

Reflections and Insights on Leadership Competencies in Botswana: Lessons and Experiences for African Managers

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Abstract

In Africa, leadership crisis stalls many organisations from realizing their goals and holds back people from attaining their dreams. Yet African culture is rich with experiences which draw from the wisdom of traditional leadership, with its emphasis on communality, hard work and kindness as emblematic in the spirit of Ubuntu (Botho) (van de Colff, 2003) an African philosophy which inculcates compassion and integrity. This paper reflects on insights of leadership practices in some of Botswana organisations to appreciate the challenges they face in steering the leadership pedestal and their impact in fostering organizational success. The role of leadership is examined against a set of attributes and functions. For example, articulation of vision, staff welfare, customer care and more importantly the extent to which leadership contributes towards social justice and equity is considered. The study was conducted in Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana, based on exploratory mini practical survey. This involved unstructured personal interviews with industry leaders' from private, public and non-governmental entities, to understand their roles as leaders and explore issues that preoccupy them and appreciate the challenges they face. Key findings from this research are the realization that the intersection between scholarship and practitioners provides a powerful mediatory process of reflection for leadership learning, more especially in transformation. Leaders who reflect are constantly imagining the vision of their organisations and ways of actualizing it.

Keywords: African managers, Botswana, Leadership, Botho, Reflection, Corruption, Vision Kgota, Kgosi, Motivation, Transformation

1. Introduction & Background

In today's intensely competitive and dynamic business environment, organizations are struggling for survival and relevance. The situation remains flux and highly unpredictable due to the emergence of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), a global pandemic which has gripped the whole world in distress and also plunged the economy into a global economic crisis. It is therefore appropriate that organizations seek to mitigate the impact of exogenous macro factors, for which they have less control over, by looking inwardly to harness their human resource competencies and situate them within the cultural context. Naturally, the first port of call is leadership competency, a strategic driving lever for human motivation and organizational performance.

The centrality of leadership in people motivation and organizational success is of strategic significance as it can be a differential factor for creative innovation, which is a source of competitive advantage. On their own, however, leaders cannot achieve much. Hence the famous Setswana expression, "kgosi ke kgosi ka batho", a Chief is a leader because of the people he serve. That is, leadership is based on followership. Through constant engagement with staff and continually articulating an inspiring organizational vision, leaders invoke critical reflection of their role and sense of purpose for the subordinates. When leaders are closely connected with the followership there is a high propensity for accountability, collective ownership, transparency and public scrutiny, all of which serves as motivational dose as well as a deterrent mechanism for misbehavior and corrupt practice.

African managers are often maligned for failing to provide good governance, exemplary leadership. Typically they are accused of political intolerance, abuse of human rights, military rule, mismanagement of resources and self-enrichment, while the majority of their people wallow in poverty (See Mulinge and Lesetedi, 1999). Thus more often than not western media is awash with critiques of them for dictatorial tendencies and fraudulent practices. This prognosis is confirmed by long time dictators who have tenaciously strangled on power for decades and changing the constitution to suit their comfort — the case of Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, Uganda and Rwanda, provide testimony. In his prognosis Radithokwa (1999) ascribes corruption of in Africa to unethical conduct and lack of participation by the public, which manifest in the crisis of leadership. The recent approval of a 6 Months State of Public Emergency by the ruling party, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) parliamentary majority, coffers President Mokgweetsi Masisi, with wide ranging powers not just to fight the coronavirus but it essentially gives him the sole power rule alone, since parliament is somehow dissolved. (Republic of Botswana, 2020)

Following the approval of the emergency powers and regulations, several people and non-governmental organizations have complained about being beaten by the police and army for breaking the COVID -9 lockdown regulations

These complaints were raised shortly after the President issued the Statutory Instrument No. 61: 2020, Emergency Powers Act-COVID 19, which gives the police sweeping powers. Thereafter the police issued a press statement warning citizens that they will strongly deal

with anyone who publishes “offensive statements against government ...or maligns or degrades the leadership of the country” (Media Release, Botswana Police Service, 11 April 15, 2020). The police statement followed a swift arrest, imprisonment and torture of three young Batswana, charged for publishing so-called “fake news” on their Facebook, which is an offence under the Emergency Powers and the Cyber Crime Act. One of the convicts is Justice Motlhabane, a Public Relations Spokespersons and Executive Committee member of the opposition Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF), a new splinter party from the ruling party following bitter power struggle between former President Ian Khama and his protégé, President Mokgweetsi Masisi. Motlhabane and his co-accused were not allowed access to consult their lawyers and after appearing in Court, they were denied bail. Political observers have ascribed the absolving of power by elected members of parliament to one unelected person, the President, as emblematic to a crisis of leadership in a crisis situation of the Coronavirus pandemic. This abuse of power could be a stepping stone to an emerging dictatorship in Botswana.

However, in some cases such disparagements are sometimes biased and misplaced as it is often informed by Eurocentric analysis. As Mo Ibrahim argued recently, “for every corrupt African leader, there is a dozen corrupt business people”^(Note 1) some of them from Western countries. After all it was Europeans who started putting fences around Africa to divide and facilitate exploitation and plunder of its resources hence taking the continent far backwards (See Rodney, 1974)

However, in many instances these condemnations of abuses of power are justified. Needless mass poverty of ordinary people exists alongside extreme wealth of elite minority who spend lavishly on self-serving projects which have little impact on people’s livelihoods. Botswana and South Africa provide an interesting scenario of leadership extravagance. For example, the two former leaders, Jacob Zuma, and Ian Khama, resemble equating parallels in terms of squandering public funds to advance self-serving interests. Both leaders have faced public condemnation for diversion of public funds to build their lavish retirement homes — Nkandla and Muso as there are called in South Africa and Botswana respectively. This extravagant spending occurs in times when people in their respective countries are experiencing high unemployment, excruciating poverty and deep inequality. Such debilitating social ills are a brewing time bomb for social unrest.^(Note 2)

1.1 Botswana’s leadership Context and the Khama’s Presidency

The impetus for the relationship between leadership and organizational performance was accelerated when the government of Botswana adopted performance management system (Washington & Hacker, 2005. Marobela, 2008) as a strategy for enhancing performance and service delivery across the public service. The imperative for leadership assumed center stage, with the appointment of General Ian Khama, (former army commander), as a vice president and minister responsible for public service and later as the fourth president of Botswana. Khama’s renewed interest in leadership as a lever for change, is reflective from his attempt to articulate his vision for governance in terms of the 5Ds perspectives, (Democracy, Development, Dignity, Delivery, and Discipline). However, it was the latter D, which gained

more authority as he began to issue directives and instructions to public officers. Gradually people began to challenge some of his dictatorial decisions as his leadership style was seen as militaristic, seeking to punish and discipline public service workers instead of appreciating and motivating them. Hence his notoriety and flat refusal to increase government workers salaries, instead he generously rewarded himself, his cabinet and the soldiers where he previously served as a commander. In terms of his leadership perspective, performance was more aligned with nationalism, patriotism and cronyism, as he explained during his inauguration:

“Leadership at all levels must attempt to be exemplary and show the way towards changing mindsets as I have described. We must be patriotic towards Botswana and supportive of one another instead of pulling our country and each other down as is often demonstrated by some in our media”. (Khama, 2009)

With his patriotism agenda civil servants, were now required put their name tags to identify themselves, and added to it was another badge, the flag of the country. It was quite common to hear government workers whispering that they work under fear as their supervisors are continuously on their shoulders with timelines and demanding performance standards. There is a perception that under Khama’s leadership some of the appointments of senior government posts like directors and permanent secretaries were based on cronyism, loyalty, and party affiliation, rather than merit. The case of one Minister, Eric Molale, is a telling case of abuse of power. The Minister who lost his parliamentary constituency twice, was appointed as specially elected Member of Parliament and rewarded again with a cabinet post by Khama. This illustrates how authoritarianism can be used to frustrate people’s will — democracy. It is this mockery of established liberal parliamentary convention, which slaps on Khama’s own declaration that “he is a democrat and joined the army to defend democracy” (Molebatsi and Sello, 2018). Accordingly, Molomo (2000) gives a perspective to this by pointing out that Khama, is known to be contemptuous of established governance processes as he comes from the military background. However, part of his psyche is informed by his privilege from aristocracy. As the King of the Bamagwato tribe and son of the founding President of the nation, Ian Khama wields power and influence beyond his tribal territory. Some of the highlights of his actions which are contrary to his own vision of democracy include the refusal to appoint a judge recommended by the Judicial Service Commission, even after appealing and losing the same case against the Law Society of Botswana, he continued to refuse to abide by the rule of law. Relatedly his hardline anti-union attitude and unilateralism is reflected in his issuance of a sole declaration of public sector pay rise outside the collective bargaining council and the consequent collapse of this structure, which was an affront on the workers’ rights. Just shortly, after of the State of Emergency became effective, President Masisi, moved swiftly to suspend the Trade Dispute Act, thus taking away the worker’s rights to freely associate and organize and the barring their right to strike. So under corona virus workers can work but they have on legal rights even when their lives are at risk and their health is endangered.

Such authoritarian political leadership signals have consequences at other levels of organizational leadership, for example at strategic, functional and operational levels where

leadership is expected to implement policies and directives without due consultation. It is fair to argue that leadership culture and practices at governance superstructure has an impact at managerial level. In Botswana it is now increasingly admitted that one cannot easily rise up the leadership ladder or get a tender contract without association to the ruling elite. Learning from their South African friends, the African National Congress, who deploy their own party cadres in government and state owned public enterprises. Under Khama's leadership the line between the party and government became blurred. It was a shocking surprise that a new government policy called Economic Stimulus Package (ESP) was first announced to the public at the ruling party political forum instead of government institutions like parliament as has been the norm. It is imperative to give this background as a lot of changes which affected governance occurred under Ian Khama's presidency, although not in a transformative manner. His leadership was populist transactional, in the sense that he gave credence to loyalty over meritocracy. While consciously targeting the poor with short term unsustainable programs such as distributing blankets, radios and bibles to cultivate his mass political electoral base. It was therefore no surprise that Ian Khama, formed his own new political party (Botswana Patriotic Front), so that he continues to exert influence and shape Botswana political landscape.

Though Botswana is often projected positively and praised for sound economic governance and exemplary political leadership. The recent turn of events following the emergence of institutionalized corruption in both the private and public sector has cast a dark shadow on the mantra of Botswana's prudent economic management and the leadership credentials.^(Note 5)

1.2 Literature Review

According to Eustace and Martins (2014) the concept of leadership predates organizations. Wren, Hicks and Price (2014), further notes that the concept of leadership is as old as civilization. Indeed the evolvement of society from primitive, feudal to contemporary capitalism developed through leadership. The complex and dexterous construction of the Egyptian Pyramids shows that this monumental work was organized and structured around leadership. Despite intense research on leadership discourse there is still no definitive consensus on what really constitutes leadership Pfeffer (1993). Studies have revealed diverse definitions of leadership. No wonder Connell, Cross & Parry (2016) contend that leadership is one of the most hotly debated topics in the field of management studies. This is understandable because leadership is complex as it interfaces with a dynamic business environment, which is also context bound. Just as organisations are different, so is the people who work in them and the leaders who have to navigate their pedestal and cause carefully. Despite this complexity, there is a consensus about the strategic imperative of leadership as a change agent for people motivation and a driving force for organizational performance.

According to Tsai (2011) leadership implies authority and not simply the power to punish or give rewards but the ability to enhance positive influence. Leadership therefore bases its tenets on objective and subjective factors such as culture of an organisation and leadership behaviour. Berson and Linton (2005) contend that leadership behaviour of a manager is

highly related to the satisfaction of the employees within the organisation. Nielsen et al. (2008) concur and further state that leadership behaviour and job satisfaction depend largely on leadership behaviour. These two observations therefore point to the fact that leadership is responsibility and that comes through a deliberate relational context where the leader is sensitive and responsive to subordinates needs. Therefore the nature of role played by a leader in an organisation determines the behaviour of subordinates and the culture of the organisation.

In today's dynamic organisations and knowledge workers there is need to depart from authoritative models of leadership which promote personal power, seek compliance, and demand respect and cooperation. Such self-serving leadership dumbs worker's morale which is a prerequisite for productivity. Thus Maxwell (1999) has an alternative view that leaders should focus on investing in people rather than always expecting output from people. This people centred leadership no doubt fosters relationships between leaders and their team members and ultimately places emphasis on human resource development that in turn improves productivity.

The above observations and views on leadership clearly place an inclination on the leader's ability to influence and motivate followership for high performance. This resonates with Jaques and Clement (1991) view that a person in a leadership position sets direction for others to follow by leading with example through demonstrating competency and showing full commitment to the achievement of goals. In this respect, leadership is about developing, inspiring and transforming people and organisations. According to Oyetunji (2006) effective leaders exhibit competences of developing, respecting, appreciating and caring for their followers. This goes with acknowledging them as powerful sources of knowledge, innovation and performance in order to improve the organisation's performance and growth. It is important to distinguish leadership from management as their functions, scope and context are not the same. Accordingly Edwards (2003) notes that leadership is concerned first and foremost with the strategic direction of organisations and that leadership without management may be short-lived while management without leadership may become no more than passive administration. This finding concurs with the observation by Kotter (1990) who notes that managers focus on execution and control while leaders deal with vision and planning. All these observations confirm that leadership plays a cardinal role in influencing the growth and development of an organisation and that an organisation's human resource is a fundamental source of its performance and growth. Leadership therefore plays a significant role in shaping the direction which an organisation charts by the manner in which it invests in, values, motivates and appreciates its human resources. A critical part of leadership is articulating a vision for change. Transformation is a complex endeavour which affects the whole organisation, structure, process, culture and people. Often it is taken for granted and not given due consideration but it not just a technical process it is also emotive. Thus if it is not embracive and participatory it can result in unintended consequences (Marobela and Mawere, 2011) such as resistance, lower morale and poor productivity.

1.3 Transformative Leadership ^{Note 6}

Transformation is a key ingredient of leadership. The need for an open, transparent and flexible approach is critical for impactful leadership. This takes a paradigm shift from hierarchical approach to embracing shared leadership, so that subordinates can find meaning and purpose in the organisation. Such a perspective is informed by what (Neal, 1997:122) calls “spirituality in management and workplace,” a deeper sense of appreciating workers to extent that they are not taken as costs to be cut but worthy assets to invest in for their own personal empowerment and organisational development. Therefore transformative leaders are deeply caring as they seek to motivate and inspire their followers, given such positive work scenario, Steinmann, Klug & Maier (2018) contend that employees are more likely to achieve more than is expected.

Underpinning transformational leadership is the notion of change and innovation. According to Connell, Cross & Parry (2016) this type of leadership is relevant in the changing business environment. The concept of change is embedded in vision articulation, which is a vital competency of leadership as it seeks to position their organisations to respond to the dynamics of competitive pressure. Aarons (2007) notes, that transformational leadership is akin to charismatic or visionary leadership. This leadership style is distinct in inspiring and motivating followers so that they focus beyond mere exchanges and rewards. In order to inspire followers to buy in the vision, they must create deliberate efforts to make a compelling case for the need for such a vision. And efforts must be made to encourage staff to participate in its creation, allowing debate and accommodation of different ideas to enrich it. This will ultimately lead to ownership and commitment. In view of persistent negative global institutional reports for lower productivity and poor work ethic, which are hampering Botswana’s ability to compete well both regionally and globally, the transformational leadership style is applicable, as people and government look to leadership to be creative and come up with innovative methods of motivating subordinates. The influence of transformational leadership is felt when workers begin to show commitment to vision. But it takes responsible leadership (Eriksen and Cooper, 2018) to convince followership to commit to higher performance level. Such responsibility goes with ethical awareness and reflection on leadership on the past performance in order map a future motivational (Vivier, 2013) strategy. For (Chou, Lin, Chang, & Chuang. 2013:2) a key enabling success factor for transformational leadership is the ability to win subordinates trust, they further posit that without a shared collective efficacy and team cognitive trust it is difficult to effect a credible and sustainable change in the organisation.

It is much easier for governments and global institutions such as the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to reduce a complex problem of motivation and fair rewards and equality to leadership level, without appreciation of the local context (Global Competitiveness Report, 2018). The contextual factors at macro-economic spectrum are a pullback force since they promote disproportionate rewards in the distribution of firm resources. Thus the executive and managerial level get a sizable share of rewards whereas majority of workers grumble over leftovers. To the extent that leadership can cultivate performative goals and inspire followers through intrinsic motivation, the

underlying conflict between capital and labour is problematic as expressed and reflected at micro level where the relations of work remains exploitative. This is a foundational problem of capitalist relations of production and work.

2. Methodology & Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study was not to establish any regularity from observable events, usually associated with a few variables, which form the basis for causality which can be used as a standard for generalization or prescribing the role of leadership, as is the norm in positivist statistical research (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Rather the intention was to broadly explore some of the functional duties performed by people in leadership, based on theoretical discourse, lived experiences, expectations, training, beliefs and values and role expectations as well as articulation of vision. In this respect a realist philosophical paradigm (Bhaskar, 1975 ^{Note 7} is used as framework for this investigation. According to Sayer (2000) critical realism provides an alternative view to mainstream research in both philosophical and methodological viewpoint. For example, Maxwell (2004: 3) posits that “a realist understanding of causality is compatible with qualitative research, and supports a view of qualitative research as a legitimately scientific approach to causal explanation” However, this does not mean that realism is against quantitative research, in fact it does apply it as a method, since it accommodates pluralistic approach to research methods. Although critical realism has been used widely in management studies (Fleetwood, 2004, Marobela, 2006) however its contribution to leadership research is still minimal (Parry, 2008). Yet its theory of stratified ontology can help illuminate leadership Kepmster & Parry (2011), as a complex phenomenon which cannot be fully grasped from a superficial analysis. Thus issues of engagement, participation, power, control and structure needs deep ontological disposition. A realist layered ontology is best illustrated by Fletcher (2017: 183) using an iceberg analogy to show different levels of reality, which are relevant in considering different levels of organizational leadership. The real level is a space where leadership is positioned and exercise causal strategic powers which govern. At the managerial level, actual powers which determine occurrence of events at supervisory level where events are experienced and actually observed.

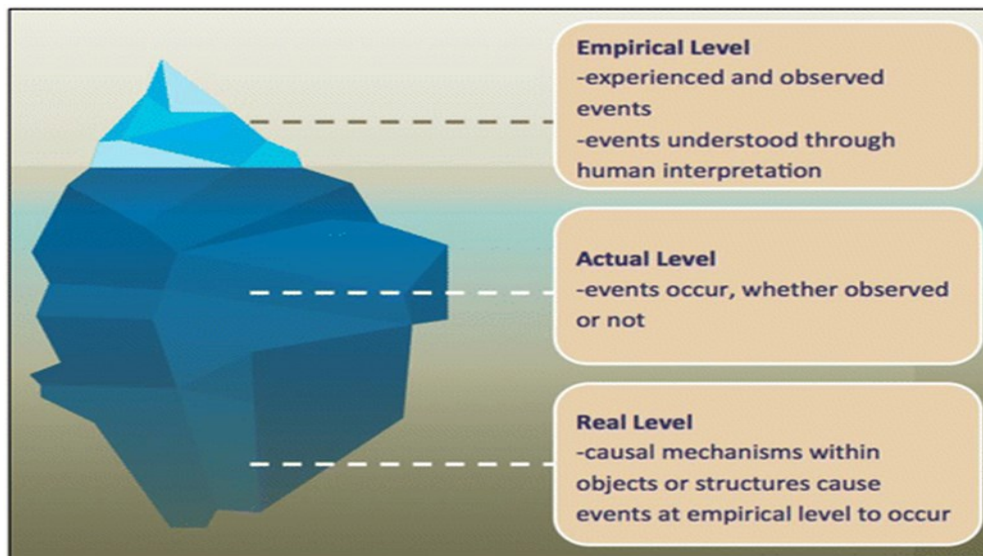


Figure 1. Realist Stratified Ontology

With emphasis on unobservable reality and generative mechanisms critical realism goes deep to explore contextual issues which motivate leadership behavior. A key advantage of critical realism is its appreciation of the dialectical nature of phenomenon. For example, poor organizational performance cannot be merely ascribed to leadership failure. The social structures and social relations shape agents attitude and in the process reproduce antithetical predisposition towards management, for instance resistance to change.

Consistent with Brown (2004: Figure 2) this research applies the tripartite theoretical framework as a reflective tool for understanding leadership role in enhancing performance and effecting positive outcomes. This takes into account that their reflection, discourse and intervention is not only a matter of their values and beliefs but shaped by the leadership ecosystem in the form of context, generative mechanism and the wider environment.

Based on the interface between scholars and practitioners, a number of leaders from different organizational settings (government, private and not for profit) were interviewed, interacted with and engaged to open dialogue to understand their take on performative goals, welfare of followers and the strategic decisions they take to guide the future of their organizations. Participant's perspectives on what account as leadership and their personal interpretations and experiences of daily practice as transformational agents for change were thematically analyzed to learn about their organizations as well as to understand their leadership styles.

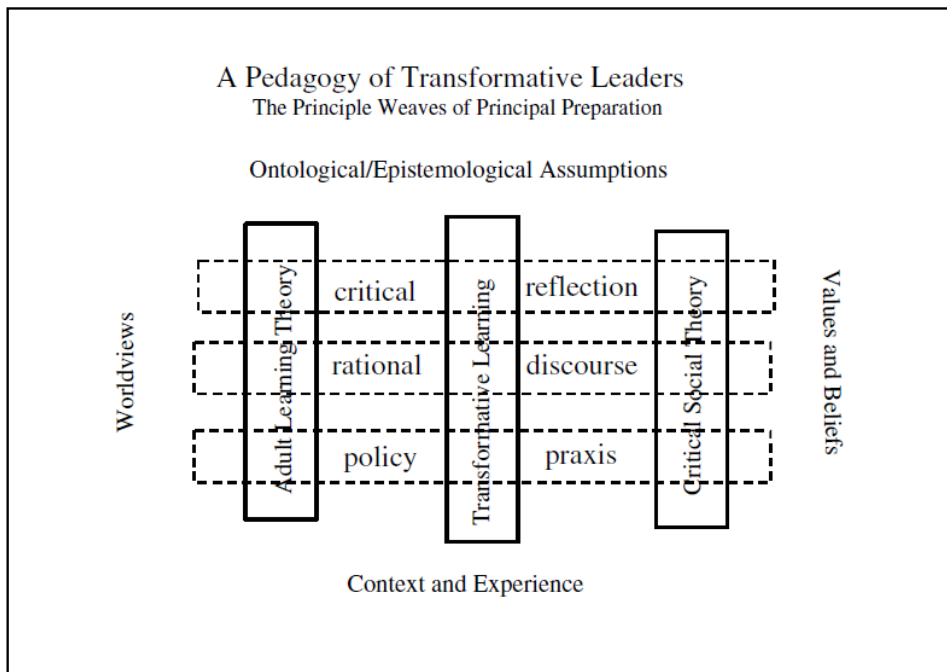


Figure 2. Pedagogy for Transformative Leadership

Source: Brown (2004) Leadership for Social Justice & Equity

The research approach is based on descriptive exploratory survey investigation. The data was collected through dialoguing in interviews with people in leadership positions across organisations, from health, education, sports, government, in all over 50 participants were involved. The aim of this survey was to assess the role of leadership as a catalyst for organizational change and human capital performance. The responses to the questions were analysed against the theoretical literature with the view to draw lessons on how different leaders inspire people towards working for collective vision.

2.1 Critical Reflective Insights and Learning from Practitioners

Based on critical realism method of abduction and retrodution (Kempster & Parry, 2011) analytical process, inferences were drawn from the interviews and conversations with respective leaders across diverse grouping of organisations which included, Retail, mining, Media, Sports, Education, Power, Health amongst others to explain their lived experience in managing organisations. Retrodution and reflexivity has been used in the study of leadership learning to explore contextual factors which are not easily discerned through structured methodologies (Willis, 2019). According to Fletcher, (2017) retrodution, helps with contextual factors and their relation to causal mechanisms which gives rise to observed empirical trends. These methods are used alongside thematic analysis, which is credited with advancing theoretical freedom and flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006) in qualitative research. The following are some of the main thematic narratives and reflective leadership pointers emerging from the data.

2.2 Leadership Philosophy

It is generally assumed that one of the primary duties of leadership is to provide guidance on the nature and character of the organisation. This is a perspective statement outlining the vision of the organisation, its basic values and strategic outlook. Normally this can be learned from training for example in the business school or gained from experience. Most of the leaders had some form of guiding perspective on where they want to take their organisations. In most organisations there was a sense of understanding on the importance of vision. Some organisations had explicit visions statements, while in others it was simply implied from the conversations. In one organisation, the leadership expressed its vision by an expressive position which valued “employees as life its partners”. Another linked its vision to empathy and caring for workers. While other organisations situated their values on nurturing talent. Yet, others confused the vision with their mission statement. The attempt to articulate vision in terms of valuing people, fits with the normative managerial human resource philosophy which is framed on the narrative of people as the most valuable assets. This was expected as hardly any of the organisations openly admitted that their core mandate is to grow company investment. In reality however, most organisations visions are driven by pursuit of the bottom-line and workers come second.

2.3 Culture

It would appear most leaders recognise the need to keep some form of cultural identity for their organisations. They are varied reasons for this cultural connection. Culture could mean many things beyond the usual team-ups and exercise wellness programmes. It could very much be used as a mechanism for coherence and unity of purpose, or a representation of power and control through shared norms which promote tolerance and respect for leadership. In other organisations it was simply a way of singing the song along and conforming to the customs of managing to go with what is preached in management literature — cultural correctness, for example cross-cultural management. In contract, one organisation emphasised the importance of keeping staff and family interactions and outings as a form of culture of caring. In one interesting case, exceptionally different they modelled their culture around Botswana Kgotla (Tribal Council) traditional setting, they meet informally and share ideas in an open circular sitting. This is interesting scenario because the former president, Ian Khama likes to use the Kgotla forum with communities around bonfires to greet and share ideas and later give blankets and bibles and soup. As he sits around the Kgotla he is accorded respect from his dual leadership as a Chief and also as a President. For one organisation which supposedly should provide a critical space of diversity of ideas and free thinking, it was a surprise that a senior official emphasised a culture of discipline and fear, “The University is committed in insuring that employees behave in an acceptable manner. There are some disciplinary programmes in place to enforce this policy”. How then does creative thinking and innovative ideas thrive in such a threatening environment? Managerialism has transformed higher learning institutions to some kind of factory production, where managers and directors have power and control over academics. This comes with neoliberalism in education, where emphasis is on education for the market not for social justice, critical thinking and equality.

2.4 Ethical Conduct

Leadership and morality are inseparable. Ethics and values take the centre stage in influencing people otherwise they will not buy into a leader's vision. As we have seen trust is at the heart of any successful transformational agenda. People will hardly invest trust in a person against whom they hold unfavourable perceptions. It must be noted that when a leader is unethical he loses a moral authority to lead. He lacks the drive to persuade subordinates with a clear conscience and this makes it difficult for them to adhere to the set core values. Good character and upright conduct helps leader's position and credibility. Although International institutions such as Transparency International have consistently ranked Botswana one of the least corrupt countries in Africa, evidence on the ground does show that there is widespread corruption in government and the private sector. Following revelations of massive corruption and scandals in government multibillion projects in the power stations, glass and construction involving Chinese construction companies and locals, the issue of ethical conduct has assumed much more significant attention. More recently, the ongoing corruption cases where funds from the public officers pension fund and national petroleum funds, were embezzled, compromises the credibility of higher level leadership at governance.

At lower leadership, it appears they are doing their best to curb corruption and promote ethical and moral rectitude. However, all this efforts remains ineffective because higher level political leadership still refuses to legislate for two essential laws which will help restrain the spread of corruption, the freedom of information act and the declaration of assets. Without transparent information flow and knowledge on how people gained wealth, it remains a futile exercise for leadership to convince followership about their trust and moral rectitude.

2.5 Learning Organizations

From the interviews some managers inculcated the spirit of "learning organizations" as espoused by one of the leading the management gurus, Peter Senge. They embarked on training and development programs such as coaching and mentoring. One organization emphasized trust and belief in young managers as they allowed capacity and confidence building through creating conducive work environment that allowed trial and error. Mistakes were tolerated and viewed as part of learning. In one interesting case, the leadership mistrusted subordinates as no delegation was encouraged and they were a veil on transparency. As much as young people must be empowered and capacitated to develop requisite skills to discover their potentials. Similarly, old managers must also learn from junior staff. Reflecting on the importance of a learning culture, some of the leaders did not always support further long-term training for subordinates even when funds allowed. One manager confirmed that, "he does not give full responsibility to his employees by way of delegating authority, nor fully empower employees to be creative and innovative". It's difficult to comprehend how this can be justified. It might well be motivated by jealousy if not fear and self-preservation as young scholars could pose a threat to their entrenched comfort zones. What seems ignored in the transformation is the role played by leadership in shaping change. Although some of the organisations have gone through restructuring this did not appear to have occurred in a spirit of participatory learning. In this respect it is noteworthy to recognise that it is leadership

which needs to learn more and embrace new ideas of leading than the ordinary workers.

2.6 Teamwork, Participation, Job Enrichment

Like culture, teamwork is highly valued in human resource as a strategy for not only promoting the narrative of goal congruence, shared vision and esprit de corps. Team working promotes social cohesion amongst workers and this serves as a mechanism for accelerating productivity. In one revealing instance, the leader narrates the importance of teams, “employees are made to feel and believe that they belong to the organisation together and are a family not to feel like independent individuals” this is supported by regular staff consultation meetings and the drinking of tea together at break time. This tea and bread are bought by the organisation and the practice has been there for a long time and seems like if the organisation was to stop that ritual it would have taken away the most cherished moments from the employees of socialisation and a semblance of togetherness. Surely, this raises concerns. Do employees really feel the same way as described by the leader? Do they feel closer and part of the organisation simply because of some goodies, or is the manager imagining such to impress the researcher? This appears like a case of impression management or gaming. Work improvement teams have long been introduced in Botswana public service and followed by performance management system, all implemented to boost performance. The government went as far as to engage the World Bank sponsored consultants, and a PMS philosophy document published, as a guiding framework. Most of the public officers have been trained to facilitate in countries like Singapore to bench mark the best practices. Yet despite enormous efforts to financial spending in training the level of performance has not noticeably improved. Why? The leadership style in Botswana organisations is still based on hierarchical structure, this is not helped by a cultural ecosystem which does not appreciate accomplishments of its followership and the lack of recognition to remunerate fairly for good performance.

3. Conclusion

This study was a reflective exploration of leadership to understand its essential role in outlining vision as a rallying call for employee motivation. The strategic position of leadership agency in transformation is also examined, with relation to staff engagement welfare and equity in industrial relations climate. Critical realism offers a fresh breath in leadership and management research because of its deep analysis of structures, mechanisms and relations which are sometimes taken for granted in inductive investigations. In this study, it allowed for exploration of broader contextual forces that impact on organisational behaviour and leadership at micro level. In summation, management scholars and practitioners acknowledge the centrality of leadership in influencing workers to rally behind organisational vision. Because of its strategic positional role, leadership is instrumental in creating a positive environment where people can feel welcomed and motivated to contribute in enhancing productive performance of the organisation. Therefore leadership without an inspired followership is futile. It is not enough to set vision and outline the mission statements. More crucially, today’s leaders need to constantly reflect as they navigate the

complex evolving and dynamic environment, as they face the challenge of highly informed and educated followers who need their trust to lead responsibly and not embedding in corrupt tendencies for their own self gain.

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Notes

Note 1. Mo Ibrahim address to the 2017 Tutu Fellows on the leadership challenges of Africa. 14 September, 2017.

Note 2. “The conditions that lead to revolution in the first place are typically oppressive leadership, the bankruptcy of ideas and institutions and, above all, a failure by society to renew itself”. Hence the recent mass protests, looting and killings of fellow African foreigners small traders in South Africa, is emblematic of failure to provide basic socio economic needs and services for the poor and marginalised. Though this phenomenon has been mischaracterised simply as xenophobia. The deep causal factors are poverty, unemployment and widespread inequity. These are the conditions that can brew an uprising and a revolution for a better world.

Note 3. Botswana has consistently received a ratings from global rating agencies such as Standard & Poors. Additionally, transparency International has listed the country as least corrupt. However, there is a gradual turnaround as Botswana’s Gini-Coefficient reflects deep wealth inequality. A recent report from World Justice Project shows a significant downward trend in the rule of law. In the past both former Presidents of Botswana have publicly expressed discontent in the way the country is managed. The rushed new electoral voting machine and the suppression of trade unions by expanding essential service workers are examples.

Note 4. Recent failure of high profile expensive projects such as the Palapye Glass project and Morupule B power station and the failure to prosecute the Director of the Intelligence Agency (DISS) for misuse of public funds is a signal for flawed leadership and lack of accountability.

Note 5. For a detailed exposition of corruption & mismanagement in Botswana, see Motshwarakgole, J, 2014, two years to Vision 2016: Yet too far Away.

Note 6. Transformative leadership is central to governance, because it determines the future direction of change, the trajectory of human and social progress, and prudent management of national resources for sustained development. (The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) The Africa Governance Report 2019: Promoting African Union Shared Values.

Note 7. Philosopher Roy Bhaskar is acknowledged as the founder of critical realism, he outlined his basic ideas in his book, A Realist Theory of Science, which marked a major contribution to philosophy of science and a departure from dominant hegemonic western philosophy, underpinned by positivism.

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