AFRICAN WOMEN AS GLOBAL LEADERS: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS
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ABSTRACT.
The women in traditional African societies suffered discrimination and prejudice in their quest to participate in leadership. This paper examined the attitude of modern Africans towards allowing female equal access as their male counterparts to leadership positions in global organisations. The study was conducted among 100 part time students of a tertiary institution who worked under male and female leaders. The participants were purposeivey selected into a quasi-experimental group. They were asked to express a preference between a male leader and a female leader assuming they were the ones to decide who to hire to fill positions of CEOs in two simulated global organisations. They were also requested to rate their female or male leaders using Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The result of the study revealed that women were still unfavourably perceived as fit for leadership positions. The reasons for the negative perception towards women participation in leadership was discussed, the qualities that make African women good leaders were analysed, and efforts that can be made to increase women's leadership participation in Africa were also suggested.

Keywords: *African women, leadership, global leader.*

INTRODUCTION

Organisations do evolve from domestic companies to become multinational institutions or global organisations. Invariably, the leadership of such organisationsis expected to be part of the evolution process, besides, globalization as a phenomenon has compelled many companies to adopt a global mindset in their business operations. It has therefore become an issue of concern to researchers how today business organisations plays in the increasingly globalised world. Introduction of new or improved technologies in information communication and the continual ease in modes of transportation has further enhanced the drive for businesses to think and act globally.

Thus, many African organisations whose operations were limited only to the boundaries of their home countries only have started spreading their tentacles to several other countries outside their borders physically, or virtually. Interestingly, in this new reality Lajtha and Carminati-Rabasse (2008) opined that women should be accorded more consideration than men for global leadership roles because they appear better prepared because of their perceived positive tendency towards inclusivity, diversity, social responsibility, and global skills than men. Moreover, other advocates of women leadership have pointed to studies that suggest that women's leadership styles were more democratic, participative and less autocratic or directive than men's leadership styles (Eagly& Johnson, 1990). In spite of this vantage position ascribed to women in the extant literature, fewer women were still in executive positions and/or on board of directors compared to their male counterparts (Singh & Vinnicombe, 2004). According to a Catalyst (2011) report, the following represent the number of women in executive positions in the United States: 51.5% holds management and professional positions, only 14.4% of executive officer positions and 15.7% of board seats. Adler (2002) had earlier painted a worst scenario when he reported that only 3% of senior management positions in the United States and 2% in Europe were held by women. Similarly, Singh and Terjesen (2008) revealed that the percentages of women holding seats on company boards ranged from only 0.2% in Japan to 22% in Slovenia. The U.S. Department of Labor (2010) and the Bureau of Labour Statistics corroborated further by stating that, in spite of the fact that 30% of both men and women have at least a bachelor's degree; women were underrepresented in senior leadership roles and only make 81% of their male counterparts' wages.While some of the records presented here reflect certain improvements from pastdecades, Eagly and Carli (2007) showed that women continue to face a series of obstacles within a labyrinth as they attempt toascend the line of command to become leaders.

As poor as women participation in leadership is in North America and Europe in spite of their liberal dispositions to the female gender, the situation is worse in Africa with a less liberal disposition. For example, the recent data made available by World Bank Enterprise Survey (2011) shows that in both the public and private sectors in Africa, only 1 in 26 salaried African women is employed in a senior management position, compared with 1 in every 6 men.In South Africa that has the reputation as one of the most developed African countries as far as equality of gender is concerned and gender sensitive constitution, (see table 1), it was reported that there were only 10 companies with more than 25% women in senior management in 2004,this increased significantly to 58 companies in 2008 and then fell back to only 37 companies in 2011. (Business Women's Association, 2011). However, There is a substantial volume of literature on the merits of creating equal access to leadership roles for both men and women, what appears to be lacking in the existing studies is the research on struggles of corporate women in the developing economies in their effort to attain leadership positions domestically and globally. The present study is aimed at contributing to filling this gap.

Global Leadership: A Conceptual Clarification

There has been no success among scholars to reach a consensus on who is a *global leader*. Thus the search for a common meaning for global leadership has been ongoing. (Bass & Bass, 2008; Dickson, Den Hartog, &Mitchelson, 2003). Consequently, there exist studies, though few, in literature that conceptualized the phenomenon of global leadership as well as the mindset of a global leader. Jokinen (2005) refers to a global leader as anyone with global responsibility over any business concern; he explained that such a leader may also be found in lower levels of organisation. According to Greenberg, Goldsmith, Robertson, and Uh-Chan (2003), global leadership is an extraordinary capacity to integrate and unify a global workforce around a well articulated vision, through a mastery display of ability to influence, think and act globally, anticipating opportunity and using shared leadership networks. Story (2011) defined global mindset as a highly complex cognitive structure characterized by an openness to and articulation of multiple cultural and strategic realities on both global and local level, and the cognitive ability to mediate and integrate across this multiplicity" (p. 378). A global leader is a person that 'builds alliances and coalitions to shape shared values through cross-cultural communication, develops mutual economic, diplomatic, political, and security relationships, and balances corporate, national and international interests" (Campbell, 2013: 22). The basic challenge of conceptualisation for global leadership among scholars is recognition of a theoretically integrated and synchronized common lexiconfor researchers and educators to shape emerging leaders within an increasingly complex global environment.Jokinen (2005) also argued for a need to come up with a"a more concise definition of 'global leadership with adequate identification criteria, in order to create a common understanding of the subject term" (p. 212). In spite of paucity of literature in this area, the existing studies have been able to theoretically frame global leadership as a conceptual approach to internationalise the level of operations, activities, and actions at various echelons within governmental and corporate enterprises.

Theoretical Background

This study is anchored on 'Sex role Differentiation theory'' This is a theory developed in the 80s which was aimed at describing the appropriate social functions filled by men and women. (Eagly, 1995, 1997, Hyde, 1996) What informed the adoption of this theory is the basic assumption that there are certain traits, tasks or roles which are naturally masculine or feminine. In the light of this perspective, leadership is traditionally ascribed to men while women are only expected to follow. This belief is entrenched in the enduring cultural values of Africans, hence, socially shared expectation and norms have developed as regarding ''appropriate behaviours'' and legitimized work roles for both sexes. (Akindipe & Asekun, 2007). Sex role differentiation theory develops partly from the observation between the content of ideas that people have about women and men and empirically validated differences in sex that reflects in social behaviour and personality. The theory is premised

further on the argument that the beliefs that people hold about gender are a function of the role performances of both male and female and thus manifest in the sexual division and assignment of labour and gender hierarchyof the society. The theorists explain that these assumptions influence what leads to the development of the sex roles which eventually stimulate the real differences in behaviour. According to Parson and Bales (1955), who are some of the proponents of the theory, there exists a presumably analogous division of responsibility within the family, men more than women tend to specialise in behaviours related to task accomplishment and women more than men tend to engage in behaviours related to relationship maintenance and other distinctively social concern. (Strodtbeck & Mann, 1956).

Literature Review
There is an unprecedented number of African women in the workforce, Catalyst. (2011) consequently there is an increasing record of female folks at the highest levels of leadership in business, politics, education and other sectors. This development can be traced to the outcome of an age long agitations from concerned civil society groups for the girl-child to be given same educational opportunities the male child hitherto exclusively enjoyed in the traditional communities of Africa (Akindipe & Asekun, 2007: Willemsen, 2001). As organizations adjust to this changing demographics, leadership scholars and researchers have at different times attempted to investigate the perceived differences between male and female leaders (Helgesen,1990; Rosener, 1990; Eagly& Johnson, 1990). Findings from such studies have been quite instructive, for example Helgesen, (1990); Rosener, (1990); Cleveland, Stockdale, & Murphy, (2000) suggested that females tend to be slightly more interpersonal and task oriented and slightly more comfortable with democratic styles of leadership, while males prefer a more directive style Eagly & Johnson, 1990)
According to Advocates of female leadership, certain   qualities such as: intuition, ability to multi-task, good communication skills, relationship building ability, endurance to stress which are developed during childhood of a female child through socialization process, are all advantages in managing an organisation (Billing &Alvesson, 2000;Yukl, 1999). Yukl (1999) observed that there is a tendency to be influenced by role expectations in leadership behavior, and the evaluation and perception of that behaviour. Yukl, argued that these role expectations are the causes of varied stereotypic opinions about men and women, which form the basis for an individual's life experience. Extant literature on transactional and transformational leadership explains the distinctive characteristics between male and female leaders, Transactional leadership was explained to be based on exchanges between the leader and followers. The leader gives motivation. attention, and guidance to followers, which usually leads to conformity to the leader's wish or instructions, but this does not imply that subordinates would be enthusiastic or committed to the goals of the group (Howell &Costley,2001; Yukl, 1999).
The transactional leader may also use directive behavior including clarifying expectations and procedures needed to complete the task, as well as contingent punishment for those followers who do not perform well. Transformational leaders, on the other hand, motivate followers by stressing their importance of the task. Using charismatic behaviors, these leaders inspire followers to look beyond their own interests to that of the group (Yukl, 1999). Bass (1985)found that transformational leaders increased the motivation and performance of their followers more than transactional leaders. Several studies have compared the transactional and transformational styles of male and female leaders. These studies found that followers are more likely to perceive female leaders as transformational (Druskat, 1994). In addition, Lipman-Bluman, Handley-Isaksen, & Leavitt (1983) found that leaders are more likely to be perceived as transformational if they build effective relationships with followers to achieve their goals. Further examination of this finding among male and female leaders and non-leaders (Story, 2011) found that female leaders used more intrinsic and collaborative styles, consistent with transformational leadership. Helgsen (1991) also found that followers of both gender associated relationship building styles with transformational leadership, as

opposed to transactional leadership. Thus, it would appear that female leadership characteristics maybe uniquely suited to transformational leadership roles.

Studies have also revealed a number of factors posing as obstacles to the emergence of female global leaders, in spite of the moderate gains recorded in favour of women as regards leadership position, which was highlighted above, these include corporate initiatives that are ineffective and deficient in developing women managers (Oakley, 2000), gender stereotypes (Jogulu & Wood, 2008), historical management practices (Adler, 2002), insufficient international experiences for women (Insch, McIntyre, & Napier, 2008) and issues with balancing work and life (Jogulu &Wood, 2008). Additionally, women are treated differently than men in the global marketplace including being faced with harassment and discrimination (Tzeng, 2006), whether overtly or covertly. If women are not in the pipeline for global leadership roles, they may not be gaining the proper skills to be effective global leaders, such as adaptation skills or cultural intelligence, nor would they be gaining the visibility to be recognized for promotions into these roles, but what has not been added to the list of the obstacles in the path of leadership for women is the influence of the social role culturally and traditionally ascribed to the woman in any social organisation especially in the African society. i.e., the expectation that only the man should lead wherever there are activities involving the interplay of the male and female gender. This point of view was reinforced just recently in Nigeria when the Senate of the country rejected a bill on ''Equality of gender" which if passed would allow equality for women and men in business, politics and other social life.(The Punch Newspaper, 2016). Table 1also reveals the poor representation of women in leadership in organisation in another African country. South Africa to be particular

Table 1
South Africa Women in Leadership

Position	Percentage
CEOs/MDs	4.4%
Chairpersons	5.3%
Directorships	15.8%
Executive Managers	21.6%

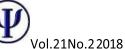Source: Business Women's Association (2011)

Hypotheses.
1. There would be more preference for a male as a global leader than the female even when themale possesses traditional leadership qualities while the female possesses global leadership qualities.

2. There would be more preference for amale as a global leader when presented with a choice between qualified male and female prospective candidate with both possessing global leadership qualities.

3. Subordinates would rank male leader higher than female leader on individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation.

METHOD

Participants
Participants consisted of students of part time students of Management in a higher Institution in Lagos, Nigeria. The participants were employees of divers business organisations situated around different parts of Lagos which is the commercial nerve center of Nigeria and indeed West Africa. The participants showed some good understanding of the concept of'global

leadership', however, the researcher gave a five minutes lecture to participants, on the meaning of 'global leadership to complement their prior knowledge of the subject. Selection was through purposive sampling, this was because, not all the students were gainfully employed, and some were self-employed. Participation for all students was voluntary. The mean age of the participants was 25 years and standard deviation was 5.0. The total number of participants in the study was 100, one of the participants dropped out before the completion of the study, bringing down the total to 99. 45 were males representing 41.4% of the sample while the rest 54 were females representing 58.6%of the sample. They were all final year students of the higher institution.

Procedure

The study adopted a quasi-experimental design and was conducted in a large lecture room. Two vignette of two different organisations with branches in three countries located in USA, UK and Japan who are in need of new CEOs were devised and presented to participants who took turn to give answers verbally to the questions asked from the researcher and the assistants based on what they saw in the vignette, They were also presented with the abridged curriculum vitae of the two leading contenders for the vacant position in the organization, one was male while the other was female, they both possess similar educational qualifications, however   the male was displayed to be lacking in leadership qualities, such as assertiveness, eloquence, confidence and also had no proficiency in the use of ICT, seldom traveled and had never worked outside the country, however, the female's qualities were displayed as thus:, technologically savvy, had a team spirit; great communication skills; amiable, well traveled, and had worked abroad before (This is what this study considers as qualities for global leadership). In the second instance, participants were shown the abridged profile of the two leading contenders for the vacant position in the second organisation. The two 'applicants appear to rank similar on all criteria of assessment, qualifications and possession of global leadership qualities in the vignette presented. The only difference was the gender of the applicants. The participants were thereafter asked to indicate their preference of the suitable candidate for the global leadership position for the two organisations assuming they were in a position to hire the CEOs for the organizsations in need.

Instrument

Participants also responded to a 21-items questionnaire designed to measure their perception about the male or female leader they have in their organisation, on idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation. These are parts of seven factors items meant to assess leaders on transformational leadership (Bass &Avollo, 2004)   Question items on idealized Influence was made up of three items which are : (1) ''Your leader makes others feel good around him/her'', (2)''The subordinates have complete faith in him or her'' and (3) subordinates are proud to associate with him/her'' Question items on intellectual stimulation is (1)'' He/she enables subordinates to think about old problems in a new way''(2) He/she provides others with the new ways of looking at puzzling things. (3).He/she makes others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before. The questionnaire was originally developed and validated by Avolio & Bass (2004).The instrument was reported to have coefficient reliability of 0.92 (Alaedin, Motaghh i& Osman, 2012). The questionnaire was represented on 4 Likert scale ranging from 0 = Not at all to 4 = Frequently, if not always.

RESULTS

The table below shows the percentage of respondents in Preference for a CEO position being held by a female leader, when both are qualified but the male possesses traditional leadership qualities while the female has global leadership qualities.

Table1 : Frequency table of Respondents on preference for male and female global leader.

N	Frequency	Percent

Participants who preferred male as a global leader	31	31.3
Participants who preferred female as a global leader	66	66.66
Participants who were indifferent	02	2.02

Simple percentage shows that 66.6% of the sample expressed preference for a female as a global leader whom was shown as qualified and also possess global leadership characteristics, The rest 31.3% of the participants preferred a male to be selected whom was described as qualified and also possess global leadership qualities, while the remaining 2.02% said they were indifferent.

The table below shows a Chi-square analysis on the preferences for global leadership between and male and female
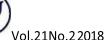
Table:2. An Analysis of respondents on preferences for a global leadership between male and female leader

	Value	dfAssymp Sig (2 tailed)	
Pearson Chi-Square	12.90	0.00	
Likelihood Ratio	12.4	0,00	
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.76	0.01	

Chi Square analyses were performed to determine the preference of the participants on their choice of candidate for global leadership positions . Results from these analyses indicate that more participants would prefer a qualified female leader possessing global leadership qualities to occupy global positions than unqualified males. $\chi2(2) = 12.90$ (P<.10). Participants also expressed preference for female global leaders possessing global leadership qualities than their non qualified male counterparts. $\chi2(2) = 5.12$ (P<.10).

Table 3: showing the means and standard deviation of rating of participants on male and female on intellectual stimulation

Idealized Influence	N	Mean	S.D	t values	Sig.
Male leaders.	57	8.06	3.70	0.48	p < .05
Female leaders.	39	6.87	3.90	0.46	p < .05
Intellectual Stimulation					
Male leader	57	9.13	3.69	0.84	p <.05
Female leader	39	8.79	3.54	0.84	p< .05

The mean and standard deviation of scores of male and female leaders are presented in table 3. The scores of Male leaders on Idealised Influence : 8.06, 3.69, Intellectual Stimulation 9.13, 3.69. The scores of Female leaders on Idealised Influence: 6.87, 3.90. Intellectual Stimulation 8.79, 3.54. From the standard deviation scores, it is evident that the individual response scores are not far apart but close indicating that error variance is minimal. It can also be seen from the mean score and t test values in the table that male leaders score higher on the variables than the female leaders.

DISCUSSION.
The result from the study could not support the first hypothesis that participants would express preference for a male as a global leader even when the male possesses traditional leadership qualities while the female possesses global leadership qualities.
 This implies that the gender of an applicant for the leadership position was not necessarily a sole determinant in selection into leadership position.   There appear to be a growing consciousness among the enlightened Africans that" what a man can do a woman can do even better", this viewpoint aligns with Lajtha and Carminati-Rabasse (2008) who reported in their study that women   were thought to be better prepared in the areas of inclusion, diversity, social responsibility, and global skills than men. Although, this result comes as a surprise considering the hitherto patriarchal nature of the African society, there are now deliberate campaigns for the inclusion of females in leadership positions even in politics, hopefully, this may improve the inclusion of female gender in global leadership positions in future.
However, the second hypothesis which states that selectors would express preference for a male as a global leader when presented with a choice between qualified male and female prospective candidates with both possessing global leadership qualities was supported by the result. This further suggests that people are only willing to give women a chance at global leadership positions only when there is no qualified male leader that is available for the position, thereby confirming the existence of discriminatory posture to the women against their male counterpart, Eagly & Karau, (2002) suggested that women leaders are discriminated against because their roles are less congruent with traditional
leadership roles than men's are. Furthermore, the result of the study shows that subordinates would rank male leaders higher than the female leader on intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, thereby confirming the third hypothesis, this further reinforce the position of this paper that attitudes towards female leadership remains negative largely due to traditional or cultural factors.

Conclusion.
World organizations, Non-governmental organisations and other civil society organisation still need to do more in the task of calling attention to the rights of women for equal treatments and equal opportunities in all sphere of human social life, they also need to work on the women to free themselves first from the cultural constraints that has been self-inflicted, this becomes necessary because the findings of this study did not show any difference in the responses of men and women in their preference for male global leaders. The women in Africa must believe in themselves first before they can expect the men to believe in their abilities to lead. The distinctive qualities of a female which have been confirmed by past studies, i.e, good social communicator, the ability to multitask, intuitiveness, democratic tendencies and others can be leveraged on by women and thus make remarkable contributions in the development of global organizations.

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