



THE WOMAN KING: NANSICA AS AN IDEAL LEADER IN THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY

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Abstract

Although there are various international and national legislations against the discrimination of persons on account of their gender, race, religion and other similar social status, in Nigeria, women are still excluded from occupying certain leadership positions politically and otherwise. Many studies have been done in poor leadership or leadership crisis in Nigeria. However, very few of them focused on the impact of gender on leadership styles, outcomes and qualities. Moreover, such previous studies were neither multidisciplinary in nature nor multidimensional in approach. Thus, the present study investigated the differences between the leadership styles of women and men as well as the impact of gender on leadership outcomes and leadership qualities. Using a sample size of 400, the study adopted mixed-method research design with Survey and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as instruments for data collection. Findings revealed that gender has impact on leadership styles and outcomes because it can influence the brain's structure and operation and by extension personality of individuals, and that due to variations among individuals of both genders at group level, some individuals in both genders, would exhibit leadership qualities naturally ascribed to the other gender. The implication of the finding is that the society should look out for candidates with relevant leadership qualities, regardless of their genders, who can take their groups to greater heights. The study therefore recommended gender rotational leadership system and more enlightenment to challenge societal stereotypes and biases against women in leadership roles.

Keywords: Woman King, Nanisca, Leader, Nigeria

Introduction

The Socio-political terrain of Nigeria seems to disfavour women headship of certain public offices. Since the inception of democracy in 1999 or even prior to it, a keen observer will easily notice the persistent low representation of women in politics and other high-level leadership social positions. Despite the 30 percent constitutional provision, efforts made by women to occupy these top offices have not yielded the desired results. Hence, the agitation for a more gender inclusive government structure in the nation. Many factors have been identified by scholars as responsible for this ugly trend, including religion, culture, corruption, quota system, political party systems and structures, discriminatory legislation, violence



against women, conservative and sexist beliefs and practices in the society and lack of funds (Nelson, 2012; Asaju, et al., 2014; Okonkwo, 2016; Relly, 2019).

The exclusion of women from high-level leadership positions has some grave consequences because good leadership outcome is not the exclusive reserve of any gender. Records of women who performed exceptional well in high-level leadership positions globally abound including Queens Victoria, Elizabeth 1 and 11 of England, Margaret Thatcher of Britain, Catherine 11 of Russia, Maria Theresa of Austria, Indira Gandhi of India, Empress WU Zetian of China and Angela Merkel of Germany amongst others (Obasi & Aondover, 2023). Most ethnic groups in Africa also had such great and famous women leaders and warriors including, Cleopatra VII of Egypt, Yaa Asantewa, the Asante warrior of Ejisu in Ghana, Agathe Uwilingiyimana of Rwanda, Gisele Rabesahala of Madagascar, Meaza Ashenah of Ethiopia and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, Africa's first democratically elected woman President (Bortolot, nd; Gale, nd).

While this clearly indicates that leadership capacity is not gender bias, the absence of women leaders in higher public offices in Nigeria raises a greater concern. It seems logical and not gainsaying that Nigerian women leaders are resourceful and naturally endowed to meaningfully impact governance at all levels as witnessed at the lower levels, business sector, academia and other areas of the society (Obasi & Obasi, 2022). This submission aligns with Sirleaf (2022) averment that Africa women throughout history were and are still critical problem solvers leading militaries or freedom fighters for positive reforms from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial periods. She states further that Africa's future can be reclaimed only when women's knowledge, skills, and talents at all levels are explored and exploited for problem-solving. It is noteworthy that this kind of innovative problem-solving and excellent leadership qualities was exhibited by Nansima, the General of *Agojie*, an army of black women in the movie, *The Woman King*, who led the *Agojie* to liberate Dahomey from the oppressive forces that held them bound for 90 years.

Arising from the above, leadership is a common right of every citizen but the style employed is a major factor in achieving goals. Since both genders have tractable successes (though not without failed instances), it is necessary to interrogate the relationship between both factors alongside the role of leadership style in attaining a positive impactful outcome (Obasi, 2023). Hence, this study undertakes an exploration of leadership styles and qualities of governance by men and women to know if gender differences have impact on leadership outcomes (Obasi, 2023).

Although some previous studies (Alechenu, 2013; Asaju et al., 2014) focused on poor leadership or leadership crisis in Nigeria, this study focuses on gender and leadership styles influence on performance. Also, unlike other studies, the issue was approached from various angles including political, academic, religious and traditional leaders' perspectives as well as the followers' standpoint. Moreover, in contrast to most of the previous studies that were carried out majorly by politically scientists, this study cuts across many fields, that is interdisciplinary, incorporating political communication, film and media studies as well as political science experts. Again, methodologically, the previous studies mainly used social survey as data collection tool, in contrast the present study employs questionnaire and (CDA).



Research Questions

1. To what extent does the leadership style of General Nanisca differ from that of King Ghezo?
2. To what extent does gender have impact on leadership outcomes?
3. How do the leadership qualities of women differ from those of men?

The Woman King, an Overview

Woman King is hereby summarized in relation to the context of the study. To do so effectively, Nanisca's prowess and some of the principles that made the Agojie's successful will be highlighted. *The Woman King*, a movie directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood, was released in 2022. This historical action-adventure movie is about 2 hours and 15 minutes. The movie is about the precolonial Kingdom of Dahomey in West Africa that was under the oppression of highly structured forces led by the powerful Oyo Empire and their allies, the Mahi people and the Portuguese slavers for 90 whole years. Unlike his brother the former king, Ghezo, the new and inexperienced king of Dahomey had decided to try something new, he had employed his elite force of women warriors, the *Agojie* led by General Nanisca to bring Dahomey out of her slavery (Obasi, 2023).

In one of the scenes in the movie, General Oba Ade, the "esteemed regard of the King of Oyo" as he calls himself arrogantly disrupted Dahomey's feast, notwithstanding the fact that Dahomey had regularly and promptly paid her tribute to them to avoid being raided. In short, Nansica, who later became the General of the formidable women warriors was once a victim in one of such raids in her community. As a captive of the Oyo Empire, she was continuously and brutally raped and even impregnated by Oba. But for her doggedness especially in the face of oppression, she would not have escaped from their iron grip. It is pertinent to state here that the rape of Nanisca by Oba was beyond mere sexual defilement. It also translates to all forms of sabotage, intelligent and ambitious women undergo in the society all in the bid to keep them at the periphery politically and otherwise. Like Oba, some of those championing the oppression of women in the society are husbands, lovers, boyfriends, fathers, uncles, brothers, cousins and nephews to the women. Thus, like Dahomey which was regularly raided and was not even allowed to enjoy her festivals despite all the homage she paid to her oppressors, women folks have eagerly played along to the oppressive written and unwritten rules in the society (Obasi, 2023). But like Oba, the society continues to make unreasonable demands from the women and treat them as inferiors, as objects not good enough to occupy certain positions in the society. It was such inhumane treatment on Dahomey that propelled Nanisca into action (Obasi & Msughter, 2023).

The preparatory speech of Nanisca to the Agojie before the final battle with the Oyo warriors vividly brings out the essence of the situation of Dahomey. She said, "For 90 years, Dahomey has lived under the thumb of the Oyo...the ancestor weep for the pain the women feel. To match into battle with our slavers, we must rip the shackles of doubt from our minds and fight with courage. ...Fear not, face it head-on. Relentlessly, we will fight". This speech should be craved in gold tablets for all women and their allies on similar course. The *Agojie* were able to liberate Dahomey from slavery because of some principles. For want of space, only three of such principles will be highlighted namely, unity, sacrifice and rigorous training.



The principle of unity can best be seen in the membership structure and the operation of the *Agojie*. Membership into the military group was open to all women in Dahomey and beyond who were fed up with the oppressive structures that held Dahomey bound as well as all women rejected by their families and the society on account of their standing up against oppressive patriarchal forces in the society. Even women wars-captives from the neighbouring kingdoms were admitted into the group. Without any tribal, religious and similar sentiments, the women soldiers fought together, one case at a time without dissipating their energies unnecessarily. This fact was well captured in one of their war chants, “Blood of our sisters, make us invincible. You live for me and I for you...”. Moreover, Nanisca had said to Mawi after the unplanned battle with General Ade at Ouidah, “We are Agojie, we do not act alone, we move together with one purpose. Alone you are weak. Alone, you are killed or worse captured...A captured *Agojie* is a slave used by men, left to rot”. The need for unity in the nation especially among all in this noble task of women emancipation cannot be emphasized. For, as the saying, “any house divided against itself cannot stand”.

Another unique principle that guided the operation of the *Agojie* is sacrifice. This was exemplified in their abstinence from marriage, child bearing and other feminine relationship with men. The reason for this sacrifice could be found in what Izogie said to Mawi when she was waving her after her final initiation test, “To be great, you must be focused. There should be no distraction...You are powerful, do not give your power away...Love makes you weak”. Besides the quest to conserve power, another reason for the abstinence was to avoid the after effect of the sins of men. This implies that the *Agojie* were not slave to sexual and other natural emotional ties that held other women in Dahomey bound. Similarly, all women on this noble course should borrow a leaf from them and do away with all form of irrelevant weaknesses.

The third principle behind the success of the *Agojie* was their rigorous and continuous training. Such training instilled in them discipline and other skills needed to get to the top. The discipline informed the choice of their dress code and abode. Just like in military, religious and similar setting where dressing is a serious means of identity, the *Agojie* do not dress like every other woman. Their appearance did not only make them to be more discipline and committed to their mission but it also made the society to accord them certain recognition and to take them more seriously. In a similar way, women on similar course can like the *Agojie* do away with all flamboyant wears and behaviours especially those that make women appear like objects of decoration.

Research Design

The study employed both the quantitative and qualitative research design. Due to the vast nature of the issue under study, a broad-spectrum analysis is needed. Creswell (2015), posits that extensive approach of research is commonly used when the topic or the population of interest under researched is broad. Thus, a broad premise is created for arriving at findings and conclusion.

The universe of the study was 93,469,008 eligible voters in the just concluded 2023 general elections in Nigeria (INEC, 2023). The reason for choosing eligible voters is because they have first-hand experience of choice making via voting during election base on competence, gender, party and other subjective factors.



Sample Size

The target population used was derived using the Taro Yamane's formula, thus;

$$n (\text{sample size}) = \frac{N}{1 + N (e^2)}$$

Where

N (population size) = 93,469,008; 1 = constant;

e (margin of error tolerance/level of significance) = 0.05 (95%)

$$n = \frac{93,469,008}{1 + 93,469,008 (0.05)^2} = \frac{93,469,008}{233,673} = 399.99$$

Sample size = 400

The research adopted multi-staged sampling technique. In order to have a high degree of accuracy and a better representation of the sample size, in the first stage of sampling, the study population was partitioned into six strata following the geopolitical zone division arrangement in the country. The six strata were,

Stratum 1- North Central Zone. This stratum is made up of the following seven States, Benue, Abuja(FCT), Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger and Plateau

Stratum 2- North East Zone. This stratum is made up of the following six States, Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe

Stratum 3- North West Zone. This stratum is made up of the following seven States, Kaduna, Katsina, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, Jigawa and Zamfara

Stratum 4- South East Zone. This stratum is made up of the following six States, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo and Anambra

Stratum 5 South South Zone. This stratum is made up of the following six States, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Calabar, Delta, Edo and Rivers,

Stratum 6- South West Zone. This stratum is made up of the following six States, Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo

In the second stage of sampling, homogenous and snowball sampling techniques were used to select high-position leaders in politics, academics, religious and traditional institution for questionnaire. The sampling was made to reflect the variation in ethnicity and religion-across the 6 geopolitical zones in the country.

In the third stage of sampling, using homogenous and snowball sampling techniques, followers from various profession across the 6 geopolitical zones were selected for questionnaire. In the fourth stage of sampling, purposive sampling was used to select the movie titled, *The Woman King* for the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The movie was chosen because the story of Dahomey's liberation from oppressive powerful forces that held her bound for 90 years by the *Agojie*, a team of women warriors is similar to that of women in the nation.

Questionnaire

This was one of the tools used in gathering data in this study. The Likert-type questionnaire was used to gather the views, perception of larger number of people on the subject matter. The Google link of the questionnaire was sent to the WhatsApp groups of the 300 or 400 university undergraduates in the Departments of Mass Communication, Mechanical



Engineering, Medicine, Psychology, Public Administration and International Relations in each of the 6 geopolitical zones. The universities were: University of Abuja and University of Jos (Stratum 1); University of Maiduguri and Federal University of Kashere, (Stratum 2); Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Kaduna State University (KASU) (Stratum 3); Federal University of Technology (FUTO) and Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka (Stratum 4); University of Uyo and Rivers State University of Science and Technology (Stratum 5); Babcock University, Ogun and Redeemer University (Stratum 6). The questionnaire was equally sent to either the national or regional WhatsApp pages of some professional organisations including Media practitioners, Lecturers at National Open University, Federation of Mining Host Communities, EFCC, Legal Practitioners and Medical Doctors. The Google form link was deactivated when the required responses based on sample size was reached.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

This was the most important instrument in the study. It was used in the analysis of the main text for the study, a movie called *The Woman King*. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a method used in careful analysis of a text on some sensitive issues including gender, racism, identity, politics and media content (Lodges & Nilep, 2007 cited in Aondover, 2020). Although, unsystematic in approach, this tool is used to describe, interpret and explain the relationship between the form and the function of text in order to bring out hidden power in texts and social processes and power relations.

Since the study explored the ideal leadership style and qualities of Nanisca, the Woman King for leaders in the contemporary Nigerian society to imitate, the leadership style and qualities of Nansica was x-rayed especially in relation to those of King Ghezo, the incumbent king in the movie. For the leadership styles, the analysis was based on the four types of leadership styles already established by scholars (Adebogun, Ogbonna & Nnabuihe, 2017; Naidu, 2011; Asbari, Purwanto, et al., 2020; Bernarto et al., 2019, 2020; Prameswari et al., 2020a; Purwanto, Asbari, & Hadi, 2020b; Kusumaningsih et al., 2020) namely, autocratic, democratic, laissez-Faire and transformative. While for the leader qualities, some of the peculiar attributes and actions of Nanisca in the movie will be critically reviewed.

Data Analysis and Findings

The data are presented according to the objectives formulated for the study.

Demography of respondents

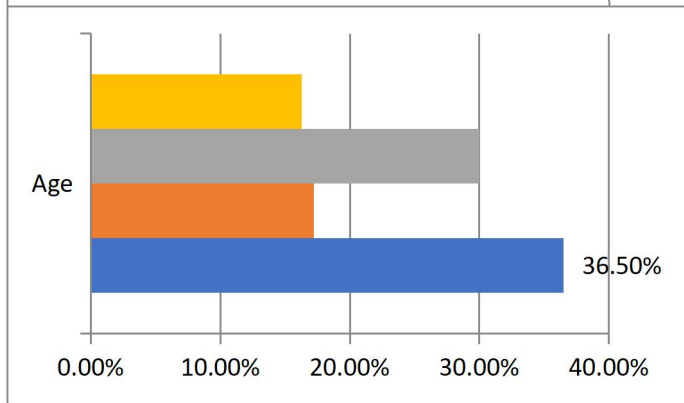
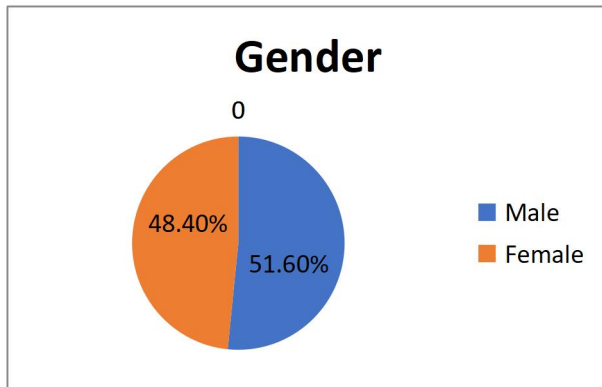


Figure 1: Gender of Respondents

Figure 2: Age of Respondents

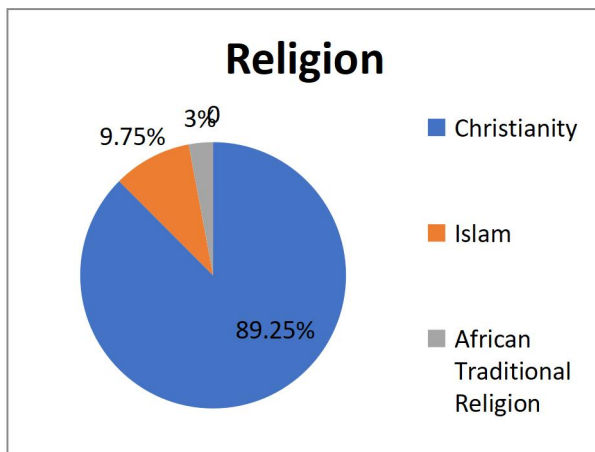


Figure 3: Religion of Respondents

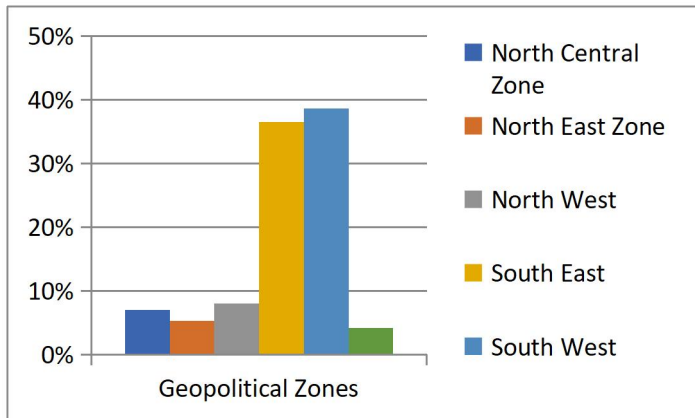


Figure 4: Location of Respondents

The demography of the respondents was based on gender, age, location and religion. Out of the 400 subjects, Figure 1 reveal that 48.4% (194) were females, 51.6% (206) were males. For the age distribution (Figure 2), 36.5% (146) were between 18-29 years; 17.2% (69) between 30-39 years; 30% (120), between 40-49 years and 16.3% (64) between 50 years and above. For religion (Figure 3), Christianity had 89.25% (357), Islam 9.75% (39) and African Traditional Religion 3% (12). While for the location (Figure 4), North Central Zone had 7% (28), North East Zone 5.3% (21), North West 8%(8), South East 36.5% (146), South West 38.7% (155) and South South Zone 4.2% (17)

Questionnaire

Section A: The extent the leadership styles of women differ from that of men. There were five items in this section. These questions were designed with the aim to investigate the differences between the leadership style of women and that of men.

Table 1: Differences between the leadership styles of women and that of men

S/N	Description	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Leader style is not based on gender	72%	25.8%	1.1%	1.1%
2.	Men leaders are more autocratic than the women leaders	17.2%	28.6%	47.3%	7.5%
3.	Women leaders are more democratic than the men leaders	21.1%	36.6%	36.6%	6.5%
4.	Men leaders are more laissez-faire than the women leaders	17.2%	40%	35.5%	6.5%
5.	Women leaders are more transformative than the men leaders	19.4%	36.6%	38.7%	5.3%

Source: (Field Survey, 2023)

Data in table 1 show that over 95% of the respondents agreed that leadership style is not based on gender, while less than 3% of them disagreed to it. Results in the table further reveal that about 47.2% of the respondents agreed that men are more autocratic than women while about 54% disagreed to it. Based on the data, less than 50% of the respondents think women leaders are more controlling, rigid and domineering than men. Data in the same table also indicate that over 57% of the respondents agreed that women leaders are more democratic



than men ones. In essence, women leaders are more collaborative, interactive and intuitive than their men counterparts. Results in the data equally show that over 57% of the respondents agreed that men leaders are more laissez-faire in decision making, management of funds, supervision of duties and other matters under them than the women leaders. Lastly, figures in the table also reveal that about 55% of the respondents agreed that women leaders are more transformative than the men ones.

Section B: The extent gender has impact on leadership outcomes.

There were five items in this section. These questions were designed with the aim to know if women were better leaders than men and vice versa.

Table 2: Impact of gender on leadership outcomes

S/N	Description	SA	A	D	SD
1.	The performance of a leader is not based on gender but on personality of the individual	68.8%	30.1%	2.2%	0%
2.	Women leaders tend to perform better than the men leaders	21.5%	35.5%	37.6%	6.5%
3.	Women leaders are more focused than the men leaders	31.2%	46.2%	4.5%	1.1%
4.	Due to their ego, men leaders can be negatively influenced by crowd effect	20.4%	48.4%	30.1%	1.1%
5	Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the former President of Liberia said, African women are critical problem solvers in the 21st century, do you agree with her?	31.2%	58.1%	10.8%	10%

Source: (Field Survey, 2023)

From the data in Table 3 above, it can be deduced that about 98% of the respondents agreed that performance of a leader is not based on gender but on personality of the individual while less than 2% disagreed on that. Figures in the table also indicate that about 57% of the respondents agreed that women are better leaders than the men. Data in the table equally show that over 90% of the respondents agreed that women leaders are more focused than the men ones. In other words, women tend to pay close attention to details of matters under them than men. Results in the table also reveal that over 65% of the respondents agreed that men leaders can be negatively influenced by crowd effect due to their ego. This implies that men leaders who are surrounded by corrupt associates can be led astray by them. Data in the table also indicate that about 80% of the respondents agreed that African women are critical problem solvers in the 21st century.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The following themes which emerged after the critical review of the different stages in the life of Nanisca in the movie were used in the critique of her leadership styles and qualities; for emphasis, these were contrasted with those of King Ghezo.

Leadership styles: Nanisca versus King Ghezo



Autocratic leadership style: In the movie, Nanisca and King Ghezo both exhibited this style of leadership. For instance, when King Ghezo sensed danger after the *Agojie*'s bloody but victorious encounter with Oyo military troupes, he ordered Nanisca (without consulting his cabinet) not to go back to rescue the captured *Agojie*. Likewise, Nanisca on her own part disobeyed him and sneaked out of the palace even without officially informing her Generals except Amanze, her bossom friend. This caused the *Agojie* to also disobey the King and go after her. King Ghezo could be said to represent all male figure heads in the life of women including husband, lover, father, friends, uncle and patriarchal structure in the society that sometimes try to dissuade them in one way or the other from embarking on some noble tasks outside the confinement of their home.

Democratic leadership style: Still in the movie, Nanisca and King Ghezo both exhibited this style of leadership. King Ghezo regularly held executive council meeting where Nanisca and other high-level positions leaders in Dahomey attended. In such meetings, decision making, strategic planning and execution as well as execution of administrative, legislative and judiciary matters of Dahomey were carried out. Similarly, as the general of *Agojie* military troupe, Nanisca also met with her top-ranking officers including Amanze and Izogie to plan the progress of the group. For instance, the decision to oppose General Oba Ade who had requested that 40 *Agojie* be brought to Ouidah as peace offering to the Oyo Empire was undertaken by Nanisca and her Generals.

Laissez-Faire leadership style: Both Nanisca and King Ghezo were laissez-faire to varying degrees. For instance, beclouded by his love for his favourite wife, Queen Ashante, King Ghezo allowed her to attend top executive council meetings where very serious and crucial issues about Dahomey were discussed. Expectantly, she carelessly divulged some classified information even to the foes of the kingdom. Besides, the King was always in the habit of taking advises from Ashante. A typical example was when she advised him not to cancel the ceremony for the coronation of Nanisca as the Woman King because it will make him appear weak before his subjects. Knowing full well that she was scheming to collect the title that was far above her, the King, out of pride, took her advice and went ahead with the function. But for the return of General Nanisca after her thunderous victory over General Ade of Oyo Empire and the all oppressive forces, Ashante's reign as Woman King would have been very catastrophic for Dahomey.

In the same manner, blinded by her hatred for General Oba, Nanisca had engaged him in an unplanned battle when the *Agojie* had decided to escape after presenting him with the heads of murdered Oyo soldiers they captured in their last reappraisal attack. But for the intervention of Mawi, who had stayed back, Nanisca would have been killed. Again, in another instance, driven by her motherly compassion for her daughter, Mawi and one of her favourite Generals, Igozie, Nanisca had disobeyed royal in search of them with no military backups.

Transformative leadership style: Nanisca was more transformative than King Ghezo. King Ghezo lived for the present because he was scared of losing his position and kingdom completely to the Oyo Empire. This fear was partly projected into him by his wife, Asante and some members of his cabinet members. For instance, when Nanisca brought up the issue of diversifying their economy through palm oil produce during one of their meetings, he



preferred to listen to the discouraging voices of his wife and others who told him that too much change is dangerous.

On the contrary, Nanisca knew that with consistent efforts, the Oyo Empire and other oppressive forces that held Dahomey bound for 90 years could be overthrown. Again, she also saw beyond the little profits they made from the sale of their citizens as slaves to the Oyos and other illegal trade. She had said to the King, "... let us not be an empire who sells its people. Let us be an empire who loves its people".

Some of the leadership qualities of Nanisca that earned her the prestigious title of Woman King include:

Consistency: In the opening scene of the movie, the *Agojie*, a formidable women army launched their first attack against the Oyo Empire's army, signifying patriarchal oppressive forces in the society. The aim of the attack was to release captured *Agojie* prisoners and other prisoners as well. As the movie progressed, General Nanisca continuously led the *Agojie* to launch similar attacks until all oppressive forces that held Dahomey bond were pulled down.

Focus: Nanisca was very focused. That is why she refused to be distracted by anything or anyone including the very provocative Queen Ashante. She refrained from indulging in any useless confrontations or fights with her because she knew who the real enemies were. So, she channeled all her energy into bringing them down. Like Nanisca, all on this course should know the real enemy, the real oppressive forces in the society and face them squarely.

Tactful: When General Oba Ade of Oyo kingdom disrupted Dahomey's celebration and demanded that 40 Agojie be brought to Ouidah as peace offering, Nanisca pretended to go ahead with his plan but had other plans.

Bold: General Nanisca, the leader of *Agojie* military troop was once captured and repeatedly raped as a young soldier by the General Oba, the same powerful General she courageously and repeatedly fought until she brought him down. No wonder Nanisca had said to the stubborn Mawi, "... To be a warrior, you must kill your tears".

Balance, equilibrium: Izogie to Mawi, "the society needs to believe in twin god-Mawu and Lisa, woman and man". The universe is still intact because it operates on this principle of equilibrium between dual forces-day and night, up and down, left and right, yang and yin. Dahomey, Nanisca's nation was able to break loss off from the iron grab of Oyo Empire because she adhered to this principle. All nations that choose to ignore this rule including Nigeria may never rise.

Clever: Nanisca was able to see through the lies of Asante, the highly ambitious wife of King Ghezo. For instance when Asante said to her, "...we should work together to serve our king, to make him more powerful". In reply, Nanisca said to her, "It's you who want to be powerful, to stay safe and rich in your fine palace".

Humility: As the saying goes, when pride goes what follows next is failure. Nanisca cautioned Mawi, whose victory as the best at the final test got into her head saying, "It is not enough to be the best. Your arrogance and stupidity will get you caught"



Foresight: During King Ghezo's inspection of palm plantation and mill, Nanisca said to him, "Vision is seeing what others do not...". In another scene, she had told to the King, "if you want to hold a people in chain, convince them they are meant to be bound. So directly or indirectly, you join them in becoming their own oppressor...A warrior knows the power of the mind...". Like Nanisca, good leaders are visionary, they see beyond the physical things.

Spiritual consciousness: Nanisca was not a fan of Lengba, the god of Dahomey or any other spiritual being. Yet she was not blind spiritually because she encountered Lengba in her dreams intermittently. That explains why she accepted the advice of Amenza to offer sacrifice to Lengba. Nanisca prayer at Lengba's altar before going to Ouidah for battle was not in vain because she got the supernatural assistance she needed to confront the mighty forces at war with them. The battle against the women is both physical and spiritual. The battle to recognize and restore women's dignity at all levels in the society is also a battle to restore equilibrium in nature. Just like Nanisca, to succeed, all on this course need the assistance of the Supernatural beings.

Discussion

Research Question 1: To what extent does the leadership style of *Nanisca* differ from that of King Ghezo? In other words, are there differences between the leadership style of women and that of men. Data in Table 1 indicated that over 95% of the respondents disagreed gender can have impact on leadership style, but some previous studies (Costa, 2001; Stake & Eisele, 2010; Nostro, Muller, Reid & Eickhoff, 2016; Siam, 2018; Greenberg & Muir, 2022) disclose that gender is part of personality. For instance, Nostro, Muller, Reid & Eickhoff (2016) revealed that gender can influence brain structure and operations, and in turn personality and other psychological functions in the body.

Granted that some factors such as social context, family background could interfere with some observed differences between both genders, physiological differences between both genders can influence personality and behavior; this can also be a decisive factor in the choice of leadership styles by leaders in both genders. No wonder evidence from CDA indicated that Nanisca, the Woman King exhibited to a reasonable extent leadership styles that were different from that of King Ghezo. For instance, she was more democratic and transformative than him. This fact coincidence with data in Table 2 that showed that 57% of the respondents' agreed women leaders were more democratic while about 56% agreed they were also more transformative than men leaders. Studies (Eneanya, 2015; Adebogun, Ogbonna & Nnabuihe, 2017) disclose that leaders with transformative style know when and how to integrate other leadership styles in order to get the desired results. This explains why data in Table 3 that indicated that over 50% of the respondents agreed that women leaders are also autocratic is not misleading.

Research Question 2: To what extent does gender have impact on leadership outcomes? In essence, are women better leaders than men or vice versa. Data in Table 2 indicate that 57% of the respondents agreed that women were better leaders than men. The reason for this position was revealed in Table 2 where 50% said that men leaders were more laissez-faire in decision making, management of funds, supervision of duties and other matters under them than the women folds.



Similarly, 75% of the respondents said that women leaders were more dedicated and compassionate than men with Table 2 showing 89% of the respondents agreeing that African women were critical problem solvers in the 21st century. This fact was further confirmed by evidence in CDA, where Nanisca led the *Agojie* women warriors to liberate Dahomey from 90 years of bondage. As revealed in the literature (Bortolot, nd; Cengage, nd), most ethnic groups in Africa have famous great women leaders who played similar unique roles as Nanisca in their liberation. This may explain why Ellen Sirleaf described African women as critical problem solvers.

Research Question 3: How do the leadership qualities of women differ from that of men? Evidence from CDA showed that Nanisca displayed extraordinary leadership qualities not usually associated with women such as boldness, focus, foresight, tactfulness amongst others.

Conclusion

The study found that gender has impact on leadership styles and outcomes because it can influence the structure and operation of the brain and, by extension, personality and other psychological functions of the human person. Granted that some factors such as social context, family background could interfere with some observed differences between both genders, physiological differences between both genders can greatly influence personality and in turn, the choice of leadership styles by leaders in both genders. Despite this, the emphasis should not be on whether gender has impact on leadership styles because no leadership style is totally bad that cannot be effectively used for the desired end. Rather, the focus should be on the ability of a leader to switch to any leadership style or integrate more than one style in order to achieve the desired collective goals. This is what the transformative leadership style is all about and only visionary leaders with the right leadership qualities can effectively and efficiently employ the relevant leadership styles to achieve the desired leadership outcomes. The study equally discovered that, although some qualities can be rightly ascribed to either of both genders as a group, lots of variations occur among individuals of both genders at group level due to some factors. This explains why Nanisca and some women leaders could exhibit unique leadership qualities not naturally associated with women or vice versa. It equally explains why the success of most homes rests on the shoulder of the women.

Implications

The findings on impact of gender on leadership style have huge implications for political actors, king makers, policy makers and other leaders alongside their followers. For just as in most families, men and women successfully pilot their affairs in a complementary manner and are not at variance except in some cases. Rather, where one is absent, huge negative effects usually occur in the home due to the vacuum, imbalance or disequilibrium caused by such absence. Similar scenarios occur in the social settings when women are restricted from occupying certain leadership positions. One may rightly say that some of the political woes besieging the nation are as a result of this fact.

Furthermore, the findings have lot of implications for policy makers, state and non-state political actors, women liberation groups and their allies. For policy makers and political actors, they need to see beyond the physical configuration of women to her other unique



leadership qualities. Nobody should be disqualified on account of gender and other irrelevant classifications. For the women free fighters or advocates, they need to believe in themselves. There is no human society that did not or still have patriarchal leadership gender-exclusivity and similar challenges to varying degree. The main challenge therefore is not the presence of the gender structural barriers but commitment in tackling these barriers. It is one thing for one to be in chain and another for the person to believe they are in chain. As Nanisca noted, if a people are or not in bondage and they are led to believe that they are in bondage, they will end up being their own oppressors. Women need to have the right mind set as this effect their body language in this regard.

As well, the findings imply that in political and other social settings, individuals should look out for candidates with relevant leadership qualities, regardless of their genders, who can take their groups to greater heights.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. Deliberate policy driven and monitored framework for ensuring actual implementation of affirmative action.
2. Serious commitment of gender groups and their allies in tackling the barriers to gender balanced leadership structure. Such groups should equally engage more male allies.
3. Introduce gender rotational leadership system to encourage corporate gender diversity especially for public offices.
4. Empower women to actively participate in politics and similar leadership activities.
5. Raise awareness on gender biases through education, enlightenment, campaigns and initiatives to challenge societal stereotypes and biases against women in leadership roles.
6. Strengthen and promote women's networks and organizations that focus on leadership development and advocacy for gender equality.

Declaration Statements

There is no competing conflict, and financial interests that influence this study as declared by the authors.

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Data Availability Statement (DAS)

This study used Critical Discourse Analysis and Survey method as the primary source of data to generate the result. The findings are available within the study.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

In compliance with ethical standards, there is human participation involved in this study, and institutional review board approved the research to be conducted based on the willingness of the respondents, and consent for human participants was granted.

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