

Idealized Influence and the Growth of Intra-Regional Trade in the East African Community

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Abstract

The study sought to investigate the influence of idealized influence of the Council of Ministers on the perceived growth of Intra-Regional Trade in the East African Community (EAC). The research question highlighted in this paper therefore is: To what extent does idealized influence of the Council Members influence the growth of Intra-Regional Trade in the EAC? The study adopted positivism research philosophy and explanatory sequential mixed design and was anchored on the transformational leadership theory. The target population comprised 205 Senior Trade Officers and Senior technical officers at the EAC headquarters. A sample size of 152 was drawn using random sampling technique. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire containing open and closed ended questions, while interview guide was used for the technical officers. Data collected was coded, cleaned and analysed using SPSS version 24 to obtain descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that idealized influence significantly predicted the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC, $R^2 = 0.162$, $F(1, 121) = 23.452$, $p < .05$; $\beta = .364$, $t(9.197) = 4.843$, $p < .05$. The null hypothesis was rejected. The findings showed that increased idealized influence will have a positive effect on the growth of intra-regional trade. The study concluded that to enhance the growth of intra-regional trade, the council should be aware that idealized influence behavior enhances the growth of intra-regional trade. The study recommends further research on the moderating effect of national culture on the influence of idealized influence on the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Idealized Influence, Intra-Regional Trade

Introduction

The concept of leadership has been explained by many scholars in different theories with a common view of it being the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal (Cote, 2017). Transformational leadership inspires trust by empowering followers thus increasing performance, leading to the attainment of organizational growth objectives (Rita et al., 2018). Idealized influence, according to Orabi (2016) refers to leader actions that make group values and goals salient. The leader promotes cooperation and teamwork by instilling in followers a desire to work towards common goals (Gyanchandani, 2017). The leader does this by articulating a group vision and fostering acceptance of group goals. Bono and Judge (2018) note that transformational leaders demonstrate high ethical norms and become role models to their subordinates. In this element of transformational leadership, the leaders behave in ways that lead to them being role models for their followers. The leader,

therefore, turns out to be admired, respected and trusted by the followers who in turn want to emulate the leader (Ghasabeh & Provitera, 2017).

According to the World Trade Organization (WTO) (2018), growth of trade in economic integration plays an important role in enhancing shared prosperity in regional economic blocs. At the global level, transformational minded leaders in North America, Europe, Asia and Africa, have been associated with the formation and growth of regional integration bodies such as the EU, NAFTA, ASEAN and AU (Buthelezi, 2006). As a result of persistent efforts of transformational leaders, the European Unions' (EU) Intra-Regional Trade accounts for 69% of total exports and is expected to be sustainable and growing (UNCTAD, 2018b). The other prominent regional integration body in the global arena is the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The combined GDP of ASEAN countries makes it the 7th largest economy in the world worth over \$2.6 trillion. Intra-Regional Trade within the ASEAN region stands at 59% of exports with a strong forecast of growth in the coming years as a result of the deepening integration process (UNCTAD, 2018b). Hildenbrand et al. (2018) attribute the formation of this successful body to the transformational thinking leadership of the member states that form it.

In Africa, leaders like Nelson Mandela, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Thomas Sankara and Jomo Kenyatta, are believed to be the early transformationists who championed for free trade in Africa (Elhiraika et al., 2016). They strived very hard to not only free Africa from colonialism, but to also create economic corporations that allowed the citizens of the continent to interact and to do trade with the aim of improving their social wellbeing (Deghetto et al., 2016).

Initially born from the progressive ideas of founding leaders of the three East African Countries; Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, the EAC is a regional economic organization currently consisting of six member countries namely; Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of South Sudan (EAC, 2017b). The core objective of the community is to foster the growth of trade between the member countries and to improve the social wellbeing of its citizens (Treaty, 2000). The heads of states of the member countries form the Summit which is the most superior decision-making organ of the community (Mshomba, 2017). However, under the Treaty, the Summit has delegated the policy making and implementation powers to the EAC council of ministers which therefore effectively oversees the management of affairs in the community (EAC, 2017b). Effectively therefore, the idealized influence of the council is critical to the success of the EAC (Rahman et al., 2019).

In the context of Intra-Regional Trade, the application of idealized influence behaviors by council members of the EAC demonstrates their strength of delivery, which is an important determinant of a leader's charisma and effectiveness (Schneider, 2017). To be able to influence senior trade officers of the EAC partner states, the council members as the leaders must articulate a clear, compelling vision of what can be attained by each organ and institution and the entire organization, providing a clear purpose, goals, values and norms that give meaning to work (Elhiraika et al., 2016). In this research, idealized influence of the council members was analyzed in relation to the growth of Intra-Regional trade in the East African Community (EAC) as perceived by the senior trade officers in the partner states. Berberoglu (2018) explains that while many organizations measure growth as a measure of performance by way of

evaluating numerical information, in many cases growth is not necessary based on objective data thus perceived opinions of informed persons works best.

The EAC region is not an exception to the continental problem in Africa of underperformance in intra-regional trade. While its' intra-regional trade growth target remains 25%, the EAC is struggling to sustain the current 11.4% growth rate (EAC, 2018). Increased intra-regional trade is critical as it means positive growth for the economies of the partner states of the region, thus the improvement of the living standards of their citizens (Elhiraika et al., 2016). Mshomba (2017) is therefore of the view that there is need for an in-depth study to understand the root cause of the underperformance of the EAC region in respect to its set growth targets. A number of studies, including Santos et al. (2018), Mshomba (2017) and Elhiraika et al. (2016) are in agreement that the process of regional integration is a transformational process from the 'national' to the 'regional.' Their research found that while a number of attempts have been made to explain the cause of the under performance of the EAC, the role of leadership in enhancing growth of intra-regional trade has not been studied adequately. Despite this fact, the number of studies on the influence of idealized influence of leaders on the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC remain limited.

This research therefore aims to fill the knowledge and policy gap by inquiring into the relationship between the idealized influence of the Council of Ministers of the EAC and the growth of intra-regional trade as perceived by the senior trade officers in the partner states whose job it is to implement the growth of trade in the region. Abdelsalam (2015) only addressed transformational leadership and its impact on governance and development in African nations, without necessarily measuring the dimensions of transformational leadership such as idealized influence. Umulisa (2020) states that little or no studies which look at the relationship between idealized influence of transformational leadership style and the growth of Intra-EAC trade has been done and that there is a great need to understand this relationship in the EAC context. This study therefore yields a knowledge gap, itsought to fill the knowledge and contextual gaps by studying the influence of idealized influence behavior of the Council of Ministers on the growth of Intra-Regional Trade in EAC.

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

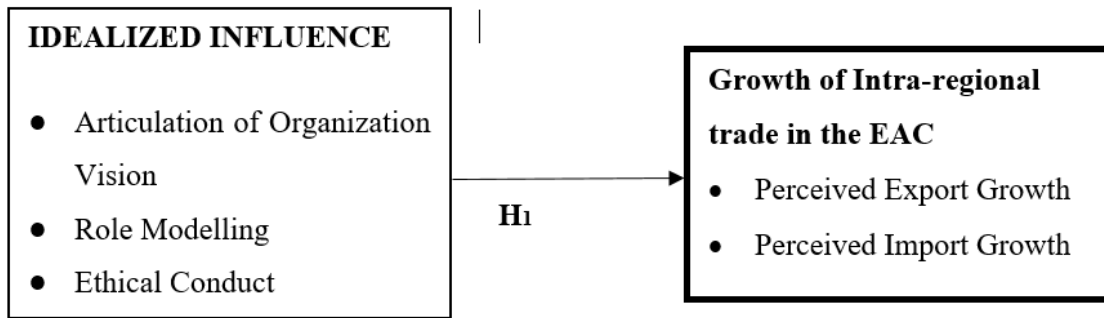
The independent variable for this study is idealized influence and the study is anchored on the transformational leadership theory developed by Burns (1978). Idealized influence or personal charisma emerges when transformational leaders behave in desirable ways that elevate them to be role models for their followers (Arif, 2018). According to Rathnaraj and Vimala (2018), in order to be effective as a role model, leaders must be respected and trusted. In providing idealized influence, followers are therefore positively influenced by the leader through admiration, trust and respect for him or her to pursue the organization's vision. Whenever the top leadership of the organization demonstrates idealized influence, it generates follower trust, esteem and confidence (Uprety, 2016). The leader also encourages ethical practices such as communicating ethical standards, encouraging ethical conduct, modeling ethical behavior and opposing unethical conduct. Application of behaviors of idealized influence have been linked to followers' performance improvement (Rathnaraj & Vimala, 2018).

The dependent variable in this study is the growth of Intra-Regional Trade in the EAC examined through exports and imports performance. Regional integration widens the market, that would lead to thriving small and large scale private sector businesses that can alleviate poverty by contributing to economic growth, job creation and people’s incomes (World Bank, 2018). In this study, the growth of Intra-Regional trade was measured in terms of the perceived growth of financial value of trade in the form Intra-EAC imports and exports in the EAC.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable



Empirical Review: Idealized Influence and the Growth of Intra-Regional Trade

Idealized influence involves articulating organization vision, role of modeling and demonstration of high ethical standards by the leader which inturn positively influences organizational growth (Gordon,2017). A vision is a sensible, sound, appealing future, toward which you ought to point, that in essential ways is better, more fruitful, or more alluring than the status quo (Boamah et al., 2018). In a study on transformational leadership, Rita et al. (2018), determined qualitatively the benefits of a shared vision as one essential feature of leadership behavior among leaders at the district Secretariat of Paupa. Their findings revealed that having a vision and properly communicating it helped leaders and their teams to have relentless focus on the mutual objective of their institutions. Arif (2018) undertook a study to investigate the impact of transformational leadership on organizational performance and found among other things that the relationships between vision communication and organizational growth and performance to be strongly related. The Data collected from 200 CEOs and employees were tested in the study.

The Congressional Research Service (2019), has in a study on China attributed the success of the Chinese economy to the good leadership policies that inspired growth and prosperity. The research explains that it is the change of leadership approach about 40 years ago from being very isolated and inefficient, to more globally open thus being a role model that inspired the growth of the Chinese economy. This has made China to be the world’s fastest-growing economy, with real GDP growth averaging 9.5% through 2018, a rate described by the World Bank as being the fastest sustained growth by a major economy in history. The study concludes that putting the most admirable leader in that generation at the helm as president, clearly indicates the relationship between the growth of the Chinese economy and the leadership. Lo and Fu (2016) conducted a study in the USA to examine the effect of the relationship between leaders and their top management team on firm performance among 697 business in the information technology industry. The quantitative research adopted a multiple regression

analysis and fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) to answer the study questions and to address the hypotheses. The findings of the study established a strong relationship between the role modeling of the leaders on the top management, employees and ultimately affecting organizational performance such as growth sustainability and internationalization. Basing their study on the upper echelons theory of leadership, the study concludes that good role modeling of the leadership is critical to the performance and growth of the organization. A study inquiring into the effect leadership traits and the growth of exports amongst 128 firms in Turkey was done by Acar (2016). The study was guided by the key objective of establishing whether survival of business in Turkey was increasingly dependent on their ability to exploit opportunities in foreign markets. The study used a hierarchical regression analysis to explore the data gathered. The findings of the study indicated that there existed a strong relationship between leadership influence and the growth of firm exports in Turkey. The recommendations of the study were that firms pay keen attention to the traits of leadership at the helm of the organization as this determines its performance and growth in international markets.

In Malaysia, Selim et al. (2019) investigated the connection between leadership and the growth of logistical services of Halal good manufacturers. This study was conducted through survey questionnaires on a total of 564 samples of managers of logistics services providers for halal manufacturing companies in Malaysia. The findings showed that ethical practices by managers of the logistical companies were positively associated with their growth business with the manufacturers of halal goods. In a study in Italy, Gallenti et al. (2016) undertook to investigate the relationship between ethical trade and the growth of coffee trade. The study also wanted to know if the resultant demands driven by ethical considerations, affected the growth volumes of coffee trade in Italy. The findings of this research showed that a significant number of consumers of coffee in Italy based their choice on organic coffee and were ready to even pay a higher premium for fair trade coffee. The study concluded that ethical consideration plays an important role in enhancing growth of trade for goods.

Methodology

This study adopted the Positivism research philosophy given its' provision that knowledge comes from experiences of people and can be gathered through observation and experiment (Rahi, 2017). The study adopted a descriptive correlational research design. The target population of this study constituted the 180 Senior Trade Officers in the EAC Partner States and 25 senior officers at the EAC headquarters. The study used stratified random sampling technique to determine its' sample. The Yamane (1967) formula was used to arrive at a sample size of 152 respondents which included a 10% correction margin. This study used structured online questionnaires with a 5-point Likert scale to gather original or primary data from Senior Trade Officers in the EAC partner states, while an interview guide was used to collect data from the Senior officers of the EAC to triangulate the information obtained from trade officers in the partner states. A pilot study involving 10% of the sample size was conducted, the study tested internal consistency of the research instrument by using Cronbach's Alpha (α) ranges from zero (0) denoting no internal reliability, to 1 denoting perfect internal reliability. The results showed that all the overall Cronbach's Alpha values for each section was greater than 0.7. Validity of the instruments was also tested with four respondents and input from the supervisors. Ethical consideration was also strictly upheld and the respondents' responses kept confidential. In the study, quantitative data was collected using an online self-administered questionnaire and an interview guide for the qualitative data. Descriptive and inferential data

analysis using multiple linear regression was conducted which included factor analysis, correlation analysis, chi-square test and diagnostics test. The model specification for this study was; $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$.

Results

The results and analysis of the data relating to the influence of idealized influence on the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC is presented. From the 138 questionnaires administered to trade officers in each partner state, 123 were successfully completed and returned. Similarly, in the case of interview schedule, all the respondents were conducted and responded.

Descriptive Statistics of the Influence of Idealized Influence of Council Members of the EAC

The descriptive statistics of the study on the influence of idealized influence on the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC is analyzed. The findings in Table 1 indicate very low variability on senior trade officer's views on how idealized influence of council members' influences on the perceived growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC. As presented in Table 1, the measured parameters on opinion of the senior trade officers on the three aspects on idealized influence indicate a low variability (M=4.2, SD=0.66).

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation for Idealized Influence

Idealized Influence	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Average Mean and Standard Deviation for the three statements.	123	4.2	0.66
The Council Members clearly articulate the vision of the EAC.	123	4.1870	.6817
The Council Members clearly act as role models in championing EAC interest.	123	4.1951	.6611
The Council Members demonstrate ethical conduct in managing the affairs of the EAC.	123	4.2846	.6340

Mean and Standard Deviation for Idealized Influence and the Growth of Intra-Regional Exports in the EAC

Table 2 presents the senior trade officers' view on extent of influence by the members of the council on the growth of intra-regional exports. The findings were, M=4.8, SD=0.68. This was an indication of a low variability.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation for Idealized Influence and the Growth of Intra-Regional Exports in the EAC

Exports			
Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Average Mean and Standard Deviation for the three statements	122	4.8	0.68
To what extent does the clear articulation of EAC vision by the Council Members influence the growth of Intra-Regional Exports?	122	4.5902	0.6894
To what extent does the Council Members' acting as role models in championing the EAC interest influence the growth of Exports?	123	4.5854	0.6886
To what extent does the ethical conduct of the Council Members influence the growth of Intra-Regional exports in the EAC?	123	4.6016	0.6864

Mean and Standard Deviation for Idealized Influence and the Growth of Intra-Regional Imports in the EAC

Measured parameters on the perceived growth of intra-regional imports are presented in Table 3. The results showed an average mean of $M=4.5$ and an average standard deviation of $SD=0.73$. This indicated a low variability.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation for Idealized Influence and the Growth of Intra-Regional Imports in the EAC

Imports			
Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Average Mean and Standard Deviation for the three statements	123	4.5	0.73
To what extent do you perceive the Vision Articulation by Members of the Council to influence the Intra-Regional Import in the EAC?	123	4.6260	.7399
To what extent does role modeling of the Council Members influence the growth of Intra-Regional Imports in the EAC?	123	4.5772	.7467
To what extent does the Ethical conduct of the Council of Members influence the growth of Intra-Regional Imports in the EAC?	123	4.0000	.7218

Factor Analysis; KMO and Bartlett's Test for Idealized Influence

From the analysis presented in Table 4, the KMO measure is 0.743 which lies in the acceptable range. The analysis also points to the strength of the significant relationship that exist between the variable and can be used to test the null hypothesis using the Bartlett's test of sphericity.

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett's Test for Idealized Influence

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.743
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	204.462
	Df	3
	Sig.	.000

Diagnostic Tests for Idealized Influence and growth of Intra-Regional Trade

This study endeavored to establish whether the assumptions for linear regression were adhered to for idealized influence behavior. These included; test for multicollinearity, tests for normality, linearity and heteroscedasticity. The results showed that all the assumptions were within normal range.

Correlation between Idealized Influence Behavior of the Council Members and the Growth of Intra-Regional Trade in EAC

The results of correlation analysis between idealized influence and the perceived growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC show that these variables were positively and significantly correlated at $r(123) = +1, p < 0.05$. These results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis between Idealized Influence and the Growth of Intra-Regional Trade in the EAC

Correlations		
		Idealized Influence
Idealized Influence	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123
Export	Pearson Correlation	.449
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	122
Import	Pearson Correlation	.462
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123

*Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level (2-tailed).

Chi-Square Test for Association between Idealized Influence Behavior of the Council Members and the Growth of Intra-Regional Export Trade in EAC

The findings for chi-square test for the association between idealized influence and growth of intra-regional exports in the EAC is as detailed in Table 6. The findings indicated that there was a strong association between the idealized influence of the council members and the growth of intra-regional exports $\chi^2(56, N=123) = 225.550, p < 0.05$.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test for Association between Idealized Influence Behavior of the Council Members and the Growth of Intra-Regional Export in EAC

Chi-Square Tests	Value
Pearson Chi-Square	225.550 ^a
Df	56
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.000
N of Valid Cases	123

a. 66 cells (91.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Chi-Square Test for Association between Idealized Influence Behavior of the Council Members and the Growth of Intra-Regional Import in EAC

The findings for chi-square test as detailed in Table 7, show that there was a strong association between the idealized influence of the council members and the growth of intra-regional Imports $\chi^2 (56, N=122) = 316.681, p < 0.05$.

Table 7: Chi-Square Test for Association between Idealized Influence Behavior of the Council Members and the Growth of Intra-Regional Import in EAC

Chi-Square Tests	Value
Pearson Chi-Square	316.681 ^a
Df	56
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.000
N of Valid Cases	122

a. 65 cells (90.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Regression Analysis Model Summary for Idealized Influence and Growth of Intra-Regional Trade

This result suggests that idealized influence contributes about 16% variance in the overall growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC when other factors are held constant. This implies that other factors not studied in this research account for the remaining 84%.

Table 8: Model Summary for Idealized Influence and the Growth of Intra-Regional Trade

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.403 ^a	.162	.155	.52986

a. Predictors: (Constant), Idealized influence

Regression ANOVA of Idealized Influence and the Growth of Intra-Regional Trade

F-test results in ANOVA, show that idealized influences showed that the relationship was strong and linear as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Regression ANOVA for Idealized Influence and the Growth of Intra-Regional Trade

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.584	1	6.584	23.452	.000
	Residual	33.971	121	.281		
	Total	40.555	122			

a. Dependent Variable: Intra-Regional Trade
b. Predictors: (Constant), Idealized influence

Regression Coefficients of Idealized Influence and Growth of Intra-Regional Trade

Coefficients tests show that there was a significant ($p < 0.05$) and positive relationship between the idealized influence and the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC. The study therefore suggested that, any improvement in the idealized influence of the council members, enhanced the growth of intra-regional imports in the EAC by a factor of 0.364.

Table 10: Regression Coefficients of Idealized Influence and the Growth of Intra-Regional Trade

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.957	0.322		9.197	.000
	Idealized influence	.364	0.075	0.403	4.843	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Intra-Regional Trade

Interview Results Relating Idealized Influence and Growth of Intra Regional Trade

The study deployed interview guide to obtain experts' feedback on the objectives of the study with regards to the influence of idealized influence of the council on the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC. From the interview guide, the findings point out to an agreement in the views of the experts that idealized influence of the council members positively affects the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC. The experts were in agreement that through articulation of vision, role modelling and acting ethically, council members positively influence the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from the correlational analysis conducted in this study showed that idealized influence behavior of the council members positively and significantly affects the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC. The study recommends that the council should consciously realize the effect of the behavior in the community and should demonstrate more of idealized influence in the future. The study has shown that vision articulation, role modelling and ethical conduct of the council members has a significant impact on the growth of intra-regional trade. The study recommends for further study to understand the influence of idealized influence of the summit members of the EAC on the growth of intra-regional trade.

Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that the chi-square test indicated a significantly strong relationship between idealized influence and growth of intra-regional trade (exports $\chi^2(56, N=123) = 225.550, p < 0.05$ and imports $\chi^2(56, N=122) = 316.681, p < 0.05$) thus giving a justification to reject the null hypothesis. Further analysis revealed coefficients results of $\beta = .298, t(11.309) = 4.578, p < .05$ indicating a value that was less than the critical p-value of 0.05, thus strongly predicting the relationship between idealized influence and the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC. Thus, this study concludes that council members of the EAC should include the use of idealized influence in their strategy as means to achieve growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC.

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