

The Effect of the African Culture on Effective Leadership: A Case of Africa International University

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Abstract

Africa is rich with diverse cultures from different communities. The various cultures are defined by social habits, language, morals, values, practices, and customs among other aspects. Cultural diversity is a valuable addition to the development and leadership in Africa for it informs and shapes peoples' perceptions, behaviors, expectations, performance, and decision-making processes. People thus interpret and transfer information from their environmental perspective and work with the same worldviews to attain their goals. Therefore, the effectiveness of a leader and his performance must be examined against the nature of a given society. Leadership in Africa has experienced many challenges such as dependency, corruption, nepotism, and mistrust among other vices that might lead to ineffectiveness and unproductiveness in society. The purpose of this paper is to examine the influence of African culture on effective leadership at Africa International University. The study seeks to answer the following questions: To what extent does Ubuntu influence effective leadership at Africa International University? To what extent do values influence effective leadership at Africa International University? To what extent does the belief system influence effective leadership at Africa International University. This study used a quantitative method, adopting a correlational design. The study drew from rich experiences that emanate from different communities that are represented in Africa International University from different nationalities that were divided into four regions: East African, West African, Central African, and South African region. The total population of the study is $N = 1007$. The sample is $n = 91$ which, is calculated using Nassiuma's sample size formula. Data was collected using self-developed questionnaires by the researchers, that were submitted using google. In conclusion, there is a positive statistically significant relationship between effective leadership at Africa International University and the following three values: Ubuntu, values, and the organizationally supported Christian belief system.

Keywords: African culture, Effective leadership, Ubuntu, Values, Belief systems.

Introduction of Study

Leadership is crucial to any organization; it is appraised against its culture and values that the members hold. Adeyemo (2009), in writing about leadership, describes it as a measure for any nation, institution, or organization and it determines the direction that they will eventually take. He further says that leaders must do things right, thus earning people's trust, being a team player, being an inspiring motivator and visionary, having a plan for growth, paying the price, being a role model, pressing on and preparing a successor. On the same line, the well-being and holistic development of the organization is informed by how the leadership interprets and makes decisions that are informed by culture. In an organization, leadership is dictated by the culture of the people. Culture and leadership are double-sided concepts; leadership is on one side of the coin, while culture is on the other. Culture describes the reason and processes of a leader. At the same time, culture creates the organizational climate that defines how employees interact and work together daily thus, giving the organization identity.

African International University has over thirty nationalities that exhibit different cultural orientations and thus, form a unified culture. The multicultural experience in the instructions has enriched the institution. Though Adeyemo (2009) says that the African leaders have brought great challenges in leadership, and their strongholds especially in the culture have to be pulled down, it is important to note the 'African' is the source of their being and identity. On the other hand, it is the same African culture that makes a great difference in leadership, thus overcoming cases of nepotism, individualism, poor management, and opposition among other vices.

The positive cultural diversity that develops its identity influences the organizational climate that is based on the key elements of African culture. This is what bridges the leadership with other relevant environments (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). Additionally, the identity of an organization "influences... decision-making activities within an organization" and "it attracts the management's attention when they cannot find easier, more specific and more quantifiable solutions regarding specific organizational issues" (Lin, 2017, p. 804). Therefore, once an institution defines its own organizational identity, the leaders determine a fundamental base that becomes a guide during any decision-making process activities that take place in the said organization.

Effect of Ubuntu and Effective Leadership

Ubuntu is a philosophy from Africa that promotes community oneness for the good of society. This includes a demonstration of humanness that is essential for human growth (Venter, 2004). In the African cultures, the aspect of the community is crucial and is engaged in the philosophy of Ubuntu; "I am because we are." The individual exists for the good of a community, therefore, he is part of a community. This means that there is always interdependence, communalism, and sensitivity towards other people who are around him. Therefore, effective leadership in Africa requires one to be sensitive to the needs of the people and care for them too. Having seen that a person belongs to the

community, there is a need for the leaders to bring people together to serve the common good and interest of everyone.

According to Letseka (2000), humanness is very key in Africa. This is the point where a leader can have the interest of others at heart, see their needs, interest, and serve them in a dignified manner. In a community, as one serves and cares for the other people, it should be done in a dignified way and adapting some ethical standards that are acceptable in the community. In this changing world where people are adopting technology, there is a very high likelihood of people forgetting the interests of others and becoming cold towards each other.

Effect of Values and Effective Leadership

Every society has its values that describe them. They also set the ethical standards of any given organization. According to Taylor (2011), citing Boatwright (2007), it was indicated that morals and ethics are almost similar, for they are essential in making moral decisions of a person or organization. The ethical principles are what inform the decision-making process, thus offering the guidelines for any action to be taken. As a leader, it is of paramount importance to make guiding principles that are informed by the organization's moral and ethical standards, since they will affect all stakeholders. It is worth noting that these ethical principles are the convictions that people have in an organization that define who they are, the character, identity, and are evident in the way they interact with each other and their clients too (Taylor, 2011; Le Roux, 2000). An example of some ethical principles is that the effectiveness of any organizational leader should be defined as transparency and openness in communication to ensure that everyone is owning and understanding the vision of the organization. This translated into the behavior and commitment of the leaders and their followers. Some of these values might be written while others might not but they have become a norm and part of the system.

Effect of Belief System and Effective Leadership

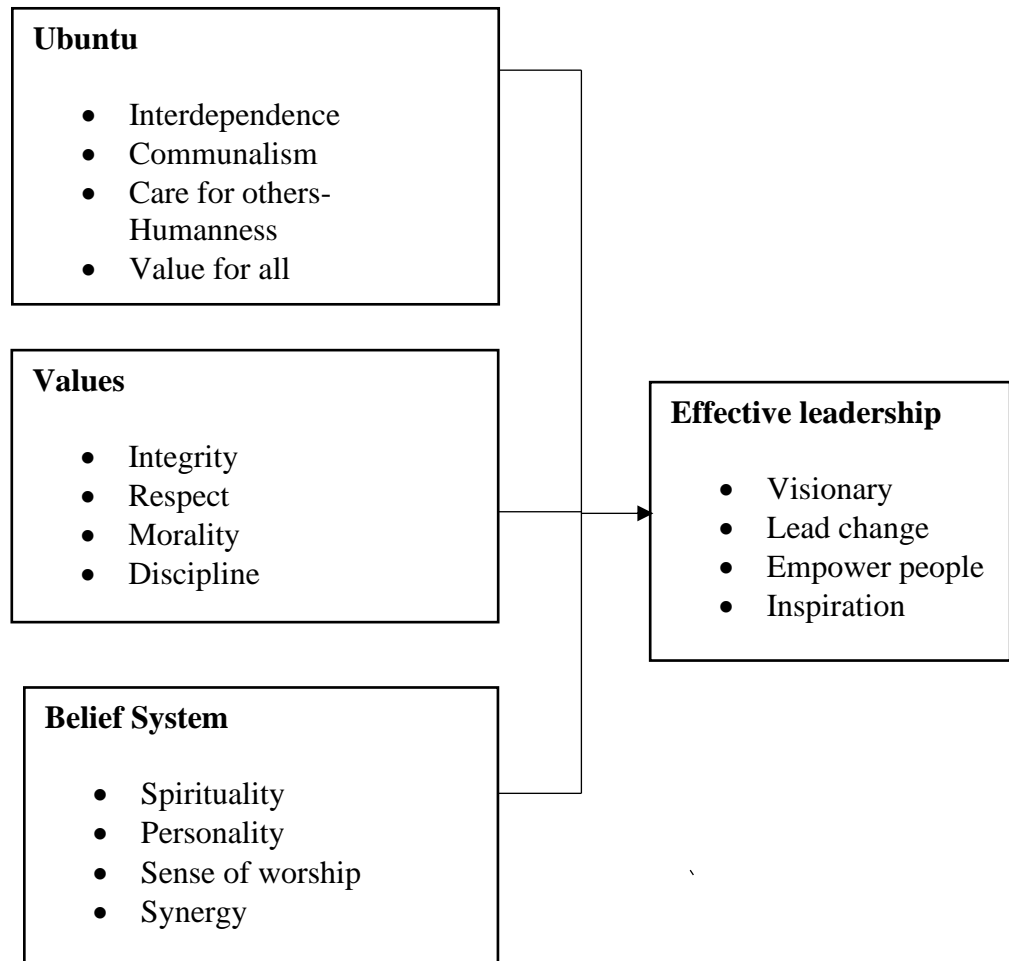
Every organization has its belief system that is informed by its ethical principles and value system. The leaders behave in a certain manner that is informed by the customs and traditions that they hold dear. These traditions are the ones that describe the value of man, humanity, and work ethics, among other issues related to an organization. As human beings, our value for each other is described mostly by our religious beliefs that bestow our belief system. Therefore, how leaders treat people depends on the quality of humanity. Urbanization and technological advancement have brought a lot of changes, so that people feel they can do almost everything alone.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine if there is any relationship between African culture and effective leadership at African International University. Especially, examining the effect of Ubuntu, values, and belief systems that are held by different people who come from a different cultural background and their relationship to effective

leadership. People's aspirations and dreams grow out of their beliefs and cultural orientations. Consequently, they will undervalue or undermine others depending on their belief system.

Conceptual Framework



Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative correlation approach in collecting and analysis of data. The independent variable so this study was Ubuntu, values, and belief system, while the dependent variable was effective leadership. A random sampling technique was used in collecting data from a sample of 91 respondents (n= 91) members from the community of Africa International University. Where Sample size, n= Sample size, N = Population size, CV = Coefficient of Variation (which is $\leq 30\%$), e = margin of error (which is fixed between 2-5%). The sample size for this study was calculated at a 30% coefficient of variation and margin error of 3%.

$$n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2 + (N-1)e^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1007 (0.30)^2}{(0.3)^2 + (1007-1) 0.03^2}$$

91.04

Reliability test

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on	
	Standardized Items	N of Items
.865	.860	18

The reliability was established using Cronbach alpha at .865 into percentage it was 86.5%.

Findings and Conclusions

The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential analysis.

Descriptive Data

Descriptive analysis results for the status of the respondents:

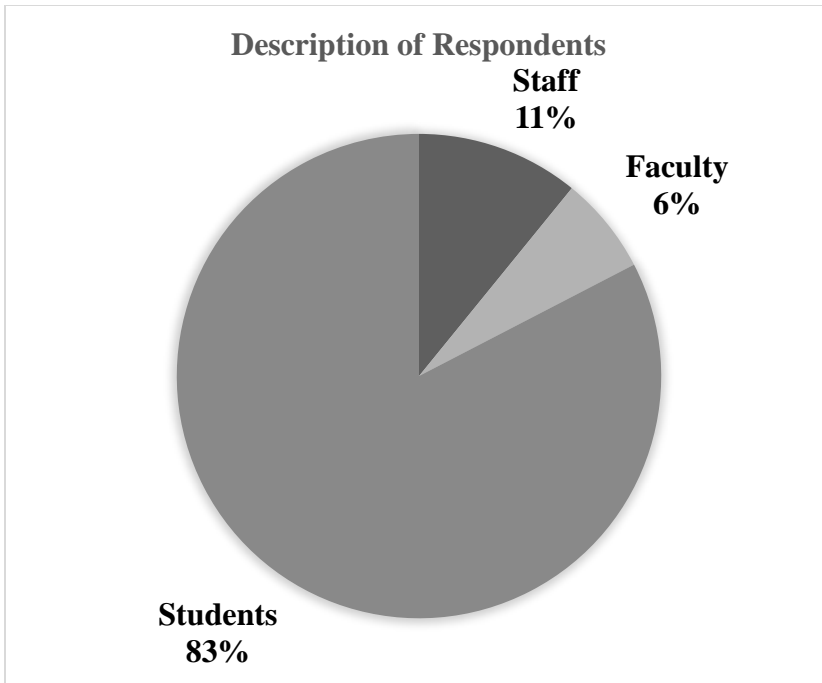


Figure 1: Status of Respondents

Students 83%, Faculty 6%, Staff 11%

Descriptive analysis results for a region of respondents:

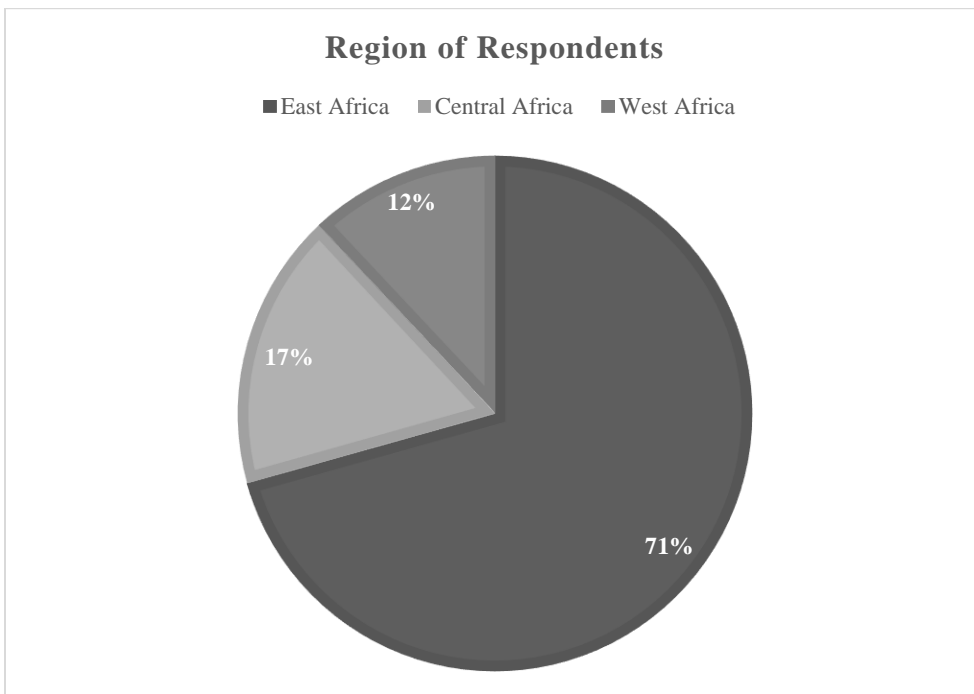


Figure 2: Regions of Respondents

East Africa 71%, Central Africa 17%, and West Africa 12%.

Descriptive analysis results for Ubuntu and effective leadership:

The results of Ubuntu and effective leadership are revealed as indicated in Figure 3. The results were measure on a Likert scale of SD -strongly disagree, D – agree, N – neutral, A – agree, and SA – strongly agree.

Ubuntu and Effective leadership

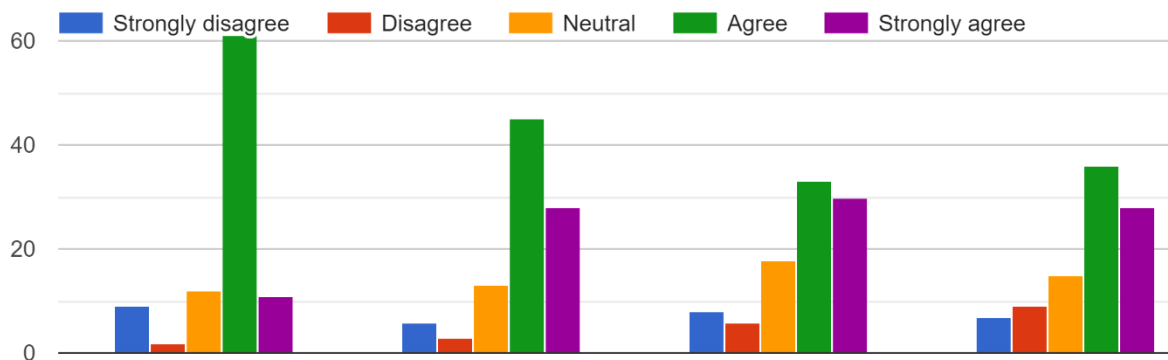


Figure 3: Ubuntu and Effective Leadership

UBUNTU	SD	D	N	A	SA
Spirit of interdependence	(9) 9%	(2) 3%	(12) 13%	(60) 65%	(10) 10%
Enhance communalism	(6) 7%	(3) 3%	(13) 14%	(43) 46%	(28) 30%
Nurturing environment	(8) 9%	(6) 7%	(17) 18%	(32) 34%	(30) 32%
Embrace Values	(7) 7%	(9) 10%	(14) 15%	(36) 39%	(27) 29%

The findings for *the statement leadership of AIU has nurtured the spirit of interdependency among its community is comprised of experts in their various disciplines*. Sixty-two percent of the respondents reveal that they agreed with the statement, while 10% strongly disagreed, 2% disagreed, 14% were neutral, while 12% strongly agreed. This implies that over 70% of the respondents agreed with the statement. On the statement, *the University's leadership has to enhance communalism practice to the community*. The respondents revealed that SD recorded 6%, D 4%, N 14%, 43%, and SA 33%. This implies that over 70 % of the respondents agreed with the statement. While the respondents strongly agreed that *AIU leadership has been able to provide an environment that nurtures care for each other in the community* at 35%, 8% SD, D 6%, N 15%, and A 36%. On the statement, *The leadership of AIU embraces value for all in the community*, over 51% of the above agreed with the statement. This was revealed by SD 7%, D 10%, N 18%, A 39%, and 26% SA. The overall results show that the highest percent of the respondents agreed that Ubuntu influences effective leadership.

Descriptive and analysis results for values and effective leadership

SD -strongly disagree, D – agree, N – neutral, A – agree and SA – strongly agree

The descriptive analysis results are shown in Figure 4. As for the leadership, a mechanism has been placed in the institution to nurture integrity for its service delivery. There is respect for each other at AIU irrespective of the position in the organization; the members of the AIU community have high moral standards and the leadership of AIU has ensured that there is discipline among members of the community.

Values and effective leadership

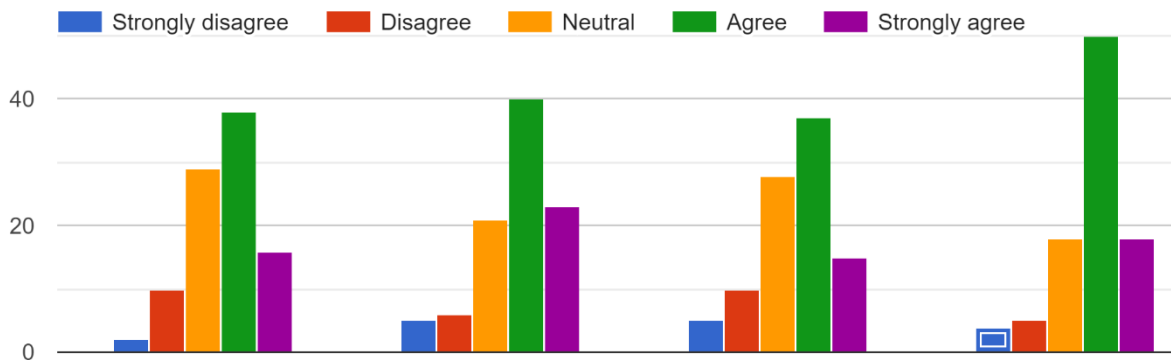


Figure 4: Values and Effective Leadership

VALUES	SD	D	N	A	SA
Nurture integrity	(2) 2%	(10) 11%	(29) 31%	(37) 40%	(15) 16%
Respect each other	(5) 5%	(6) 6%	(21) 23%	(38) 41%	(23) 25%
High moral standards	(5) 5%	(10) 11%	(28) 30%	(35) 38%	(15) 16%
Disciplined members	(4) 4%	(5) 5%	(18) 20%	(49) 53%	(17) 18%

The findings reveal that over 53% of the respondents agreed with the statement *the leadership has placed a mechanism in the institution to nurture integrity for its service delivery*, while 35% were neutral and 12% disagreed. This was revealed in the following results: SD 2%, D 10%, N 35%, A 39%, and SA 14%. On the same note, over 55% revealed agreement to the statement *there is respect for each other AIU irrespective of the position in the organization*, while 23% did not take sides and 12% did not agree with it. This is revealed by the following findings: SD 6%, D 6%, N 23%, A 39%, and SA 26%. 54% of the respondent agreed with the statement *the members of the AIU community have high moral standards*, while 15% did not agree. This is shown by the following results: SD 6%, D 9%, N 31%, A 36%, and SA 18%. Further, the findings for the statement *the leadership of AIU has ensured that there is discipline among members of the community*. The results indicated that 70% of the respondents with the statement

while 10% were not in agreement. This was shown by the descriptive results as follows: SD 5%, D 5%, N 20%, A 50%, and SA 20%. This implies that the respondents agreed that values influence effective leadership, though there was a variation of a smaller percentage.

Descriptive analysis results in a belief system and effective leadership

SD -strongly disagree, D – agree, N – neutral, A – agree and SA – strongly agree

The descriptive analysis results revealed in Figure 5 are for: The leadership of AIU has placed policies and mechanisms to enhance growth in terms of spirituality; The personality of every community member is geared towards enhancing the Christian belief systems; The leadership of AIU has ensured that there is a sense of worship at AIU; The leadership of AIU has encouraged co-operation among the staff, students, and faculty in the community.

Belief system and effective leadership

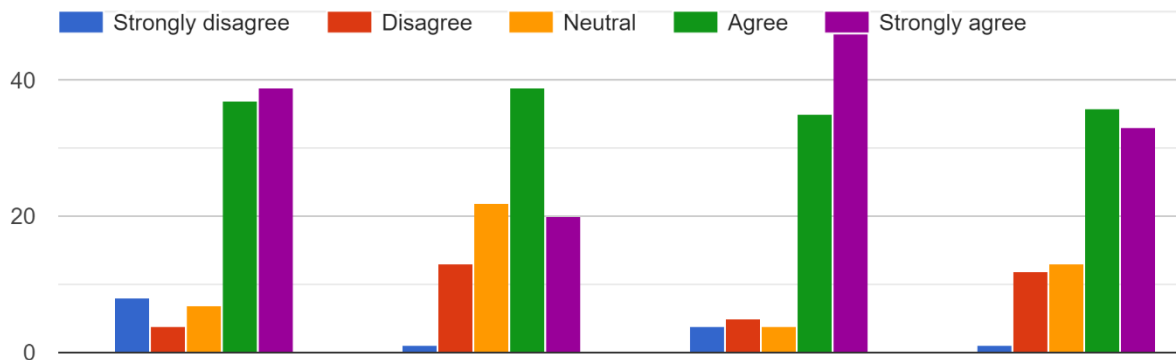


Figure 5: Belief system and effective leadership

BELIEF SYSTEM	SD	D	N	A	SA
Policies enhance growth	(8) 8%	(4) 4%	(7) 8%	(36) 39%	(38) 41%
Enhance Christian beliefs system	(1) 1%	(13) 14%	(21) 22%	(38) 41%	(20) 22%
Sense of worship	(4) 4%	(5) 5%	(5) 5%	(35) 38%	(45) 48%
Encourage cooperation among all	(1) 1%	(12) 13%	(13) 14%	(36) 39%	((31) 33%

The findings indicate that over 70% of the respondents were in support of this statement; *The leadership of AIU has places policies and mechanism to enhance there is growth in terms of spirituality*, while 13% did not agree. This is revealed by the following

results: SD 8%, D 5%, N 8%, A 40%, and SA 39%. The statement *the personality of every community member is geared towards enhancing the Christian belief systems* was supported by over 51% of the respondents while 14% were not in support and 15% were non-committal. This is shown by the following results: SD 1%, D 13%, N 25%, A 43%, and SA 18%. The statement *the leadership of AIU has ensured that there is a sense of worship at AIU* was supported by over 70% of the respondents, 10% disagreed and 5% did not decide on that. This is portrayed by the following results: SD 4 %, D 6%, N 5%, A 38%, and SA 47%. Further, 82% of the respondents were in agreement with the statement *the leadership of AIU has encouraged co-operation among the staff, students, and faculty in the community, while 13% while not in support and 14% did not take any side, they remained neutral. This is portrayed by the following results: SD 1%, D 12%, N 14%, A 41%, and SA 41%. This implies that the respondents agreed that belief system influences effective leadership.*

Inferential data

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized		
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.131	.189		-.693	.490
	Ubuntu	.526	.085	.405	6.159	.000
	Value	-.424	.063	-.354	-6.703	.000
	Belief system	.864	.079	.677	10.963	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Effective Leadership

Based on the regression results, the estimated model was as follows:

$$Y = -0.131 + 0.526X_1 - 0.424X_2 + 0.864X_3$$

Where:

Y = Effective leadership

X₁ = Ubuntu

X₂ = Value

X₃ = Belief system

The results of the Regression of Coefficient reveal that there is a positive, statistically significant relationship between Ubuntu and effective leadership at Africa International University ($\beta=0.526$, while $p = 0.000$). This is supported by a beta coefficient of 0.526 and a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05. This, therefore, further reveals that an increase in Ubuntu by 1 unit would lead to an increase in effective leadership at Africa International university by 0.526 units.

The regression analysis further reveals that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between values and effective leadership at Africa international University as the findings indicated, as supported by a beta coefficient of -0.424X₂ and p-value of 0.000 < 0.05

($\beta = -.424X_2$ whereas $p = 0.000$). This, therefore, indicates that a decrease by 1 unit would lead to a decrease in effective leadership of AIU community members by 0.424 units.

The analysis further reveals that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between belief system and effective leadership of the AIU community revealed by the findings, of a beta coefficient of 0.864 and p-value $0.000 < 0.05$ ($\beta = 0.864$ $p = 0.000$). This, therefore, indicates that an increase in belief system by 1 unit would lead to effective leadership at Africa International University by 0.864 units.

Impact Size

Constructs	Impact Size (Beta Coefficient)	Percentage
Ubuntu	0.526	52.6%
Value	-0.424	-42.4%
Belief system	0.864	86.4%

Conclusion

Ubuntu on effective leadership

This implies that the respondents agreed that Ubuntu influences effective leadership, though there was a variation of a smaller percentage. Further, the study established that there is a positive statistically significant relationship between Ubuntu and effective leadership at Africa International University.

Value on effective leadership

This implies that the respondents agreed that values influence effective leadership, though there was a variation of a smaller percentage. There is a positive and statistically significant relationship between values and effective leadership at Africa International University.

Belief system on effective leadership

This implies that the respondents agreed that the belief system influences effective leadership. The analysis further reveals that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between a belief system and effective leadership of the AIU community

Recommendation

Therefore, Africa International University needs to continue nurturing the Ubuntu practice, the Christian values and belief system for their influence on effective leadership.

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Appendix I: Questionnaire

Section A: Introduction Letter

We, Rachel Muteti and Lilian Munyekenye of Africa International University, Karen campus- Nairobi currently researching: *Effect of the African culture on effective leadership: a case of Africa international university*. As a valued respondent in this exercise, I kindly request that you read and respond to the questions provided in this questionnaire. Your response will be strictly confidential and used for the sole purpose of this study.

The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes.

In case of any issue, please call this no. or
email.....

THANK YOU.

Section A: Demographic and Respondents profile.

Kindly mark/tick in the appropriate box

1). Which best describes you?

Staff ()

Student ()

Faculty ()

Others ()

2). Which region do you belong to?

East Africa ()

Central Africa ()

West Africa ()

South Africa ()

Please weigh the level to which the following *effect of the African culture on effective leadership: a case of Africa international university.*

Kindly use the scale below to assist you in your selections.

SECTION B: EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP (DEPENDENT VARIABLE).

	EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP	1	2	3	4	5
1	The leadership of AIU plans ahead					
2	The leadership of AIU is at the forefront in embracing the changes in the University.					
3	The leadership of AIU is committed to empowering its members.					
4	The leadership of AIU is committed to inspiring all its members.					

Section C: (INDEPENDENT VARIABLES)

Tick in the space where possible and rate the following *Effect of Ubuntu on effective leadership*. a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly disagreed, 2 disagree, 3 Neutral, 4 Agree and 5 Strongly agree.

	Ubuntu and Effective leadership	1	2	3	4	5
1	The leadership of AIU has nurtured the spirit of interdependency among its community is comprised of experts in their various disciplines.					
2	The University's leadership has to enhance communalism practice to the community.					
3	AIU leadership has been able to provide an environment that nurtures care for each other in the community.					
4.	The leadership of AIU embraces value for all in the community.					
Tick in the space where possible and rate the following <i>Effect of the values on effective leadership</i>						
	Values and effective leadership	1	2	3	4	5
1	The leadership has placed a mechanism in the institution to nurture integrity for its service delivery.					
2	There is respect for each other AIU irrespective of the position in the organization.					
3	The members of the AIU community have high moral standards.					
4.	The leadership of AIU has ensured that there is discipline among members of the community.					
Tick in the space where possible and rate the following <i>Effect of the Belief system on effective leadership</i>						
	Belief system and effective leadership	1	2	3	4	5
1	The leadership of AIU has places policies and mechanism to enhance there is growth in terms of spirituality					
2	The personality of every community member is geared towards enhancing the Christian belief systems.					
3	The leadership of AIU has ensured that there is a sense of worship at AIU.					
4	The leadership of AIU has encouraged co-operation among the staff, students, and faculty in the community.					