders are aware and in touch spiritually.	* Lack spirituality (except Japanese) * Confuse spirituality and religion * Inability to integrate the two concepts * Do not see link between the community life and business life * Spiritual life unhealthy * No integration of spirituality into business values * Not essential to Western Business Leaders success.

TABLE 9: QUESTION 4

QUESTION 4 : COULD YOU COMMENT ON WHETHER THE ABILITY TO CREATE TRUST AND RESPECT ARE KEY TO AN AFRICAN MANAGER'S SUCCESS AS A LEADER?

Frequency Count	African Business Leaders	Other Business Leaders
Trust/Respect vital : 95% Rural respondents more emphatic about the importance 55% felt that these qualities not more inherent in African leaders	* Must create trust and respect * Prove your trust worthiness to community * Critical issue in rural community more than urban (60% respondents) * Continuity and persistence key to building trust and respect * Past history of family a vital factor * Reciprocal nature of community life is critical to developing trust and respect * Integrity and credibility vital.	* Demand trust respect; don't earn it - * Are not subjected to community scrutiny * No link between community and the workplace * More trustworthy (55%).

TABLE 10. QUESTION 5

QUESTION 5 : DO YOU BELIEVE THAT QUALITIES SUCH AS VISIONING OR VISION BUILDING AND CHARISMA ARE CRITICAL TO A BUSINESS LEADER'S SUCCESS? ARE THESE INHERENT IN AFRICAN MANAGERS MORE SO THAN WESTERN COUNTERPARTS?

Frequency Count	African Business Leaders	Other Business Leaders
Vision critical: 75% Vision not critical: 25% Charisma not critical: 75% WBL more charismatic: 70%	Vision critical - develop shared commitment and shared values - African business leaders not good visionaries Charisma - not essential for success - silent leadership more important (60%) - quiet confidence more important to African business leaders.	Good visionaries (65%) Strong self confidence helps to build visionary skills Charisma - Western business leaders rely on it to make impact - confidence key to being charismatic - people expect it more from westernised leaders.

TABLE 11. QUESTION 6

QUESTION 6 : ARE QUALITIES SUCH AS ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND VISIBILITY KEY QUALITIES OF AFRICAN BUSINESS LEADERS?

Frequency Count	African Business Leaders	Other Business Leaders
Yes : 85% No : 0% Fairly important: 15%	* Key for African business leaders success in business (85%) * African leaders espouse these values but do not practice them (45%) * Traditional/patriarchal values make it difficult to practice these (55%) * African business leaders have had their values (UBUNTU) corrupted (95%).	* Do not subscribe to these values * Not part of their community values * Individualism/privacy make it difficult to develop the ethnic * Business community corrupt (60%).

TABLE 12. QUESTION 7

QUESTION 7 : WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU BELIEVE SET AFRICAN BUSINESS LEADERS APART FROM OTHER LEADERS?

African Business Leaders	Other Business Leaders
* More nurturing * Compassionate * Willing to listen * Ability to take community interests into account.	* aggressive; assertive, confident * dishonest, lack of integrity * manipulative * not open and honest * ruthless business people * selfish * goal oriented, well directed * clear purpose, direct, persuasive * well schooled and insightful.

TABLE 13. QUESTION 8

QUESTION 8: DO YOU BELIEVE STORYTELLING TO BE AN IMPORTANT ATTRIBUTE FOR A MANAGER OR LEADER TO POSSESS? WHY?

Frequency Count	African Business Leaders	Other Business Leaders
Yes : 85% No : 5% Not sure : 10%	* Use storytelling regularly (85%) * Use to create meaning * Part of African tradition of oral communication * Helps people understand complex things in simple way * Help align vision and actions * Creates a meaningful context for important issues * Create links between various issues * Storytelling not valued and practised in western society (30%)	* Not essential quality in western business world * Gap between community and workplace values * Western society too rigid/inflexible; do not see value of stories * Western business leaders don't see it as being scientific enough.

TABLE 14. QUESTION 9

QUESTION 9: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE COMMUNAL NATURE OF AFRICAN SOCIETY INFLUENCE THE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES REQUIRED BY MANAGERS?

Frequency Count	African Business Leaders	Other Business Leaders
Fundamental impact on qualities : 90% No/little impact : 10%	* African society is essentially communally oriented * More collaborative, co-operative in nature * Not as individualistic and competitive * Close link with family and community * More expectations to deal with and manage * Must be able to manage conflicting loyalties and demands	* Western society individualistic * Business life, home life and community life separated * No holistic thinking - detachment * Compartmentalised thinking * Community doesn't impact on qualities needed due to individualistic society * Exception of honesty, trust

TABLE 15: QUESTION 10 AND 11

QUESTION 10 : WHAT SPECIFIC BEHAVIOURS WOULD AFRICAN LEADERS DEMONSTRATE THAT OTHER LEADERS MAY NOT DEMONSTRATE, OR DEMONSTRATE AS FREQUENTLY?

QUESTION 11 : WHAT BEHAVIOURS WOULD OTHER LEADERS DEMONSTRATE THAT AFRICAN BUSINESS LEADERS MIGHT NOT DEMONSTRATE AS OFTEN?

African Business Leaders	Other Business Leaders
* Reliable and honest;	* More outspoken and charismatic
* Encourage participation and openness	* Brash, arrogant and harsh
* Not business wise, no risk taken; lack assertiveness	* Very confident
* Learn and adapt quickly	* Good decision makers, planners and visionaries
* Consultative and inclusive, but	* Risk takers
* Dictatorial and autocratic (conflict)	* Cold and unemotional, unfeeling
* Integrity stong, accountable	* Driven and forceful
* Principled and humane.	* Non-participative, closed, no sharing
	* Not honest, open, truthful, reliable.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to establish the qualities necessary for African Business leaders and develop a tentative model for African business leadership.

The tentative model has been developed after considering the various themes that emerged from the content analysis. The analysis also confirmed that :

- African Business leaders were of the opinion that they possess different qualities to their western counterparts, that these qualities are a prerequisite to successful leadership in an African context, and
- that despite African leaders espousing these qualities, they appear reluctant to operationalism these within the working environment.

The differences between western leadership practices and a more Afrocentrically based leadership paradigm, as highlighted by the responses from the participants, indicate support for the assertion by Kiggudu (1988) that there is a need for leadership models rooted in the African culture and context.

6.2 Regional and Geographic Differences

As an introduction to this section, the terms 'regional' and 'geographic' must be clarified. 'Regional' refers specifically to the regions as defined in the operational strategy of the bank.

These coincide with the geo-political boundaries such as the Northern Transvaal and Pretoria/Witwatersrand/Vereeniging regions. 'Geographic' refers in particular to specific physical locations within a particular region, for example, Pietersburg (within the Northern Transvaal region). This distinction is of importance as differing responses were recorded within the same region between urban and rural respondents.

The emergency of a trend toward leadership practices based on regional and geographic contexts was evident. This emerged in particular if one considers the differences not only between respondents in geographically separated areas, but also the variance in response between rural and urban managers within the same geographic region. This was evident particularly in the Northern Transvaal and Border/Eastern Cape regions, both of which have branches that are rural and urban based. The marked difference in responses from respondents in these two regions have also been attributed to the strong rural bias within these regions.

This finding conflicts marginally with Kanters (1991) findings where it was concluded that "managers' views tend to correspond more to their country's cultural heritage and less to its geographical location or its regional economic affiliations" (Blunt and Jones 1992, p.189).

The responses in the Central Transvaal region showed less of a divergent tendency with strong agreement on the qualities necessary for business leadership within the African context. The Border region, although more convergent in their responses than other regions, showed a marked difference in their

responses and perceptions regarding the adoption of western schools of thought in comparison with other regions. Their rejection of western management concepts and practices was more vocal.

A number of unexpected results emerged particularly in the urban areas with respondents rejecting the notion that there was a difference between African business leaders and their western counterparts. This response was more prevalent amongst urban managers than their rural counterparts.

There was amongst these respondents hostility towards the perceived assumption that African value systems were inferior to those of their western counterparts. It is significant to note that the respondents who initially reacted negatively to the question on differences in leadership practices reversed their initial responses after it was explained that the reference to "differences" should not be read as "inferior" and in all but one case strongly supported the notion that there were significant differences between African business leaders and western business leaders.

Maynard and Mehrtens (1993) and Drucker (1993) argue that bioregionalism is a reality of our society and as such will have a major impact on the development of business practices that are more indigenous to a particular region and community. This conflicts with Kanters' (1991) findings and provides a foundation for further empirical research.

Mate (1992, p.194)[16] observed that the intractable problems of organisational development encountered in Africa may well be "more than merely the peculiarities of a particular organisation's culture. It seems possible that work-related values operating at the macro, or national level, may be creating a general cultural atmosphere not conducive to organisational change". This would support the notion that national, regional and geographic differences may affect the leadership qualities desired by business leaders in a particular context.

Mbigi (1993, p.77)[17] argues that the task of developing a management theory relevant to Africa is complicated by the diversity of tribal and racial cultural values. If one is to draw this back to Lessem's (1988) Four Worlds theory, then it becomes evident that within the Four Worlds of South Africa, geographic and regional location provides a meaningful explanation as to the differences in perceptions regarding desired qualities of African leaders in differing regions.

6.3 The Rural - Urban Dichotomy

It was observed that there were marked differences between the perceptions of rural and urban managers. Managers from rural areas were observed to hold traditional and conservative values more dearly than those in the urban areas. It appeared that respondents in the urban business environment felt that

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[16]In Blunt et al. *Managing Organisations in Africa*. (1992).

[17]In Christie et al. *African Management: Philosophies, Concepts and Applications*. (1993).

adherence to certain traditional values was fading as more "westernised" ideals were being followed. Urbanised managers tended to initially accept that there were no differences and interpreted the question as an inference that African leaders were inferior to their western counterparts.

A significant number of managers were concerned at the lack of adherence to traditional values which they felt were key to a managers success. A number of respondents expressed the concern that Africans had very few African role models in the business world. Thus traditional African values were giving way to influences from the west. A number of respondents referred to "this cultural imperialism" that was destroying a valuable African resource.

Managers in rural areas adhered strongly to traditional values and were more resistant to implementing practices that appeared to them as foreign and of little importance. Given the strong collectivist nature of rural traditional society, Blunt and Jones (1992, p.192) argue that it is evident that in a number of African organisations "there is evidence of a low concern for modern management practices". It may be argued that this would provide a tentative explanation for the reluctance of rurally based managers to accept and implement modern leadership practices.

Given the differing responses and perceptions between rural and urban business leaders, and the perceived eroding of traditional values in the urban communities, it may be argued that the migration by rural people to urban areas has resulted in traditional values becoming less important in the lives of many

many urbanised business people. The highly individualised nature of western management and leadership practice has led to a conflict developing between adherence to traditional community values and desired modern business values. This is supported by Kiggundu (1992, p.192)[18], who argues that one would expect most African cultural groups and organisations to score low on individualism, although high levels of rural-urban migration and the emergence "in may African cities of an urban proletariat might be beginning to erode collectivist values". Support for this notion is reflected by Fuhr (1991)[19] where he attributes the current dominance of individualism over communalism to the breakdown in ubuntu.

This has, in the eyes of most of the respondents, major implications for the way in which organisations will be managed. This may provide an explanation for the concern expressed by the majority of respondents that the concept and practice of Ubuntu was being eroded, particularly in the major metropolitan areas. However, it was argued by the majority of respondents that Ubuntu is a fundamental tenet of African society and that the values, behaviours and qualities associated with this philosophy must be included as key prerequisites needed to manage organisations and people within an African leadership context.

It may also be argued that the conflict between traditional values and their implications within organisations, and the demands of

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[18]In Blunt et al. *Managing Organisations in Africa.* (1992).

[19]In Stacey. *Preferred Forms of Participative Management.* (1991).

modern organisations and their more "modern" values, demanded in leaders the ability to manage the conflicting demands and pressures of the two environments. Thus the ability to tolerate and manage ambiguity, handle conflict, tolerance, patience, impartiality and integrity emerged as key qualities pertinent to African business leaders.

6.4 Key Themes

6.4.1 African Cultural Imperatives

The rich cultural diversity and distinctiveness found on the African continent cannot but influence the nature of African business leadership practices. This argument is supported by Blunt and Jones (1992), Jones and Mann (1992), Lessem (1989) and Christie (1993).

The assertion by the respondents that there exists fundamental differences between African business leaders and their European, American or Japanese counterparts, appears to stem from the deeply held belief emongst the majority of respondents that the injustices of the past socio-political and economic order have impoverished Africans to a large degree. The assertion that the lack of proper and meaningful education had resulted in the majority of the respondents finding themselves in a situation where they were not able to translate western management philosophies into practical actions, received strong support from the majority of respondents.

In response to the question as to whether African business leaders are different to their European, Japanese or American

counterparts, 80% of the respondents replied positively stating that definite differences did exist. 38% of the respondents qualified their answers. It was also noted that there was a great deal of initial resistance by 45% of the respondents to the suggestion that differences existed. This was seen as an inference that African leaders, and Africans in particular were inferior, rather than different. This viewpoint was particularly expressed by respondents who had received advanced education and training, particularly from foreign institutions.

Responding to the second question, many of the respondents agreed that there were definite differences in traditional value systems rooted in their respective community upbringing and formative education that explained the differences between the two leadership groups. This it was felt influenced very heavily the values displayed in the working environment.

It is thus argued that the differences between African and other leaders appears to stem essentially from differing cultural backgrounds, lack of relevant and applicable education, and the value systems and beliefs developed in their formative years.

These assertions correspond with Nzelibe's (1992)[20] statement that whereas western management thought advocates Eurocentricism, individualism, and modernity, African management thought is rooted in ethnocentricism, traditionalism, communalism and cooperative teamwork.

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[20]In Blunt et al. *Managing organisations in Africa.* (1992).

There emerged also a key difference in the perceptions of necessary leadership qualities between male and female respondents. These difference were, however, not geographically or regionally isolated. Female respondents were of the opinion that they possessed a quality essential to leadership success which there male counterparts did not share, namely the ability to nurture and develop people.

Female respondents argued that the ability to nurture and develop subordinates and colleagues was a quality inherent in all women regardless of their ethnic or regional ties. However they were of the opinion that female leaders whose leadership development had been grounded in western leadership practices, were reluctant to bring this quality to the fore as it was argued that one does not want to develop ones own replacement.

Female respondents were unanimous in their opinion that their male counterparts were unable to nurture and develop subordinates as this quality was seen to be one suited to women and not to men. The traditionalist approach and values within African society was seen as a possible reason for supporting this assertion. The roots of this thinking, it was argued, lay in the patriarchal nature of African society.

The ability to direct and develop others is seen by Jaques (1989) and Jaques and Clement (1991) as an essential quality needed by business leaders to ensure the effectiveness of their leadership. It would thus appear that there are differences in approach to the development of this quality, not only between African males and female directors, but also between African leaders and their western counterparts.

6.4.2 Spirituality as a cornerstone

The notions of culture and spirit are in the African context finely interwoven concepts. The impact and relevance of the spiritual realm as part of the leadership dynamic within a particular cultural unit or community cannot be underestimated. Mbigi (1993) argues that the ability to create meaning and develop a collaborative spirit is essential to a leaders success within the African context.

The assumptions regarding the spiritual element of leadership and business practice appear to have common foundations in both African as well as western business practices. However it is argued that whilst African leaders appear to have integrated their spirituality into the business context, western oriented business leaders have not yet achieved this. This is supported by Maynard and Mehrtens (1993) and Vaill (1993) who argue that if the organisation of the nineties is to survive into the next century, one of the critical elements of future success will be the respiritualisation of society and business.

The understanding of the role that spirituality played in determining a leaders success featured prominently in 90% of the participants responses. Although the participants were not unanimous in their interpretation and meaning of this concept, it was established that failure to recognise the impact and relevance of the spiritual realm would definitely impact on a leaders abilities. Rural respondents placed a much greater emphasis on the relevance of spiritualism than their urban

counterparts. It also emerged that 85% of the respondents were of the opinion that the values being displayed in the urban areas and communities were being eroded and that the concept and practices of Ubuntu were being destroyed.

This sentiment was echoed by all but 10% of the respondents, who felt that the ability to read and understand the spiritual dimension of the work relationship was a prerequisite to creating a context where the employees felt that what they were engaged in had meaning and relevance. The creation of a positive spirit was essential to harnessing the creativity and commitment of staff.

This assertion is based on the responses of a number of respondents, some of which are listed below:

"Spirituality pervades all that we do".

"African society is rich with symbolism and ritual. A leader must respect this".

"A leader must understand things in a more holistic way".

"African business leaders must have the ability to integrate community values with corporate values. You must therefore interpret the spirituality and manage it as it is (an) inherent part of our society".

"There is a thin line between the spiritual world and the living, tangible world. If you do not respect and show reverence to this that is greater than yourself and others, you will fail as a leader

in the eyes of the people".

"You must be able to destroy the negative spirit that prevails from time to time - harness the positive myths, rituals and symbols that will create a positive spirit in peoples lives and consequently in the workplace".

The striving for discovering and understanding the spiritual side of the work relationship is supported by Vaill (1992) and Lessem (1989) who argue that the key to future business success lies in the ability of business leadership to harness and tap into the spiritual side of the employment relationship. De Pree (1994, p.87) further corroborates this thinking by stating : "We at Herman Miller acknowledge that matters of the heart and spirit are important to each of us".

Furthermore it was argued by several respondents that although cultural differences played a major role in shaping the beliefs, values and behaviours of leaders, this should not be seen as an impediment to organisational success. The majority of respondents supported the view that indigenous value systems held valuable keys to a productive economic future if harnessed correctly.

6.4.3 Trust and Respect

Trust and respect emerged as key qualities that business leaders should possess in order to create a productive work environment and be seen as successful leaders.

The emphasis on this assertion was stronger amongst rural

respondents than amongs urban respondents. However, it emerged that these were also linked to integrity, consistency and honesty. Respondents were not unanimous in their opinion that these qualities were more inherent in African leaders than their western counterparts. It was established that these values are seen as an integral part of the African value system and form the cornerstones of the concept of ubuntu.

Respondents argued that the ability to create trust and respect within the rural communities was more important than in the urban environments. They argued that leaders had to earn trust. Trust and respect are not bestowed on you by virtue of your appointed position, but rather as a result of community scrutiny and the ability of the leader to prove his/her trustworthiness to the community at large.

"Trust and respect are not automatic. You must work and prove yourself to the community as a whole".

"The community in which you work must trust you. Even your family background counts in determining if you come from a family that can be trusted".

Respondents also argued that a persons prior record in that community, or any other community for that matter, had a profound outcome on the ability of that leader to secure the trust and respect of the workforce and the community at large.

This appears to coincide with Cohen's (1990) assertion that positional prestige due to a persons position, birth, money and

accomplishments would greatly strengthen the influence of leader. Respondents stated that the ability of a leader to exert influence within a particular community was to a large degree determined by his or her ability to deal with scrutiny of ones family background and the ability to explain incongruencies which were unacceptable or of concern to that particular community.

It may be argued that this ties up with Adonisi's (1993)[21] assertion that a persons career aspiratio s, and consequently the achievement or not of those aspirations, are intrinsically linked to a community dynamic. He argues that the African career is formed within a framework of shared values, norms and belief systems. Nobody lives for themselves, they live for the community.

6.4.4 Vision and Charisma

Visioning or vision building emerged as a key quality for a business leader to possess. Respondents expressed the view that African business leaders did not possess this skill and that their western counterparts exhibited this skill more forcefully. Political leadership emerged as being strong in this area. Charisma was not seen as a vital quality to pos s by 75% of the respondents. This was qualified by 80% of those respondents who felt that the quality of silent leadership was of greater value to African leaders than charisma. Respondents expressed the view that qualities such as wisdom, self

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[21]In Christie et al. *African Management: Philosophies, Concepts and Applications*. (1993).

confidence, insight and the ability to inspire subordinates by creating meaning was of more value than charisma. 65% of the respondents expressed the view that western leaders were more charismatic than African leaders.

It was established from the research that respondents did not see the vision and charisma in the same light. It was argued by a number of the respondents that whilst vision was a critical quality for a leader to possess, charisma was in the majority of cases, seen by respondents to be a negative or undesirable quality.

Vision, it was argued was critical in terms of harnessing the collective energy of the employees working with you. Respondents argued that it was imperative for employees to feel that the leader had a plan for the future. This inspired people and engendered a feeling of trust and commitment to a shared vision of the future.

This finding appears to support the assertions by Bennis (1989), Kouzes and Posner (1988), Nolan et al (1993), Charlton (1991), Lynch (1993) and Davis (1982) who state that a leader has a clear vision of the future and is active in guiding people whilst creating a context that is meaningful. Thus there appears to be an agreement by African leaders within the sample, that vision is a critical quality, but that this quality is stronger amongst western business leaders as opposed to African business leaders.

The means of communicating this vision and creating excitement necessary to harness peoples energy was a point of mixed

feeling. This was interpreted from the statements expressed below :

"You can be confident, strong and articulate. It will serve you better than being arrogant and loud about what and who you are".

"Sharing your idea in a constructive manner is more important. The sangomas are wise and have vision, but they do not need charisma to communicate it".

Certain respondents saw charisma as being a reflection of a leaders aggression or even arrogance. Particularly the rural respondents argued that leaders should possess a form of "silent leadership" - leadership through the ability to generate confidence and commitment to what must be achieved. It was regarded as being against community values for one individual to stand up and espouse a course of action that had not been thoroughly debated by the group. Adherence to the collective manner of African life was seen by the rural respondents as being of utmost importance.

This would appear to support Mant's (1983, p.20) assertion that charisma is not an essential leadership quality ; "their great virtue is that they (leaders) do not exercise charismatic influence at all; they simply keep their eye on the ball, and with a certain humility, they grow in the fullness of time...". Humility and patience are seen to be key leadership qualities and this is borne out by the majority of respondents.

The collective ritualistic manner inherent in African traditional

society is echoed by Stacey (1991 : p111) where he argues:

"The African perspective emphasises morals and emotions, and the removal of dissent through communication within the group. This attention to involvement in ths group, observation of rituals and adherence to processes of decision making are typically considered inefficient, but are inescapably part of African culture".

6.4.5 Accountability, Transparency and Visibility

Accountability transparency and visibility were seen by the majority of respondents as critical qualities for leaders to possess and thus emerged as key qualities of African Business Leaders. However, it must be noted that respondents were unanimous in stating that they believed that although these values and qualities were treasured more by African leaders, these qualities remained illusive within African leadership circles.

Accountability, transparency and visibility emerged as key qualities of African business leaders. However, 45% of respondents were of the opinion that African leaders espoused these values but did not practice these values. Integrity and accessibility emerged as key qualities that were necessary in order for the others to have meaning. It is important to note that 55% of the respondents felt that traditional patriarchal and authoritarian values in rural society precluded leaders from practising accountability or transparency. There emerged a conflict between what respondents saw as desirable qualities which they believed were being practised, and the practical

reality that existed, which was one where these values were not in evidence.

This assertion was supported by several respondents who continually referred to the much publicised investigations regarding the conduct of senior executives of the National Sorghum Breweries.

This argument was further elaborated on by numerous respondents who argued that African business leaders espoused the values of openness, honestly and accountability as they had been educated into this way of thinking after attending management development programmes. However, leaders appeared reluctant to implement these behaviours.

It was argued by respondents that African business leaders still stood in a position whereby the conflict between traditional community based values and more advanced management practices were in conflict. It appeared that the patriarchal, authoritarian values of certain communities still held sway over modern business practices.

These arguments support Choudhry (1992), Montgomery (1992) and Kiggundu's (1992)[22] research findings that African leadership styles are rooted in highly authoritarian practices which in turn have their foundations in the colonial oriented administrations prevalent in the majority of developing African states.

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[22]In Blunt et al. *Managing Organisations in Africa.* (1992).

"People must see you. They must be able to observe what you are doing if you want them to trust you".

"Sharing is important to us Africans. If you do not share, if you are not open and accountable to your community or constituency, you will not inspire the confidence of your followers".

"You must set the example. People will be suspicious of you if you are not open. They will think you have something to hide if you are not visible or transparent. This will damage your credibility as a leader".

"African leaders say that they are open but this is not so. In the community, yes. But in business they are scared of having their authority challenged. Look at the NSB saga".

"African leaders do not like the idea of their new-found power being challenged. They think employees are saying that they are incompetent. True participation is a problem, but it shouldn't be if you look at the practices in our society".

This conflicts with the ethic of confidentiality, particularly in the case of bank employees where such employees are faced with the pressure to disclose confidential information to the community, whilst maintaining client confidentiality.

Respondents in the urban centres seemed less concerned with these values in terms of their implementation. Although these qualities were rated as highly important to a business leaders success, it appeared that rural respondents felt strongly about

these values being practised yet appeared reluctant to commit themselves as to whether these values were being implemented by leaders in the rural communities.

It was argued by a number of respondents that African leaders in the urban business sphere espoused these values, but were either unable or unwilling to adhere to these practices as a consequence of the nature of the business environment within which they found themselves. They argued that the divergent community and workplace value systems and demanded led to dysfunctional conflict.

6.4.6 Storytelling

The African tradition is oral. This was the response from the majority of respondents who stated that the nature of communication in Africa has always been predominantly of an oral nature. There appeared to be a tendency amongst managers to favour oral communication as opposed to written communication in delivering important and significant pieces of information. This was reinforced by respondents who stated that in certain cases managers would not read important memoranda from Head Office as they would prefer the courtesy of a verbal notification.

Storytelling emerged as a key quality amongst 85% of the respondents with 75% of the respondents stating that they used storytelling on a regular basis to communicate important messages, transmit values, create meaning and help align their vision. Whilst 15% of respondents believed that it is not an essential quality, they expressed the view that it may be a useful

skill to possess. Thirty percent (30%) of respondents expressed the view that the art of storytelling was not valued and practised as it should be and that in western society the benefits of storytelling as a leadership quality was still to be discovered.

Various respondents cited the role of storytelling in the traditional as well as modern societal context.

"Yes, Storytelling - I grew up with it. It is a fundamental part of African life".

"Storytelling helps you develop a means of communicating desired values, beliefs about how things should happen and generally inspiring people through building a shared vision of the future".

"Storytelling is part of being African. It is a good way of creating meaning, focus and cohesion with a group of people".

However, it was noted by 70% of respondents that the practice of storytelling was being eroded in the more urbanised centres as it was seen not to be playing a central role in communicating items of important value to the communities in the urban areas.

"Certain practices, like storytelling are losing their impact in the modernised corporate world. People think that African practices are inferior".

Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents agreed that the

practice of storytelling was a necessary quality for business leaders to possess. African leaders would by virtue of the fact that they were rooted in African tribal and traditional custom feel more at home with the concept and practice of storytelling.

Storytelling, according to the respondents, would thus be an essential element for organisational learning. The assertion being made is that storytelling supports the process of collective learning, which it is argued by Lessem (1989), De Pree (1989) and Ramudzuli (1993)[23] is an essential element to organisational learning.

Although it would appear that little, if any, reference is made to storytelling as being a key leadership quality by western business leaders, certain of these leaders such as De Pree (1994) are beginning to see the value of such practices within a western context. De Pree (1994, p.91), in support of this assertion states that:

"Tribal storytellers, the tribe's elders, must insistently work at the process of renewal. They must preserve and revitalise the values of the tribe".

6.4.7 African Communalism

The respondents were unanimous in agreeing that the communal nature of African society influenced the nature of leadership qualities and how these were exercised. The communal nature

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[23]In Christie et al. *African Management: Philosophies, Concepts and Applications.* (1993).

of African society has a fundamental impact on the leadership qualities required by managers. This view was expressed by 90% of the respondents.

Respondents stressed that the communal nature of African society conflicted severely with the highly individualised nature of western society. This, it was argued gave rise to African leaders having to balance themselves between two conflicting value systems that demanded two separate ways of conducting business. Role conflict was a logical outcome of this dilemma often resulting in dysfunctional conflict within the work environment.

The interdependent nature of African society placed additional demands on business leaders in that leaders were required to adopt a more collaborative spirit toward dealing with community related problems. It was also stated by respondents that business leaders were often faced with having to cope with divided loyalties, namely loyalty to their community and loyalty to their company.

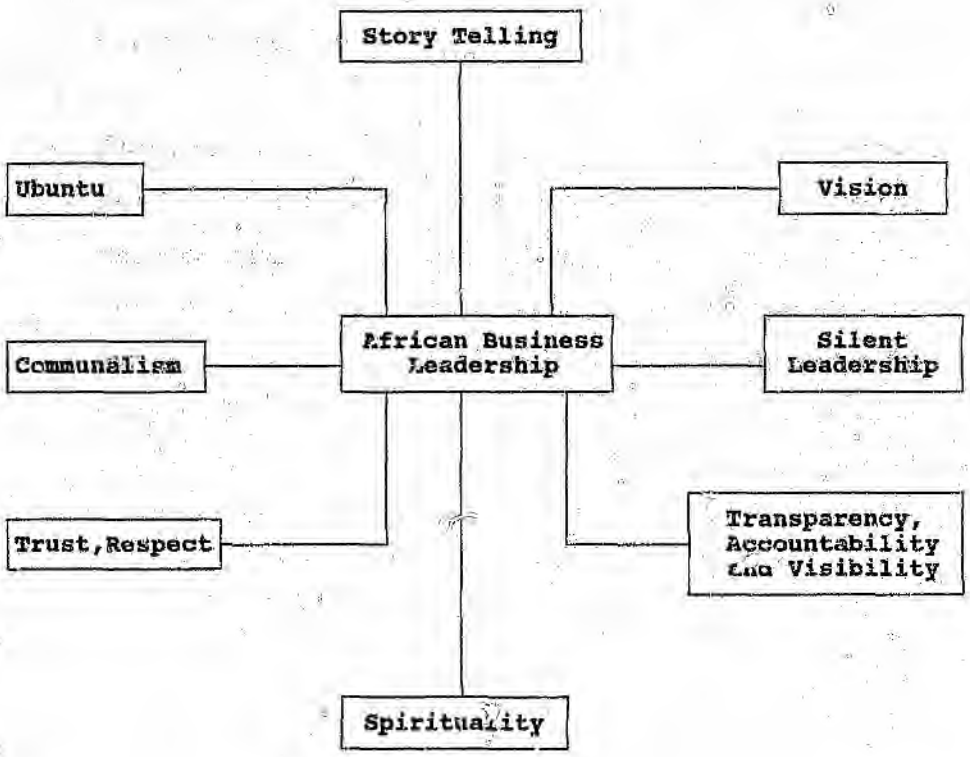
"You have to balance many balls. You have to be objective, impartial and highly professional. So often you have to take decisions that hurt the community and are then placed in a position where you have to explain why you took a decision that is seen to go against the interdependent nature of your community".

"You have to be a pillar of strength in the community. You have to act as a guide and live out the values and qualities associated with ubuntu more than anyone else".

"Tolerance, patience and impartially are all critical in our society. You must be a role model. Thus humility, integrity, good judgement and fairness are most important to display to your community".

6.5 A Tentative Model for African Business Leadership

Figure 16. A Tentative Model for African Business Leadership



CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The overall pattern of findings indicates that African business leaders are of the opinion that there are important differences in leadership qualities between themselves and their western oriented counterparts. The findings further suggest that certain of these qualities and competencies that African business leaders believe they possess, appear to be unique to African leaders in that these qualities appear not to be inherent amongst business leaders adopting a more conventional western approach to business leadership.

Although it appears that the prerequisites to leadership success may be universal, responses from the participants indicate that the application of leadership practice varies markedly. The findings further indicate that although certain qualities are universal they are not applied, understood or interpreted in the same way. In the opinion of the respondents, African business leaders apply and interpret western concepts with a Afrocentrically acceptable contextual framework.

Furthermore, the present findings suggest that the regional dynamics, as well as the urban-rural dichotomy, have a definite impact on the adoption, intensity and implementation of various practices by African business leaders.

This has an important implication for research namely, that the relationship between African business leadership and more western oriented forms of leadership should be explored in contexts where there African leaders are able to integrate the two leadership concepts more fully, and where a more Afrocentric leadership style has emerged.

The present findings support Blunt and Jones (1991) research indicating that there are marked differences in leadership style and the perceptions of leadership qualities between African leaders and western business leaders. These findings also support Christie's (1993) research which argues for a more Afrocentrically based approach to leadership development strategies and business practices.

It is suggested that further research would be important to the extent that it would consider more empirically based evidence of certain indigenous factors, such as communalism, ubuntu, spirituality and ethnocentricity, impact and influence on a more Afrocentrically based leadership practice.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE ON QUALITIES OF AFRICAN BUSINESS LEADERS

QUESTIONNAIRE ON QUALITIES OF AFRICAN BUSINESS LEADERS.

Extensive research has been conducted into the qualities that determines a leaders success. The questions and statements that I will be putting to you are primarily aimed at establishing whether these qualities are universal or whether certain qualities may be more inherent to African business leaders.



1. Do you believe that African Business leaders are different to their European, American or Japanese counterparts?

2. Which values do you believe set African leaders aparts from other business leaders?

3. Could you comment on the role that spirituality plays in determining a business leaders success or ability to fulfil his/her role adequately?

4. Could you comment on whether the ability to create trust and respect are key to an African managers success as a leader?

5. Do you believe that qualities such as visioning , or vision building, and charisma are critical to a business leaders success? Are these inherent in African managers more so than their Western counterparts?

6. Are qualities such as accountability, transparency and visibility key qualities of African business leaders?

7. What qualities do you believe set African business leaders apart from other business leaders?

8. Do you believe storytelling to be an important attribute for a manager or leader to possess? Why?

9. To what extent does the communal nature of African society influence the leadership qualities required by managers?

10. What specific behaviours would African leaders demonstrate that other leaders may not demonstrate, or demonstrate as frequently?

11. What behaviours would other leaders demonstrate that African business leaders might not demonstrate as often?

APPENDIX B

TENTATIVE MODEL FOR AFRICAN BUSINESS LEADERSHIP SUB-CLUSTERS

A TENTATIVE MODEL FOR AFRICAN BUSINESS LEADERSHIP SUB-CLUSTERS

FIGURE 1. VISION

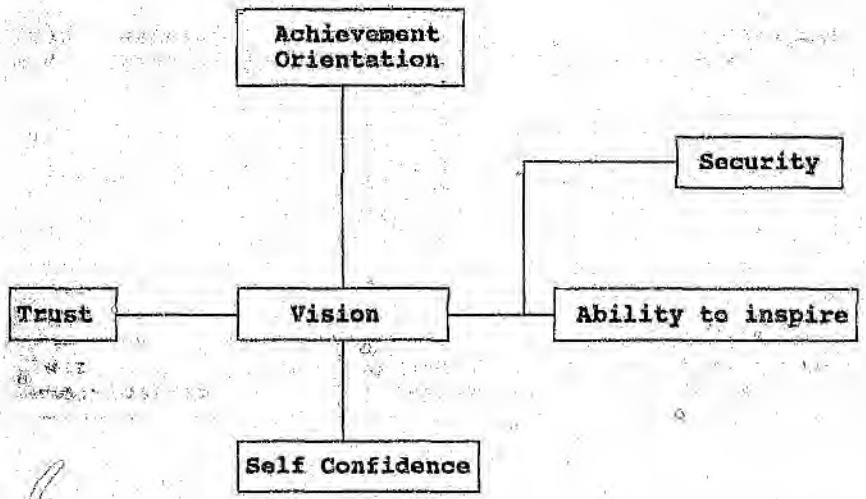


FIGURE 2. SPIRITUALITY

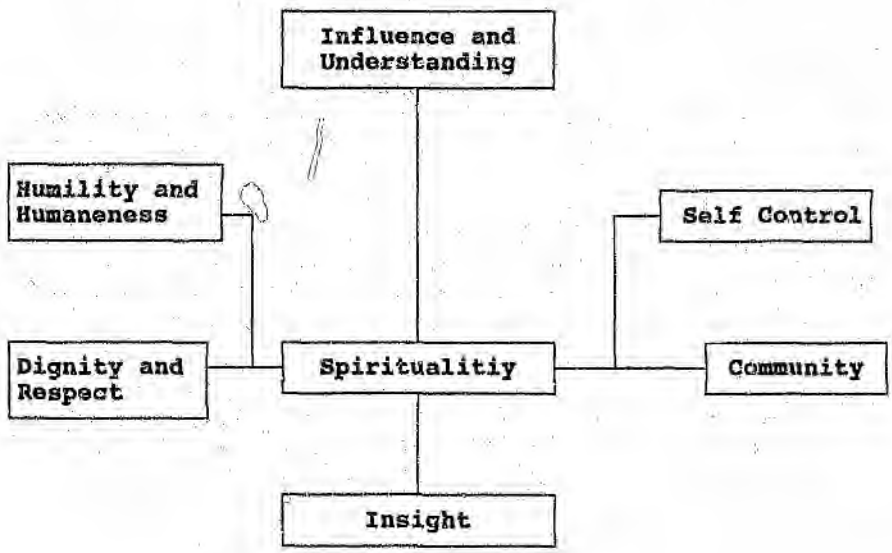


FIGURE 3. STORYTELLING

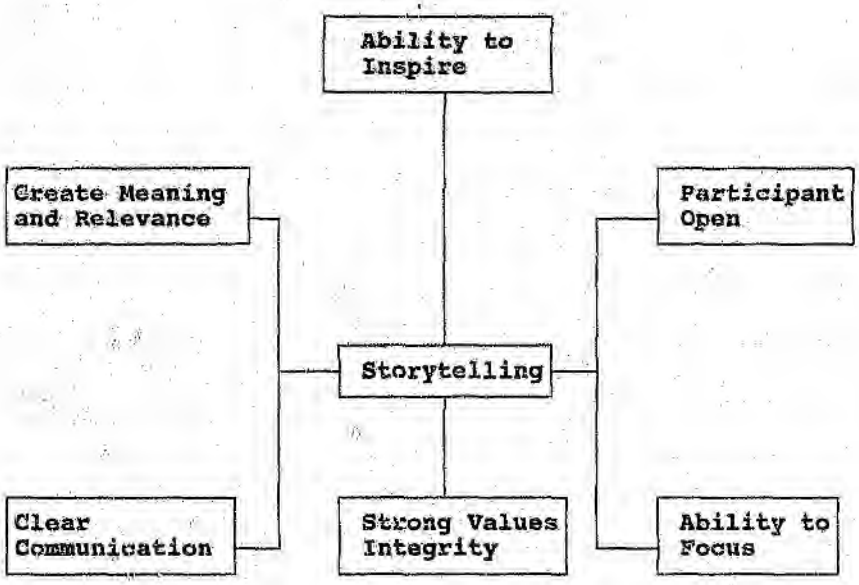


FIGURE 4. COMMUNALISM

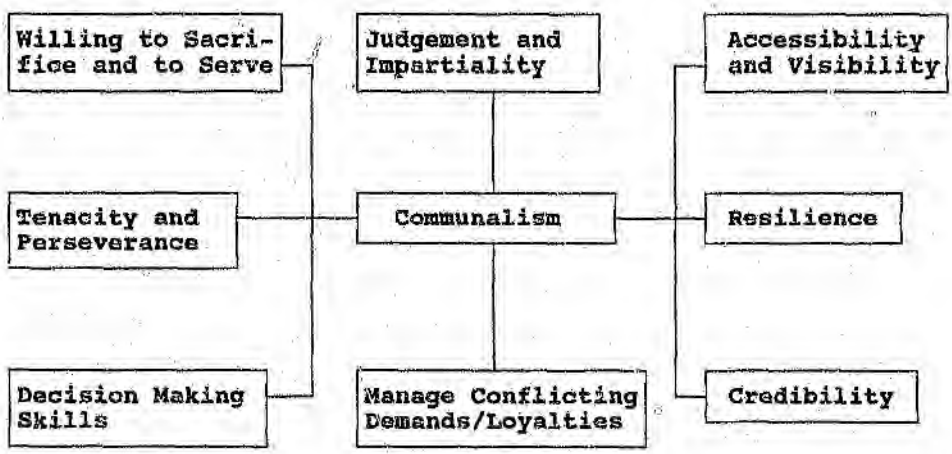


FIGURE 5. TRUST AND RESPECT

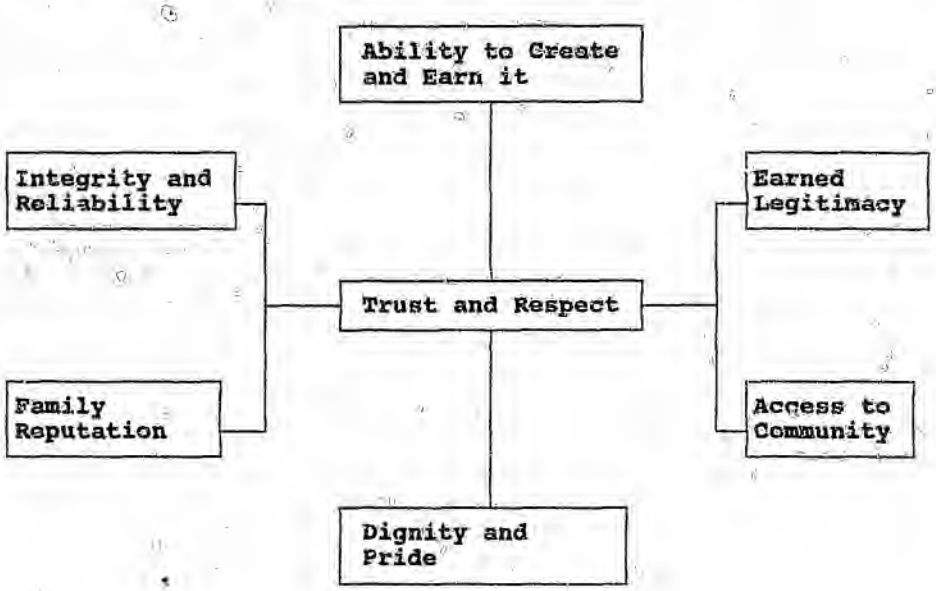


FIGURE 6. TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND VISIBILITY

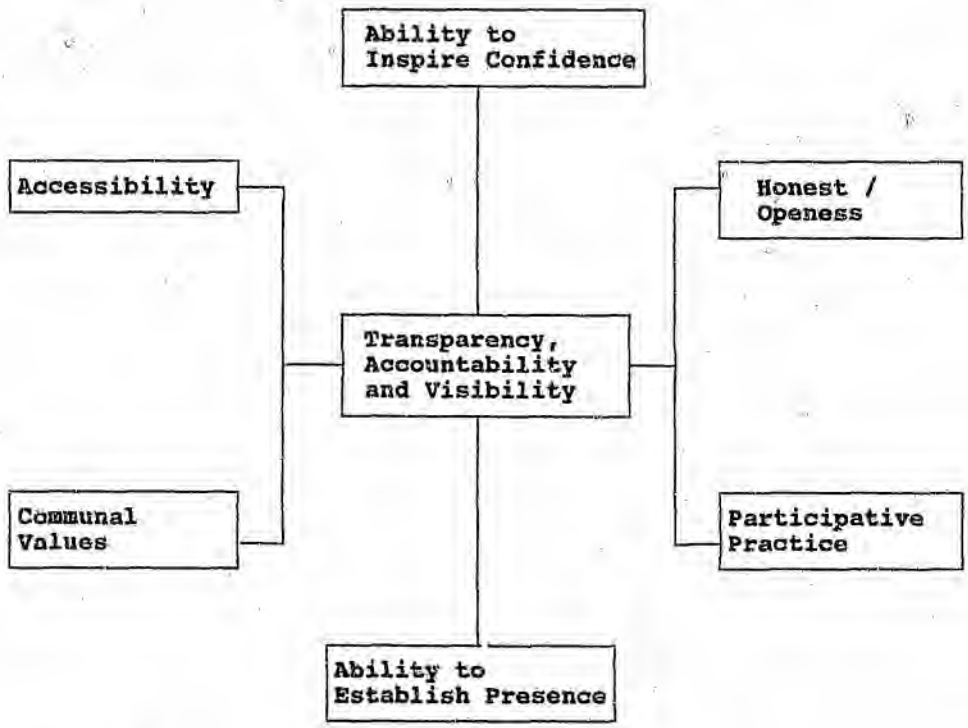


FIGURE 7. SILENT LEADERSHIP

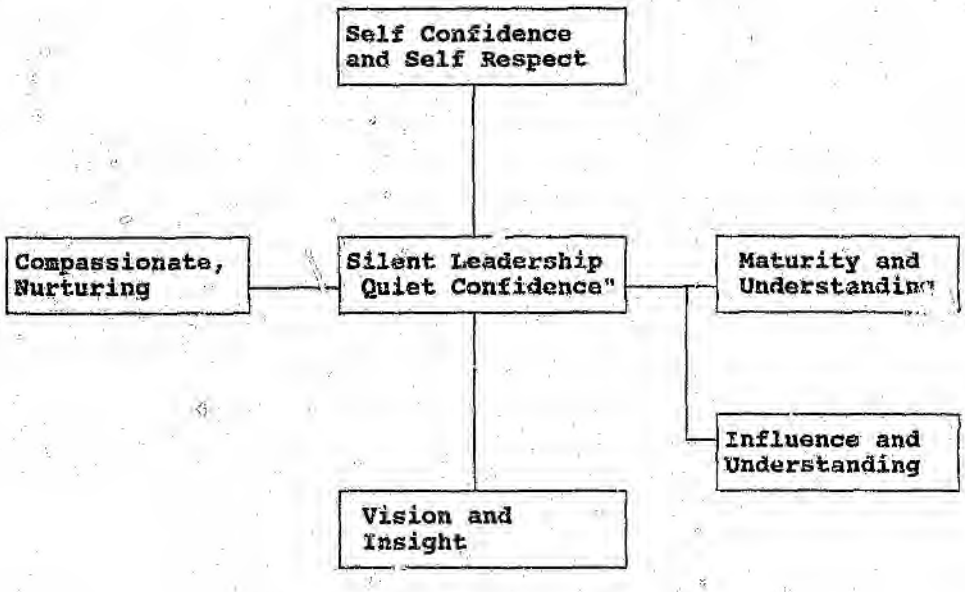
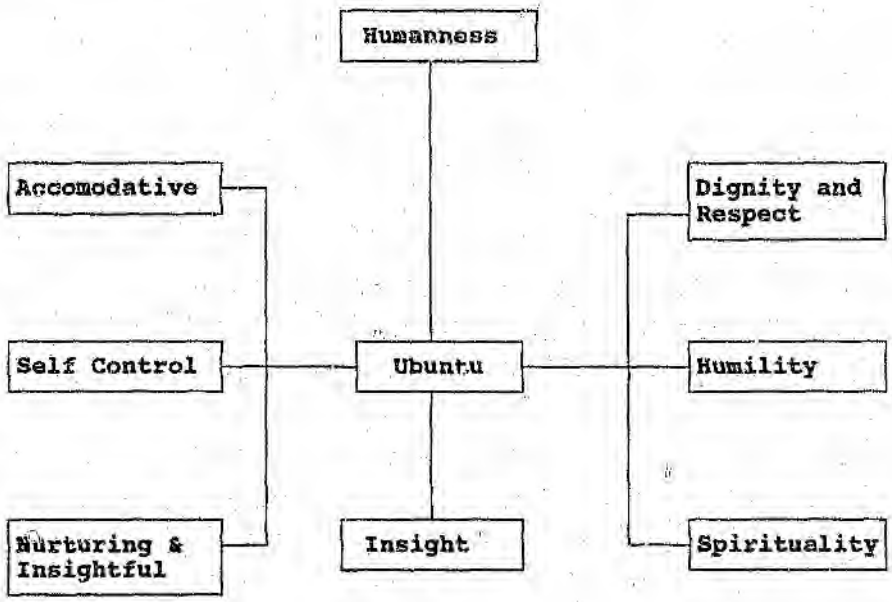


FIGURE 8. UBUNTU



Author: Chown, D.
Name of thesis: Qualities of african business leaders

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
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