

AN EVALUATION OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN FINANCIAL FIRMS IN IRELAND

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I certify that the dissertation entitled: AN EVALUATION OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN FINANCIAL FIRMS IN IRELAND

submitted for the degree of: MSc in International Business Management is the result of the my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to Almighty God, my ultimate strength for the opportunity to do this Masters program and giving me the strength, wisdom and knowledge to complete my masters program in Griffith College successfully. I also dedicate this project to my supportive and loving mother, Mrs Adesanya.

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ABSTRACT

‘An Evaluation of leadership skills on organizational performance in financial firms in Ireland’

Seyi Adesanya

The objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of **leadership** on **organisational performance**, by critically accessing those leadership skills that make a leader successful from the employee perspective. The study focused on the financial sector in Ireland, because of its importance in contributing significantly to the Ireland economy, leadership in the sector is therefore paramount for the overall success of the sector. The study adopts the qualitative method of research which collects data from the conduct of interviews, seven (7) interviews were conducted with employees of several firms in the Irish financial sector. Analysis was done using the thematic process as provided by Braun and Clark (2006). From the analysis it was discovered that **leadership skills** that related to Interpersonal skills(Ability to motivate, interact and communicate) Expertise, and experience, Cognitive and strategic thinking skills were skills that made leaders successful, further a leaders ability to communicate required results and train staff to handle certain responsibilities themselves were essential for **employee productivity** as this skills stimulated employees to work more for the organisation. Also, leadership ability to provide non-material motivations and exemplary leadership was significant in keeping **employees loyal** to the organisation. The study thus discovered that leadership skills was essential for organisational performance, hence the study recommends that leaders should adequately take time to acquire and learn leadership skills as it will aid in enhancing **employee commitment** and the general success of their organisations.

Keywords: Leadership, Leadership skill, employee commitment, employee loyalty, employee productivity, organisational performance

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Overview

Leadership is often referred to as the ability to influence or inspire a group of people towards achieving a specific goal or objective. Most often than not people say leadership is the same as management, however, a difference exists between the two as while the latter deals with the ability to administer a group of people to achieve a particular goal, the former entails inspiring people so that they see the need to achieve the goal and work together to achieve it (Husko, 2006). There are various forms of leadership i.e. religious, political, social, and organizational leadership. For this study, the focus is going to be made on organizational leadership. This kind of leadership is the critical component of an organization as it brings both direct and indirect impacts on the employees and overall organization (Kalsoon, Khan and Zubair, 2018). According to Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, (2008), leadership aids in fostering an organizational culture that promotes knowledge sharing, employee retention, creating loyalty by both customers and employees to the organizations. In a business environment that is heavily characterized by competition, it is necessary to have good leaders that can drive transformation through concrete innovation and creativity, thus increasing the competitive advantage of organizations.

Organizations in the 21st century suffer significant challenges such as how to continuously meet consumer demands, proper methods of recruitment of professional staff, increase the revenue of organizations, ensuring harmony amongst the workforce, keeping staff motivated and engaged, etc. These challenges can significantly be solved when the right leader is a charge. When an organization lacks the proper type of leadership, the organization is bound to collapse, a typical example is the collapse of the giant energy industry-Enron, which due to the absence of quality leadership practices led to its collapse together with billions of investors' money and a crash in stock markets. Rank, Nelson, Allen et al (2009), noted that leadership at Enron continuously fooled regulators and stock market investors with fake holdings and fake accounting figures, leadership also lacked the necessary visionary and management skill to prevent the final collapse of the company.

To avoid repeating scenarios such as Enron, leaders must possess the right set of skills to make them successful. With the growing need for good leaders, it becomes evident that leaders play important role in organizational performance (Afshari, Shahhosseini, Kosaripoor et al, 2013).

The value of good leadership in an organization cannot be understated. Good leadership aids in the efficient and effective management of resources, driving employees towards better achievement, and ultimately enhance organization chances of succeeding and beating competitors. Leaders with good leadership skills are imperative in organizational success.

However, the skills that make for a successful leader is much debatable within the academic spheres; Ulrich, Zenger, Smallwood (2013), mention that leaders need a mix of performance as well as interpersonal skills ranging from drive and ambition, visionary, Huusko (2006), opines that leaders need skills that envision, energize, design and control staff and drive them towards achievement. He further notes that leadership skills need to be achievement orientated, empowering, rewarding, team building, positivism, and team building. From the foregoing, it is evident that there exists a plethora of skills that leaders must possess without a concrete division between leadership and managerial skills. Figure 1 shows a list of leadership skills.

Figure 1. Attributes of Leaders

Attributes of Leaders
Innovates principles
Charts the course or vision
Provides direction and counsel
Motivates and inspires
Develops environment for change
Focuses on people
Plan general goals
Empower people
Create a vision of the future
Define the group's culture
Focus on long-term results
Strategic orientation
Long-range view, vision
Focus on the horizon
Leader asks what and why
Leader challenges it

Source: Huuzko (2006).

Over the years, several researchers have debated and tried to reduce the influence of leadership and its impact on organizational performance, to such scholars leadership is not as important as the employees of an organization, however, more research has revealed that leadership is vital not only to human resource management but also to financial management, strategic decision making and the overall organizational outcomes (Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008).

Leadership is not just limited to the organization setting, but also the national life and the economy. Dixon and Hart, (2010), noted that leadership influences the growth and development of political structures, economic progression, and the quality of social life. The relevance of leadership to national life has further necessitated an amplified study of leadership with the intention of creating better leaders for societal purposes.

The importance of leadership has made it a subject of research in both formal and informal organizations. The qualities which leaders possess, their act of influencing individuals with a blend of different skills has attracted researchers to study what makes leaders carry much influence and legitimacy amongst followers.

Essentially, leaders are known for their capacity to carry others along, care for individuals, communicate perfectly, and drive commitment levels. Managers on the other hand are known for their ability to command, administer obedience, and also foster teamwork and cooperation (Li-an Ho, 2008). It, therefore, becomes clear that leaders and managers have certain similarities and differences, however, the case leaders need managerial skills and managers need leadership skills. The case, therefore, is what managerial and leadership skills must a leader possess to drive organizational performance?. Husko (2006), noted that both leaders and managers need to have sufficient personal attributes that justifies their matching authorities. A lack of such skills may result in the leader/manager being challenged by certain elements within the organization thus condescending his/her role to a figurehead. It thus follows that having good leadership and managerial skill is not only necessary for organizational performance but also legitimize one's authority and garner followers.

Organizational performance refers to the effectiveness and efficiency of a firm, organization, company or industry in meeting its goals and objectives (Noor, Mohamad and Abdullah, 2017), organizational performance measures the overall productivity in terms of its ability to mobilize both human and material resources to achieve its goals. The

organizational performance also measures the performance and attitude of staff and the profits of the organization (Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn, 2002).

Leadership is very essential for organizational performance, as leadership is the rudder that steers the organization towards the right path by taking proper decisions, drafting standard organizational performance, setting strong and feasible goals as well as creating workable strategies to achieve such goals (Li-an Ho, 2008), Ulrich, Zenger and Smallwood (2013), notes that leadership plays a significant role in organizational performance as without quality leadership the organization will not achieve its goals. For a leader to ensure his organization performs well, he must have the right skills to manage an organization.

Furthermore, in a contemporary business environment where issues like retrenchment, turnovers, outsourcing are becoming rampant, organizations need to develop standard frameworks that attract, develop, sustain, and retain quality talent. Since the organization success is largely influenced by the quality of its staff it is necessary to develop leadership that can effectively manage staff. Strong leadership is thus an indispensable factor in an organization.

In relation to the above, this study seeks to empirically evaluate the impacts of leadership skills on organisational performance of financial firms in Ireland. By explicitly researching on fundamental skills leaders require to be successful and how such skills have influenced organisational performance within financial firms in Ireland. The financial sector of Ireland is selected for this study as it is one of the vibrant firms in Ireland, contributing significantly to GDP and employment (Deloitte, 2020) furthermore, given the prime importance of the sector, leadership in the sector becomes important.

1.2. Statement of the Research Problem

According to Dixon and Hart (2010), research on leadership mainly takes a leadership centred approach and does not investigate what the staff of the organization think about successful leadership skills. While it is no doubt that leaders work within the organisational context, therefore in measuring the impacts of leadership on organisational performance, one must look at the different variables that make up organisational performance and leadership impacts on each of them, these variables include employee productivity, goal achievement and customer service (Dixon and Hart, 2010).

Essentially, therefore, a successful leader must possess a list of internal and external skills, Internal skills refer to a mindset that combines personal skills, attitudes that are formed by experience, while the external skills involves the perceptions of staff and consumers concerning the leaders. Research on the external skills of leaders is significantly lacking. Most studies focus on the internal skills of leaders which is insufficient to determine whether a leader is successful, also most research do not link skills of Leaders to organisational performance i.e. how the leader's skills able to drive employees, and harmonise resources towards the achievement of organisational goals. As such, there is a need for research that studies the link between leadership qualities and organisational performance.

The goal of this dissertation will be to investigate the skills that make leaders successful looking at external skills and also exploring the linkage between leadership skills and organisational performance, drawing primary evidence from financial firms in Ireland.

1.3. Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to empirically investigate skills that make leaders successful and how these skills impact significantly on organisational performance. This is driven by the need to investigate leadership skills and further make recommendations on what leadership skills needs to be improved on to ensure better performance of financial firms in Ireland.

1.4. Research Questions

The following are the research question;

- i. What are the effects of leadership skills on productivity amongst employees in Financial firms in Ireland?
- ii. How does leadership skills influence employee commitment towards organizational performance in Financial firms in Ireland?

1.5. Research Objectives

Scholars are divided on the set of skills that leaders must possess to be successful, while scholars as Ahmed (2005), mentions that leaders need a mix of performance as well as interpersonal skills ranging from drive and ambition, visionary, Edersheim (2007), opines that leaders need skills that envision, energise, design and control staff and drive them towards achievement. Boatright (2009), further notes that leadership skills need to be achievement orientated, empowering, rewarding, team building, positivism, and team building. This skill set is divided between managerial and leadership skills also most scholars rely on internal skills of leaders while neglecting external skills which involves the perception employees have about them. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the external skills leaders possess that makes them successful. Also, there is a need to discover if leaders can drive the team towards organisational performance by having leadership skills. Based on this, the overall objectives of the study will be to investigate the role of leadership skills on organisational performance using financial firms in Ireland as case studies. Specific objectives include;

- i. To critically investigate the skills that makes leaders successful in financial firms in Ireland
- ii. To empirically discover the leadership skill that is shown to be effective in enhancing productivity amongst employees of financial firms in Ireland
- iii. To investigate the relationship between leadership skills and goal attainment
- iv. To empirically investigate the influence of leadership skills on employee commitment

1.6. Justification/Rationale of the Study

This study is justified based on its empirical attempts to study the skills that make leaders successful, most scholars such as (Ahmed, 2005), Ertugrul and Krishnan (2011) and Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002), relied solely on theoretical explanations to describe skills that leaders must possess to be successful. This study will move a step ahead by studying leaders from different financial firms in Ireland to discover if there is a link between a theoretical set of skills and empirical evidence. Further, scholars as Boatright (2009) and Edersheim (2007), discussed the internal skills of leaders which

makes them successful while neglecting the external skills. This study will examine empirically to discover the external skills that are necessary for success.

Also, as Hollensen (2015), notes the ultimate goal and test of every leader is to drive organisations towards achievement of goals, profits, and performance. This study will thus investigate if leadership skills are necessary to achieve organisational performance.

1.7. Significance of the Study

With the popular demand placed on leadership, it is worthy to note that no organisation can succeed without vibrant and purposeful leadership and no leader can succeed without a set of skills which can actively be used to inspire employees, drive commitment levels, and effectively engage them. Furthermore, the impact of leadership is felt via organisational performance, when an organisation is not successful it can be termed as a failure in leadership. This study will thus be significant in its empirical findings which will contribute practically to the business environment, in terms of discovering skills that leaders need for success and also recommending ways by which these leadership skills can be adopted by leaders or potential leaders. The study will thus be available to business owners, the board of directors, managers, and leaders to study and improve on leadership and managerial skills for better organisational performance.

The study will also be relevant to the academia, as it will be a source of reliable information on leadership skills and organisational performance, which can serve as a reference for future research on the topic. Also, the research will enhance knowledge building and facilitate learning within the spheres of leadership studies and course works.

1.8. Scope and Context of the Study

The research revolves around leadership and organisational performance, which essentially is a part of human resource management, hence popular terms and concepts adopted for the research will be within the field. The geographical scope of the research is limited to Ireland (this will be discussed further in chapter three). Ireland however was chosen based on the ability of the researcher to get adequate primary data.

1.9. Research Structure

In line with the directives of the faculty, this study is limited to 5 chapters. The chapters include;

Chapter one, which is the introductory chapter, this chapter provides the background of the study as well as the research problem, research questions, aims and objectives, research purpose, scope and context of the study.

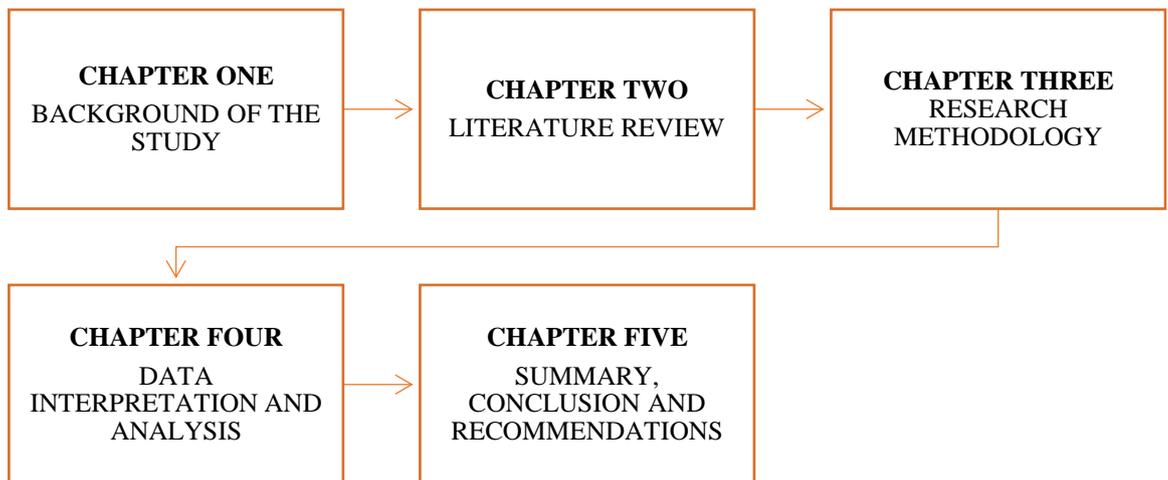
Chapter two, is the literature review, here research concepts, theoretical and conceptual frameworks are being discussed

Chapter three is the research methodology which covers the methodological framework of the study

Chapter four will prove the interpretation and analysis of data

Chapter five will be the final chapter that contains the summary, conclusion and recommendation of the research. This chapter will also provide prospects of the study and contribution to knowledge.

Figure 2. Research Structure



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overview

This chapter provides a review of related literature that explains all concepts used in the dissertation and their units of measurement. The literature review was further carried out to discover the extent by which existing research have studied the variables of the dissertation, this will enable the research to discover gaps in the literature which can be filled. The literature review is subdivided into four basic sections. The conceptual review discusses the basic concepts used in the study as they relate to the objectives of the study; concepts as Leadership Skills, Leadership styles, Organisational performance etc are reviewed. The second section of the literature review is the theoretical review which reviews existing leadership theories which aids to judge the potency of leadership skills and styles and how they can be applied in organisational settings. The third section is an empirical review which discusses the empirical findings of previous literatures. The fourth section is the conceptual framework which reveals how the variables of the study will be measured. The findings from the three sections are marshalled up to form the conceptual framework.

2.2. Conceptual Review

2.2.1. Leadership

The concept of leadership is one of the most discussed subjects within the academic and organisational setup (Asree, Zain and Rizal, 2010). This is because leadership is seen to be the most crucial aspect of social life as a human's life is significantly affected by the way leaders lead. Leadership therefore in a simplified definition means the way and ability to inspire and direct individuals towards achieving a particular goal (Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber, 2009). Within the organisational setting Asree, Zain and Rizal (2010), referred to leadership as the act of motivating, inspiring, engaging and directing all human and material resources for better performance and achievement.

Batool (2013 cited in Burno, 2013), notes that in an organisational setting, leaders make expectations and employees are required to meet up with these expectations, setting expectations is important to employees, as they perform better when they are aware of what kind of behaviour is expected of them. Bello (2013), also notes that leaders are responsible for job allocations and proper job description, thereby playing a significant role in the efficiency of the organisation. Leadership is also essential for influencing members of the entire workforce and stirring them towards greater productivity and performance.

Batool (2013 cited in Burno, 2013) explained that leadership is largely focused on because of influence, leadership influence employees to increase teamwork and workflow which further increases the efficiency of the organisation. To achieve efficiency, leaders must therefore possess qualities that enable them to set expectations and stir-up team effort to achieve expectations. Wood and Winston (2005), noted that every member of the organisation should have clear responsibilities, duties and role and also have the necessary motivation to achieve this duties and roles, it is thus the responsibility of leadership to set responsibilities of the employee and further provide the necessary motivations to achieve such roles. Leadership is thus the ability to inspire people to work together and achieve common objectives, it is the act of mobilising and coordinating people to cooperate towards goal attainment. The huge task of leadership has made having leadership skills necessary (Wood and Winston, 2005).

2.2.2. Leadership Skills

Leadership skills are a group of intangible characteristics that enable a leader to achieve his goals of influencing, inspiring and motivating employees towards collective actions and achievement. It refers to the inherent or learned skills which a leader possesses and uses to foster and achieve his/her goals. Since leadership skills are important elements to a leader, there has been an increase in research which have tried to discuss the number and groupings of skills a leader should possess, from the available literature, there are basically two groupings of skills that make a leader successful in the organisational setting, this is the leadership personality traits and the leadership styles. The combination of the two provides the leader with proper skills for managerial activities.

i. Personality traits

According to Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphey (2012), personality traits are a psychophysiological system that creates a leader's generic pattern of behaviour, feelings or thoughts, they also noted that the personality trait is generated purely by nature hence is stable over the course of a person's life. Kearne, Livingstone and Shearer (2015) on the other hand argued differently, to them personality traits are not constant but continuously evolve and change in reaction to experiences and situations. Therefore, a leader may have as many traits as possible pending on his/her experiences.

Personality traits have been divided into several characters; different scholars have reviewed different traits as depicted in the Table 1 below:

Table 1. Leadership personal traits

S/N	Author	Personality Trait
1	Cartell (1943)	Source trait and surface traits
2	Allport (1961)	Cardinal trait, central and secondary
3	Austin (1993)	Skill knowledge, authenticity, integrity, commitment, empathy and competence.
4	Mccrae, Costa and Busch (1986)	Extroversion, agreeableness conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness
5	Eyseneck (1975)	Extroversion, neuroticism and psychotic

Source: Compiled by the author of this dissertation

The above traits are what makes a leader differently in different situations they face, for example, Eyseneck (1975), noted that a leader may express extroversion when there is need to motivate, talk or give public speeches, however, the leader may be an introvert. Also, Cartel (1943), explained that source traits are the real character of leaders, while surface traits evolve as the situation demands, as such a leader can be aggressive (source traits) while he displays calmness and coordination while at the office (surface traits).

The above leadership traits were however not sufficient to explain leadership as they mainly dealt with the character of the leader, Bello (2012), notes that as leadership research expanded there was more focus on leadership traits which could be learned, taught and improved on for more organisational success, this led to a more authentic

development of leadership traits, Kumar (2014), noted that self-confidence, drive, cognitive ability and integrity were amongst the traits that made leaders successful.

Bond and Smith (1996), developed the “Big-Five” model which they deemed as essential for leadership and could be used in several cultural contexts. The big five were Openness to experience, extroversion, readiness to accept challenges, emotional stability and agreeableness. Bond and Smith (1996), further noted that for leaders to be successful they must possess inter-personal skills which are essential for gaining the trust of their teams and subordinate and also stir up their commitment levels towards the achievement of organisational projects and goals, thus he explained the interpersonal skills of leaders as; having a set of idealised influence, thus they should be charismatic which is displayed in confidence and competence. Secondly, leaders should be able to inspire their team members, this is displayed by motivational inspiration. Leadership should be able to identify the particular characteristics of each member of their team and deal with them according to their needs, wants and attitudes towards achieving goals. By this, the leader can provide the necessary considerations to each individual and further motivate them properly. The third important leadership trait that Bond and Smith (1996) discussed was intellectual stimulation. This involves the ability of the leader to question everything about the organisation from simple assumptions to the status quo. The leaders should also be able to critically analyse and offer creative and innovative solutions to complex problems facing the organisation. Furthermore, the leader should be able to draft out the right reward for the right behaviour of employees.

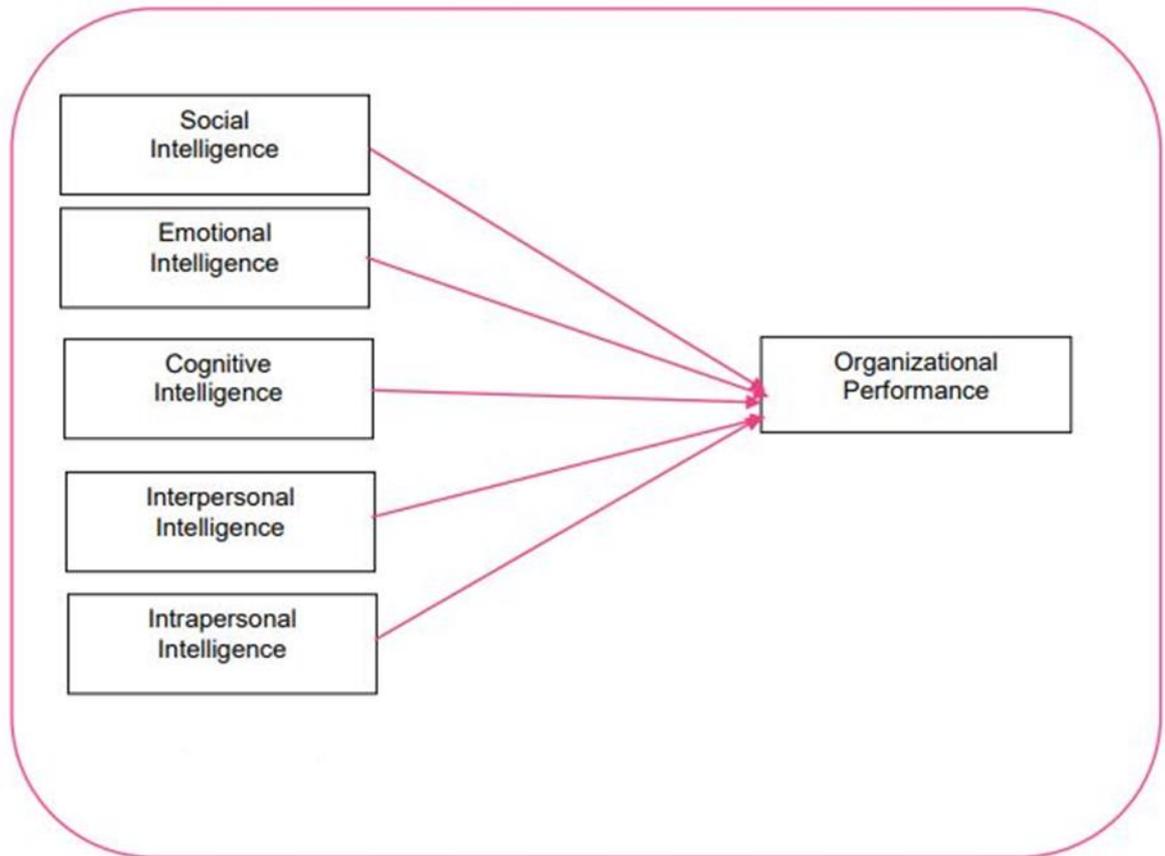
Katz (1974 cited in Bennis, 2003), noted that effective leadership needs three board sets of skills Technical skills, Conceptual skills, and Human skills. Technical skills consist of specialised knowledge within a special discipline and analytical tools within a specific facility. Human skills involve effective interpersonal techniques, which means the ability to be a team leader through effective communication, decision making, and team building. Conceptual Skills involves the ability to take unrelated information and organise it into a comprehensive and ordering way.

Bennis (2003), noted that leadership skills involve good judgment, interpersonal skills, and character which effective leaders cannot do without.

According to Noor, Mohamad and Abdullah(2017), leadership skills consist of social intelligence, emotional intelligence, cognitive intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and

intrapersonal intelligence. These skills marshal up to make a leader vision-oriented and able to drive employees into productivity and greater organisational performance, as revealed in figure 2

Figure 3. Leadership traits



Source: Noor, Mohamad and Abdullah (2017),

ii. Leadership Styles

The concept of leadership styles emerged from classical studies, based on the findings they discovered that leaders displayed three types of styles which include; autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire styles. All leadership styles adopted had a profound effect on the groups' productivity and interaction amongst group members.

a. Autocratic Leadership

This involves the display of strong-will, domination and to some extent aggressiveness by leaders. Autocratic leadership often believe in their own skills and intellectual prowess hence they seldomly listen to other views and suggestions. In autocratic leadership, followers are mainly not satisfied due to the high assertiveness of power and influence

exercised by leaders (Afshinpour, 2014). The basic way autocratic leaders lead and motivate followers is through coercion (Malik, Saleem and Naeem, 2016). Autocratic leaders care more about goal attainment and achievement, hence, they care less about building an interpersonal relationship with followers (Michael, 2010).

b. Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership often focus on decentralised decision-making styles (Ojokuku. Odetayo, Sajuyigbe, 2016), the leader integrates followers into decision making processes, planning and execution. The leader sees the interpersonal relationship as important hence he/she maintains group effectiveness by encouraging members to express their ideas, opinions and values concerning a specific task. Democratic leadership requires enormous efforts especially in decision making and planning, this is due to the high level of consultations which could slow down the entire organisation process. Democratic leadership is essential for unity and cooperation as it stimulates collective and harmonious behaviours amongst employees (Malik, Saleem and Naeem, 2016). Democratic leaders often believe in stimulating and motivating employees to work in line with policies and processes, coercion is very minimal in democratic leadership. Leadership mainly set up reward and disciplinary systems which act as essential motivators for employees.

c. Laissez-Faire Leadership

This leadership is similar to democratic leadership in which leaders involve employees mostly in organisation activities and decision making. The major difference is that laissez-faire leadership adopts delegation of functions rather than decentralisation, leaders “hands off” on most of the activities and allow employees to exercise control. Within laissez-faire leadership, there is less interference between leaders and followers, (Samad, Reaburn, Davis et al, 2015). There is also the absence of a feedback mechanism and delay in decision making. Leaders practically avoid their responsibilities hence much meaning work is not achieved in the organisation. Leaders do not participate in the organisational process, decision making and work progress, they simply allow things to unfold based on employee’s effort (Chowdhury, 2014). Leaders also have a weak relationship with their employees due to lack of communication and setting of expectations (Malik, Saleem and Naeem, 2016).

Silverthorne, (2001), noted that whatever style adopted by leaders they have a profound effect on the society or the group. This makes leadership a necessity within human associations

Bennis (2003), noted that contemporary leadership styles embedded in leadership theory include; transformational leadership and transactional leadership

d. Transactional Leadership

Within the 1970s and 1980s, leadership research significantly evolved from the understanding the peculiar traits of leaders, organisational context and employees to focus on the relationship that is built between leaders and followers and how this relationship is sustained and leveraged upon for organisational success. Within this study emerged the postulations of transactional leadership which focuses on the exchanges that exist between employees and leaders. These exchanges exist in needs, wants and expectations. The transactional leadership styles are based on the exchange of needs and wants (rewards) to employees after the fulfilment of expectations of the leader (Malik, Saleem and Naeem, 2016). Transactional leaders are known by their corrective and constructive actions, thus transactional leaders closely monitor employees and take corrective actions on them when the need arises. The style uses the carrot and stick approach (Samad, Reaburn, Davis et al, 2015), transactional leaders expect employees to conform to set down values, objectives, rules and regulation. Rewards and compensations (in both monetary and nonmonetary forms) are presented to employees who conform properly to set down rules, values and regulations. Leadership in transactional style is very instrumental in employees goal attainment, thus power and influence are most used in transformational leadership. Chowdhury (2014), notes that transformative leaders are mainly found in corporate arrangements this is why it is known as the most displayed leadership style in the 21st century. Furthermore, Malik, Saleem and Naeem (2016), notes that transactional leadership is closely associated with a managerial technique whereby the leader establishes organisational goals and enters a contractual arrangement with subordinates based on punishment and rewards. It is also closely compared with the autocratic style in the display of power; however, it incorporates elements of democratic style which is decentralisation and interpersonal relationship.

e. Transformational Leadership

According to Yukl (2001), the aim of transformational leadership is to raise the consciousness of followers through stimulating their minds to focus on moral and ideal values rather than materialistic or tangible rewards. The use of this to involve followers to achieve organisational goals is what significantly distinguishes transformational leadership from other forms of leadership (Bello, 2012). Using this style, leaders can increase commitment levels of followers by focusing on internal achievements and motivation rather than physical motivations (Afshinpour, 2014). The transformative leader inspires, motivates and transforms followers to perform task that transcends their personal or self-interest but achieves a collective benefit for the organisation and group. Samad, Reaburn, Davis et al (2015), notes that the transformational leader seeks to refocus the mind of followers from personal benefits to group benefits, by so doing he/she raises the motivation of employees based on the feeling of self-actualisation and self-belonging to an organisation. The transformational leadership is essential towards building team spirit, team confidence, sense of value and belonging amongst workers and intellectual development. Transformational leadership involves those with tendencies to motivate, share a vision of future possibilities, inspire employees and place group interest over individual interest.

Leadership in the 21st century adopts transformational styles as Samad, Reaburn, Davis et al (2015), explains that this is because material pay or physical rewards are not sufficient enough to keep workers motivated and engaged. Physical pay and benefits can only keep employees motivated in the short-run however for a long-term motivation to be built and sustained leaders must build stronger relationship amongst employees to the organisation, to an extent were employees no longer work for the pay or rewards but work because they internally derive joy and satisfaction when organisational goals and objectives are achieved.

Malik, Saleem and Naeem (2016), notes that the most popular leadership style operated in the 21st century is the transactional and transformative leadership style. They both are critical for corporate structures and management administration. Organisations in the 21st century are built to achieve certain goals which maybe profit or not profit-oriented, both styles thus seek to stir employees towards the achievement of organisational goals and objectives.

2.2.3. Managerial Skills

The rise of corporate organisations has made the need for managers imperative, managers constantly shape organisations which they find themselves and are also responsible for the achievement of organisational goals. Boatright, (2009) noted that the expectation from managers is greater than those of leaders, he noted that managers need to balance a wider range of competing interests, under greater intervals and strict external scrutiny and also achieve good returns for the company's shareholders. This makes managers more authoritative, demanding and goal-driven than leaders. Managers focus on doing things right based on rules and regulations while leaders focus on doing the right things (Ertugrul and Krishnan, 2011).

Chowdury (2014) further explained that the manager profession is very complex and expectations from individuals who hold these positions are very high, thus managers need to continuously improve themselves with all characteristics that meet up to the expectations required for an efficient manager. According to Ertugrul and Krishnan (2011), managerial skills are supposed to meet up with the strategy and objectives of the organisation, this is to ensure that managers have a good grip on the entire organisational process and make others regard them as being competent for the office they hold. The high expectations and duties of a manager makes developing managerial skill more difficult and complicated than developing other skills. Managerial art is based on complex workings and understanding of organisational processes and interacting with other persons in the office.

According to Afshari, Shahhosseini, Kosaripoor, et al (2013), due to the demands placed on the managers they require stricter skills to operate, hence he mentioned the following as essential managers skills:

Strategic thinking: includes the ability to have a strong vision, setting and implementing agendas.

Analytical skills: Problem-solving, action-oriented, decision making, effective and efficiently getting things done.

Interpersonal and team skills; Include, leadership, team building, motivation, learning from failure and personal reflections.

Personal attributes: maturity, disciplined, committed, ability to control temperament and personal awareness

Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005), in an employee-based research tried to investigate what skills employees' thought was necessary for active managers; they noted communication skills, the ability to apply knowledge, capacity for decision making and problem-solving, capacity for teamwork and cooperation and flexibility.

Covenant Leadership Centre (2015), which prepares managers for leadership and work roles noted that basic skills needed for managers include; soft or people's skills, strategic skills, leadership skills, international orientation, entrepreneurship, relationship building skills across the organization and ability to utilize diverse human resources.

From the above, managerial skills are more task-oriented, i.e moving people towards achieving goals and objectives which is ultimately to increase profit for organization and shareholders.

From the review of both leadership and managerial skills, it is evident that leaders need the blend of both leadership and managerial skills, as without the two they will be limited in some aspects of work. For example, Brown, Trevino and Harrison (2005), noted that leaders need leadership skills such as cognitive intelligence, social intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and communicative skills etc to plan, draft out policies for the organisation, however they need managerial skills such as tenacity, persistence and doggedness to accomplish goals and policies. Boatright (2009), on the other hand, noted that there is no difference between leadership and managerial skills as they both go together.

2.2.4. Organisational Performance

Organisational performance is an important concept in the 21st century which is characterised by many firms and organisation which constantly strive for dominance in the marketplace. The potential success of a business, therefore, relies significantly on its organisational performance which has many definitions

Li-an Ho (2008), noted that it is the extent an organisation meets up with its goals. He further explained that it is the extent to which human and nonhuman resources are mobilized for the attainment of organisational goals which will lead to greater profits in an organisation, they also explained that organisational performance relates to the

outcomes of a company when it is compared to its goals and objectives, Tomal and Jones (2015), expressed that organisational performance is seen in the actual outputs of an organisation when it is measured or compared to the intended outputs.

Since organisational performance has to do with outputs and results it can thus be measured, Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2002), noted that organisational performance measures the cumulative success of an organisation within a specific time. Dixon and Hart (2010), noted that organisational performance is measurable as such it can be positive or negative. To them, the measurement of organisational performance relies on:

Employee productivity: How well do employees meet up with their task? How well do they achieve the desired output? how will do they abide by company rules and regulation? And to what extent do they uphold organisational values? Employee productivity ensures that employees are committed actually to add value to the organisation

Employee Commitment: how well do employees relate to the organisation? how do they feel about continuing to work in the organisation? how emotionally attached to the organisation? how well can they sacrifice self-interest for organisational interest? What is the employee's belief to duty and obligations of organisations?

Goal Attainment: How well are company goals attained? How efficient is a company in using fewer resources to achieve more goals? What timeframe is needed for organisational goals to be accomplished? Goal attainment ensures that company is progressive.

If these questions are answered positively, an organisation has a positive performance level, as if all three are positive an organisation will constantly have more customers, less employee turnover and more profits.

From the above three definitions, organisational success can be seen to be a positive factor that is achieved when organisational goals, objectives, and intentions are met.

2.2.5. Leadership Skills and Organisational Performance

The positive performance of an organisation is largely dependent on its leaders, this is because leaders create the entire culture, strategy, environment which employees operate in, thus, the skills, beliefs, values and competency of leaders will always influence the performance of the organisation (Soebbing, Wicker, and Weimar, 2015). Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2002), noted that leadership skills can improve or reduce employee

productivity and performance. Globally, it has been the duty of researchers to discover the link between leadership skills and how well an organisation performs, in management studies, leadership has come to be established as a significant factor in motivating groups, people and teams so they act in accordance with laid down procedures to achieve a collective goal. Furthermore, leadership skill is also needed in persuading people to complete a task or act in certain ways to attain organisational objectives. Also, Tomal and Jones (2015), noted that leaders need to know how to communicate vision and objectives to others to enable them to know the accurate steps to take and duties to perform that will achieve vision and objectives. Leadership skills are important in creating committed and productive followers.

Hughes, Ginnett and Curphey (2012), noted that some leaders are born with innate leadership skills, however, these skills may not be sufficient to ensure a positive organisational performance, leadership skills require continuous development, more knowledge and more experience to be able to harness these skills and channel them towards building a strong workforce that is productive and enhances organisational performance.

Tomal and Jones (2015), explained that by adopting interpersonal skills such a coaching mentoring, leading and motivating, decision making and problem-solving, listening and communicating, influencing and negotiating, leaders can build the trust of employees, further increasing their productivity and propelling them to work better to achieve organisational goals which culminate into positive organisational performance. Furthermore, leaders need to be flexible, effective and goal-oriented, this will instil a mindset of seriousness amongst employees and stimulate them towards achieving their task and duties. In line with this, Soebbing, Wicker, and Weimar (2015), noted that leaders who achieved high performance in their organisations were those who displayed uncanny intellectual and critical skills as well as enabled their employees to develop skills which are required for job performance. Leaders with quality skills create a positive work atmosphere that keeps employees motivated and customers satisfied.

2.3. Theoretical Review

Several leadership theories have evolved, the table below shows the theories, contributors and basic tenets

Table 2. Theories of Leadership

Theory	Contributor	Year	Major Tenet
Great Man" theory	Thomas Carlyle	1840's	Based on the premise the leaders are exceptionally born people with the innate ability to lead.
Behaviour Theory	Kurt Lewin, John Fryer and others.	1940's	The behaviours of effective leaders are different than the behaviours of ineffective leaders. Two major classes of leader behaviour are task-oriented behaviour and relationship-oriented behaviour
Trait Theory of Leadership	Francis Galton	1930 – 1940's	Individual characteristics of leaders are different than those of non- leaders.
Contingency Theories of Leadership	Fiedler, House, as well as Vroom and Yetton	1964,1971&1973	Factors unique to each situation determine whether specific leader characteristics and behaviours will be effective
Situational Theory	Hersey and Blanchard	1969	Sees Leadership as specific to the situation in which it is being exercised
Leader Member/Exchange Model	George Graen	1980	Leaders form high-quality relationships with some subordinates but not others. The quality of leader-subordinates relationship affects numerous workplace outcomes
Charismatic Leadership	Max Weber, Burns, Bass	1970's – 1980's	Effective leaders inspire subordinates to commit themselves to goals by communicating a vision, displaying charismatic behaviour, and setting a powerful personal example
Transactional theory	Burns	1978	Emphasises the importance of the relationship between leaders and followers, focusing on the mutual benefits derived from a "contract" through which a leader delivers such things as rewards and recognition in return for commitment and loyalty of followers.
Transformation Theory	Burns	1978	Central concept is change in the role of leadership in envisioning and implementing the transformation of organisational performance
Path-Goal Theory	Robert House	1971	In cases where tasks are uncertain and stressful, directive leadership leads to high job satisfaction. Supportive leadership results in high job satisfaction and performance when tasks are certain (structured) and planned. When a directive leadership style is applied to employees with high experience and competence, the reluctance of employees emerges. While tasks are uncertain and complex, participative leadership is the most effective leadership if group members expect clarity and autonomy. While the tasks are uncertain and complex, the achievement oriented leadership style is determined as the most

The Iowa Studies	University of Iowa	1930s	In the long run, the most effective leader behaviour is democratic leadership
The Ohio State Studies	Psychologists, sociologists and economists	1948	The most effective leadership style is the situation high initiating structure (task or job oriented) and high consideration (relationship or employee oriented) behaviours.
University of Michigan Studies	Rensis Likert	1950's	The most effective leadership style is employee-oriented one

Source: Compiled by the author of this dissertation

According to Samad (2012), leadership not only needs power, influence but the ability to stir and motivate people towards the achievement of common organisational goals thus, all leadership theories ultimately postulate how leaders can influence people towards goal achievement and organisational performance. In the same vein Yukl (2001), noted that leadership theories though evolving from different scholars at different times were all integrated into philosophies in the sense that they progressively give explanations of leadership skills and how leaders unite individuals towards the achievement of common organisational objectives. Effective leadership is thus determined by goal achievement. As such leadership theories are the same.

Amabile, Schatzel., Moneta et al (2004), are of a contrary opinion they noted that despite the development in leadership theories, they were different in terms of focus, for instance, the great man and the behavioural theory have different premise with the former focusing on natural endowments while the other focusing on skills that can be learned. Also, James (2017), noted that transactional and transformational theories are more scientific and can be used in contemporary research than Great Man, Trait or contingency theory. As such leadership theories are different. Thus, when using a specific theory to study leadership and organisational performance, one must carefully use the underlying philosophy of theory and measure it against the particular leader who is studied.

2.4. Empirical Review

Several studies have been conducted on leadership, some focus on leadership and managerial traits others link leadership with organisational performance;

James (2017), studied Habits of Effective CEOs in the Insurance sector in the USA, using quantitative survey, he discovered that habits that made CEO successful were vision-oriented, ability to motivate, good Human resource management techniques, team player, ability to discipline and be disciplined and committed to work.

Charles (2013), in another study, used the Linkert scale to rank Leadership qualities from employees in a construction industry perspective, emotional intelligence ranked 19%, Social intelligence 55%, Cognitive Intelligence 10% and Interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence 16%

Huang (2016), focused his study on leadership and organisational performance, collecting data from the automobile industry in China, he discovered that leadership skills needed to drive organisational performance were vision, strategic thinking, innovation, and creativity, ability to keep the workforce motivated and good communication skills.

The Predictive index researchers (2019), conducted a research amongst 1,038 employees from 13 industries in the United States to discover which skills were important for managerial success and a further look at what skills management was lacking, based on the result they discovered that 30% of employees said their managers lacked team-building skills, 17.9% lacked said managers lacked feedback skills, 10.65% said their managers lacked delegation skills, 14.6% said their managers lacked time management skills.

Delizonna (2017), conducted a research on high performing teams, her purpose was to study how managers affected the psychology of employees and how this in turn affected their productivity. According to her result, she discovered that productivity teams were those who had high psychological safety. Predictive Index researchers (2019) further studied this to find out the number of employees with psychological safety, they discovered that 80% of employees could approach their boss, while 11% could not, 67% noted that they can make a mistake without their managers holding it against them, 11% believed they could not, 70% revealed that their manager valued their skills, while 15 noted that their skills were not valued.

Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), conducted a research on the quality of leadership in the United Arab Emirates, they noted that management in Fly Emirates Airline were amongst the outstanding management in the UAE, this is because due to their well-polished management and leadership strategies which enabled employees to attain their maximum possible level of performance.

Finall, Ishaku (2016), studies what skills make a manager successful drawing data from 12 banks in Nigeria, he noted that successful managers had Analytical skills, Strategic planning skills, Bargaining Skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, communication

and charismatic skills. He further explained that while skills like communication and charisma were natural, analytical, strategic, bargaining, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills were learned.

2.5. Critiquing the Literature

The above literature have been insightful in providing detail explanations concerning leadership skills and organisational, it is evident that several poignant frameworks, theories and contextual documents are available that vividly explains the role of leaders and what qualities they should possess to make them outstanding, however this, there is still much questions regarding much leadership failures in the business world, as the literature does not seem to strike a balance between the literature available for leadership and failure of leadership. The presence of much literature implies the presence of much knowledge on the issue of leadership, despite this, there is still leadership failures in the corporate world, the collapse of giant companies like Enron and Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc, the declining market share of many top companies like Nokia, Xerox, Yahoo and IBM can be linked to failure in leadership. There is thus to be a lack of synergy between knowledge and practice as, despite tangible knowledge about leadership skills, failure is still recorded in the practice of leadership

2.6. Implications of the Review on Research Objectives

From the literature review, it has been established as what leadership skills are needed to make leaders successful, these skills are found in leadership traits and leadership styles, however, for more simplicity and coherence the leadership skills gotten from the review that will be tested include Social, Cognitive, Emotional interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. These skills contain both leadership and management values.

For organisational performance, from the literature, it has been discovered that measurable value of organisational performance is Employee productivity, employee commitment and Goal attainment. Therefore, these values will be empirically investigated on with reference to financial firms in Ireland.

In marshalling up the literature review to the research, the leadership skills provided (Social, Cognitive, Emotional interpersonal and intrapersonal skills) are those which will

be tested on organisational performance (employee productivity, employee commitment, goal attainment and customer service) the theories, however, will be used as frameworks to judge the effectiveness of leadership skills and make judgments on what type of leadership is in operation to the firm of analysis. The entire process for analysis of these variables is discussed in the conceptual framework below:

2.7. Conceptual Framework

The table below reveals the conceptual framework, it describes the major concepts used and how the researcher intends to measure them using data-driven variables

Table 3. Conceptual Framework

S/N	Concepts	Definition	Variables to be Measured
1	Leadership Skills	<p>Personality traits and characters which are essential to people management (Silverthorne,2001),</p> <p>Intrinsic abilities possessed by people who have the responsibility to motivate and organise individuals towards goal attainment (Wood and Winston, 2005)</p> <p>Set of skills and observable qualities necessary to inspire and influence people to achieve a common goal and vision (Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphey ,2012)</p>	<p>Leadership Skills:</p> <p>Interpersonal and intrapersonal, Emotional, Cognitive, and social skills (Wood and Winston, 2005)</p>
2	Organisational Performance	<p>The extent an organisation meets up with its goals. He further explained that it is the</p>	Employee productivity:

		<p>extent to which human and nonhuman resources are mobilized for the attainment of organisational goals which will lead to greater profits in an organisation (Li-an Ho, 2008), that organisational performance measures the cumulative success of an organisation within a specific time (Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn, 2002)</p>	<p>The extent to which employees meet up with the task and achieve the desired output.</p> <p>Goal Attainment:</p> <p>To what extent do organisations attain and achieve their goals and efficiency in using fewer resources in achieving more goals.</p> <p>Employee Commitment</p> <p>The degree in which employees are loyal and are dedicated to achieving organisational goals.</p>
3	Theoretical Analysis	<p>The theories of leadership offer explanations</p> <p>On what dominant character is manifested by a leader thus influencing his/her success. They further note the kind of leadership style that a leader possesses (Bennis, 2003).</p>	<p>Leadership Styles:</p> <p>Transformative, Transactional (Bennis, 2003).</p>

Essentially, the research will measure the impacts and influences of the Leadership style variables on organisational performance variables i.e how leadership skill inputs has led to the organisational performance outcomes or outputs.

2.8. Conclusion

For the purpose of re-emphasises, this chapter contained the literature review which critically reviews existing documents with the purpose of understanding and critiquing contextual writeups, theoretical frameworks and empirical discoveries. For this research critical review was done on leadership styles, theories and skills with the purpose of garnering greater understanding and developing the conceptual framework. This will aid in research methodology and the discussion of findings. For Leadership skills, it was discovered that interpersonal and intrapersonal, emotional, cognitive, and social skills were essential for leadership success. These are intrinsic abilities possessed by people who have the responsibility to motivate and organise individuals towards goal attainment. These skills will be investigated by drawing data from financial firms in Ireland. The next chapter reveals the research methodology.

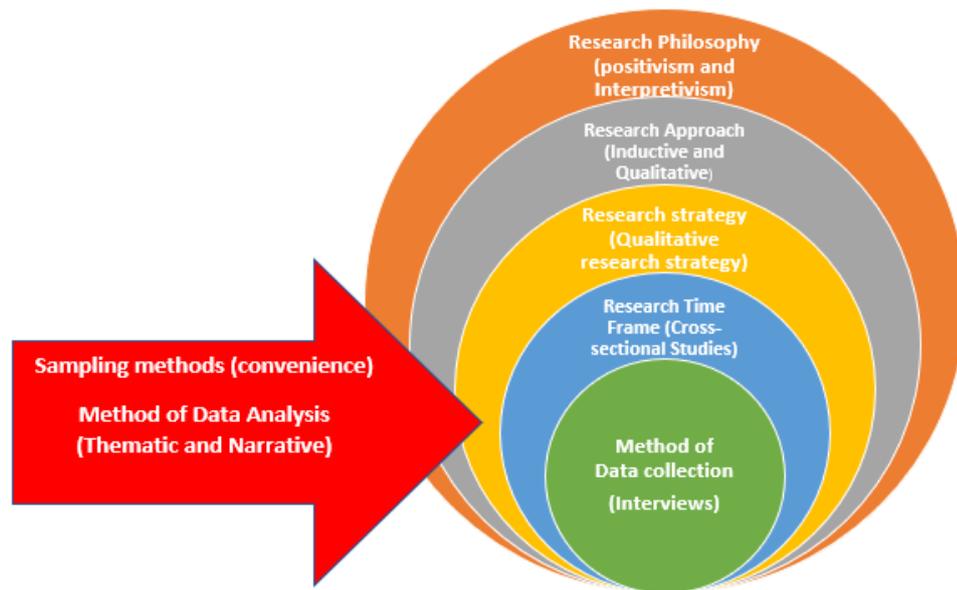
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The methodology for this dissertation includes all procedures, processes and techniques adopted to ensure that the research is scientifically conducted and its findings are valid. The methodology provides the empirical frameworks for data collection and analysis. The methodology is structured according to the research onion layers which is described in the diagram below. For the research philosophy interpretivism was adopted, interpretivism provides the research with flexibility in methodology, thus enabling the researcher to analyse human issues as they are socially constructed by humans. The research approach was a qualitative and inductive approach which gathers non-numerical data and seeks to understand the phenomenon in a detail an in-depth perspective. The qualitative research strategy was adopted which collects data from the conduct of interviews, interviews offered the researcher a chance to get more in-depth perspectives on leadership skills and organisational performance. The research timeframe adopted was the cross-sectional studies which studies a phenomenon at a specific point in time on a specific population, the reason for the adoption of the cross-sectional studies was due to the academic calendar to submit the dissertation. Furthermore, sampling methods was based on the convenience of the participant. Qualitative data collection and analysis techniques were further adopted in the dissertation.

Figure 4. Research Onion



Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007)

3.2. Research Philosophy

Collins and Hussey (2003), notes that a research philosophy is a set of common beliefs and agreements amongst scientist concerning how problems should be understood and addressed, philosophies guide the way and manner knowledge is gained in the academia. Academic endeavour essentially deals with the discovering, acquisition or update of knowledge; therefore, every research endeavour must have a philosophy. There are two main types of philosophy which are; positivism and interpretivism. This research, however, adopts the interpretivist philosophy.

Interpretivism philosophy studies and interprets elements of a study based on their naturalistic appearance, thus, interpretivism's major approach to data collection is via interviews and observation. Interpretivism philosophy is closely related to positivism (Collins, 2010), however, Interpretivism is more flexible in its nature of data collection, unlike Positivism that is solely objective, Interpretivism moves from subjective to objective, and this is because it is geared at interpreting several variables as they occur in their natural state within the society. Interpretation thus cannot be done without subjective analysis of certain attitudes like sentiments, emotions, and perceptions (Creswell, 2003).

The importance of adopting the interpretivist philosophy is to enable the gathering of subjective data, i.e will aid in the interpretation of data which relates to the perceptions and emotions of the target population. This is because the study is empirical, however, studying leadership skills and its impact on organisational performance cannot be entirely empirical, as humans are involved in the study, thus interpretivism will offer the researcher the opportunity to look at individual perceptions, sentiments and bias concerning the topic.

3.3. Research Approach

Creswell (2003), notes that research approach is the overall strategy by which a researcher chooses to harmonise and synthesis the different components of a study in a coherent and logical manner that ensures that the research problems and questions are effectively and adequately addressed. Two types of research approach exist, inductive and deductive. For this study, the inductive approach is adopted.

The inductive approach concerns itself with collecting and analysing information from non-numeric forms. By this, the inductive approach excels in exploring problems or phenomenon in detail perspectives, by giving an elaborate and in-depth explanation of the phenomena (Collins, and Hussey, 2003)

The inductive approach goes together to qualitative research methods. Collins (2010), explains that the qualitative research is that which attributes have names or labels rather than numbers assigned to their respective categories. Similarly, Creswell (2003), expounded on the qualitative design and notes that its data are not in numbers but words. Hence, research that is inductive and qualitative offer more explanations about a phenomenon by providing an in-depth understanding of the relationship between variables and how it is applicable to human behaviour.

The table below shows the characteristics of the inductive approach and how it is relevant to this study.

Table 4. Inductive Approach

S/N	CHARACTERISTICS	CONCEPTS WITH APPROACH	ASSOCIATED INDUCTIVE	RELEVANCE TO THE STUDY
1	Type of reasoning	Subjectivity Meaning		The research studies human behaviour in an organisational context, to which subjectivism is necessary to understand relationships that exist amongst humans.
2	Type of question	Open-ended Process-oriented		The research adopts open-ended questioning to establish relationship between processes by drawing a wide range of responses.
3	Type of analysis	Narrative description Constant comparison		The research is narrative and it adequately describes variables by constantly making comparison between them.
4	Focus	Understanding dynamics, robustness, emergence, resilience, focus on individual behaviour, constructing alterative futures		Research seeks to understand the dynamics involved in leadership skills and organisational performance through the use of robust methodology and analysing human behaviour.

Source: Crowther and Lancaster (2008)

From the above, the rationale behind adopting the inductive research approach is to get deeper explanations on the impacts of leadership skills on organisational performance with respect to financial firms in Ireland. Since the inductive approach goes together with qualitative research, using the two will enable the collection of non-numeric data that are better at describing and giving tangible information with regards to variables of the study. This is important as measuring variables like impacts of leadership skills cannot be successfully achieved with numeric data, as it requires a more detailed explanation. Thus, the qualitative design is adopted to provide the researcher with more in-depth data to successfully achieve the research objectives.

3.4. Research Strategy

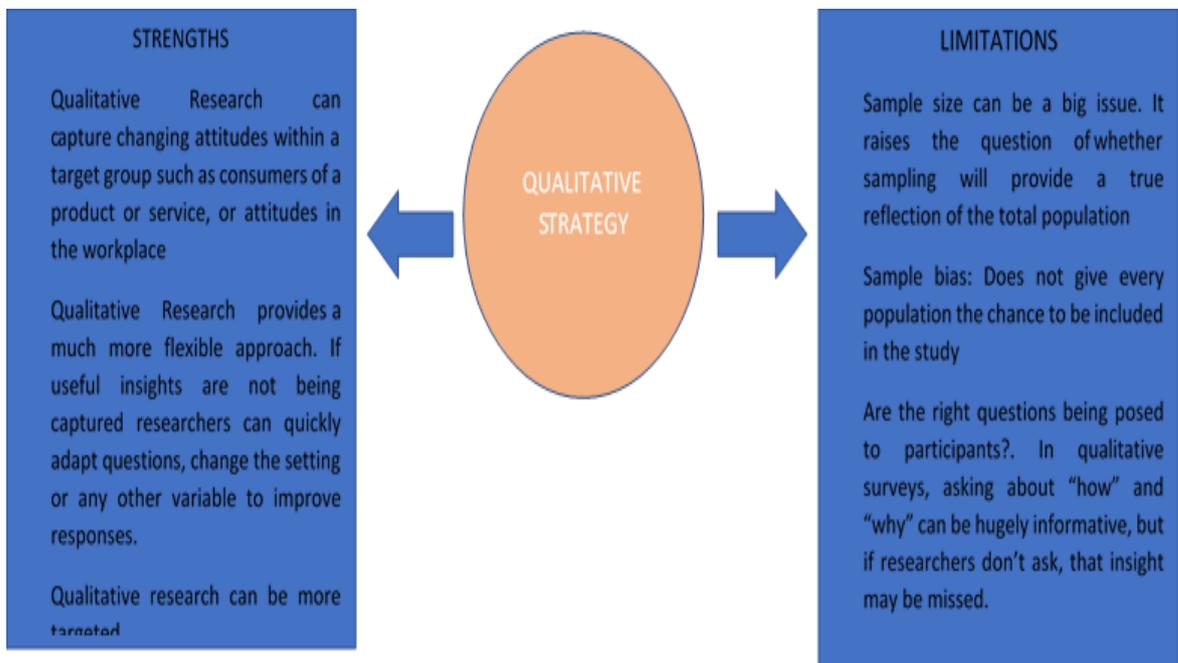
Research strategy refers to the procedural plan that gives direction to the research problems and questions and enables the researcher to conduct the research systematically to produce quality results and detailed reporting (Collins, 2010). The research strategy is important to the conduct of research as it enables the researcher to focus on specific variables of the study and also target the right audience to draw data from, it also saves time and resources. The research strategy describes the nature of research experiments and

the procedures that will be adopted to collect the necessary data needed to accomplish the research goals.

Crowther and Lancaster (2008), noted the research strategy enables the research to answer the research questions thus shaping the structure and flow of the study. Therefore, the research strategy is determined by the research questions. From the purely data-driven research questions, the study adopted the qualitative- research strategy.

The diagram below gives the advantages of the qualitative research strategy and its limitations.

Figure 5. Qualitative Strategy



Source: Collins and Hussey (2003)

From the above, Qualitative research strategy enhance a more practical and reasonable acquisition of data through interviews. Qualitative research strategy also uses analytical techniques for drawing inference from data in explaining data regarding existing relationships (Malterud, Siersma, Guassora, 2015). Qualitative research strategy also permits the researcher to acquire more data while studying small samples due to its

flexibility. The quality of the qualitative research strategy makes it necessary to use in this study, as it enabled the researcher to gather much in-depth data while studying various variables of the study. The Qualitative research also enabled a simplified and authentic collection of the data for proper analysis and discussions. Despite the limitations of the qualitative survey as noted in figure 5, it did not pose a problem to the research, as various methods were adopted to ensure that the research is valid (see section 3.10).

3.5. Research Time-Frame

The cross-sectional study time-frame was adopted for this study, this refers to the study of a group of people at a particular period. It is in contrast with a longitudinal study which studies people over an extended time-frame. The cross-sectional study is adopted for this study based on the below characteristics;

- i. Its ability to provide information about what currently happens to a population
- ii. Study takes place at a single point in time.
- iii. Studies the prevailing characteristics of a given population

Using the above characteristics, the study investigated the impacts of leadership skills on organisational performance as it currently applies to the population, within a specific period of time while considering the particular characteristics of the population.

3.6. Sources of Data

Two types of data are used for this research, the primary and the secondary,

The primary data was collected via the conduct of interviews, the interviews are an important source of data as they will provide the opportunity to investigate the variables in a more in-depth way, thereby providing detailed information of their occurrences, magnitude, and specialities. Furthermore, with interviews a higher rate of responses is certain. Thus, the interviews enabled the researcher to acquire the quality and vast data regarding the research questions and variables, therefore, making the right conclusions.

3.6.1. Semi-structured Interviews

The nature of interviews was semi-structured as it provided the option for interviewees to answer questions in their own words and provide elaborate and detail explanations using experiences, stories, or further evidence.

Questions asked within the interview schedule were simple and straightforward, relating to variables of the study. Questions also had sections to probe answers given by the interviewees thereby collecting more responses for further analysis.

The secondary data was collected from a critical review of past literature mainly published documents, journals, articles, official records, past research, magazines, and newspapers. These sources further supported data gotten from the interviews and enabled the researcher to make a proper analysis, thesis, and synthesis of overall analysis to draw out the conclusions of the research.

3.7. Population of Study

The population of the study includes employees of various financial firms, across Ireland, they were recruited via convenience sampling which allowed them to freely choose to participate in the research or not. The convenience sampling is based on the participant willingness to participate in the research and also their accessibility and ease to reach (Creswell, 2003). The sampling procedure ensured that only those who were interested in the research were recruited for the study. Selection criteria was mainly workforce staff. The reason for limiting interviews to only workforce staff was to fill in the gap recorded in existing literatures, as the majority of studies focused on management, this study will focus on work staff. The selection was not based on age, ethnicity, religion etc.

The population was recruited via consent and convenience, as the consent form was delivered to the sample population to fill and return before participating.

The number of interviews that was conducted cannot be decided by the researcher as Creswell (2003), notes that interviews end when the data becomes saturated. Therefore, data became saturated at the 7th interview, hence the number of interviews conducted was 7 interviews

3.8. Research Ethics

According to Creswell (2003), Research ethics are major principles guiding the conduct of research, research ethics are important as they ensure that the research is conducted in a safe manner that does not jeopardize the security of participants or nullify the authenticity of data, therefore, this study abided by essential principles of research such as;

- i. Participants were not subjected to any form of harm and had the liberty to withdraw from the research at will.
- ii. Dignity and respect for participants was prioritized
- iii. Full consent was obtained from participants before the study. The consent form was sent out to the participants to ensure they were fully aware of what they were participating in, the consent form was signed and can be seen in Appendix C
- iv. The privacy of participants was protected as their names were not disclosed.

3.9. Analysis of Data

Data was analysed based on thematic and narrative explanations. According to Malterud (2016), the thematic analysis is a basic method for analysing qualitative data, it is done through identifying patterns and meaning within a data, these patterns when put together become themes on which further explanation is carried out. One benefit of thematic analysis is that it emphasises the rich description of data and provides an easy and understandable interpretation of data.

Several methods exist for the thematic analysis; however, this study will adopt Braun and Clarke's Six Phases of Thematic Analysis. This is explained in the table below

Table 5. Braun and Clarke's Six Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Process	Result
Phase 1	Read and re-read data in order to become familiar with what the data entails, paying specific attention to patterns that occur.	Preliminary "start" codes and detailed notes.
Phase 2	Generate the initial codes by documenting where and how patterns occur. This happens through data reduction where the researcher collapses data into labels in order to create categories for more efficient analysis. Data complication is also completed here. This involves the researcher making inferences about what the codes mean.	Comprehensive codes of how data answers research question.
Phase 3	Combine codes into overarching themes that accurately depict the data. It is important in developing themes that the researcher describes exactly what the themes mean, even if the theme does not seem to "fit". The researcher should also describe what is missing from the analysis.	List of candidate themes for further analysis.
Phase 4	In this stage, the researcher looks at how the themes support the data and the overarching theoretical perspective. If the analysis seems incomplete, the researcher needs to go back and find what is missing.	Coherent recognition of how themes are patterned to tell an accurate story about the data.
Phase 5	The researcher needs to define what each theme is, which aspects of data are being captured, and what is interesting about the themes.	A comprehensive analysis of what the themes contribute to understanding the data.
Phase 6	When the researchers write the report, they must decide which themes make meaningful contributions to understanding what is going on within the data. Researchers should also conduct "member checking". This is where the researchers go back to the sample at hand to see if their description is an accurate representation.	A thick description of the results.

Source: Braun and Clark (2006)

From the above, thematic narrations followed the transcription and coding of interviews. All data collection and analysis were in relation to the conceptual framework possible. Themes generally revolved around the subject matter of the study, as such, themes elaborately discussed the impact of several leadership skills on organisational performance. However, due to limited time the researcher was not able to carry out the "member checking" as stated in stage 6 above, however through the aid and scrutiny of the supervisor, the researcher was able to ensure that whatever data collected was an accurate representation of what was attainable.

3.10. Validity of the Research instrument

Validity refers to the extent to which the research instrument measures accurately what the research intends to measure, it also refers to the compatibility between theoretical constructs, variables and items on the research instrument (Collins, 2010). In a simplified explanation, a research instrument is said to be valid if it collects the right data and gives an accurate representation of what transpires in reality. The validity of a research instrument ensures that the overall findings of the research is acceptable and authentic. Thus, for this research to be valid, the instrument of data collection (the interview) was presented to the supervisor and other academicians who are vast in leadership studies who checked for originality and authenticity of variables in the interview schedule. Furthermore, a brief pilot study will be conducted with one (1) participant, the pilot study provided insights on possible challenges and flaws of the research instrument thus limiting their occurrences on the actual data collection. This enhanced the validity of this study thus reducing the effects of the limitations of the qualitative strategy on the research.

3.11. Conclusion

The above methodology is adopted to ensure that the outcome of the research serves a significant addition to the academia in terms of quality and findings. Using this methodology, the study empirically discovered the impacts of leadership skills on organisational performance and offered recommendations on what best leadership skills should be cultivated for the best organisational performance. The next chapter provides the analysis of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Overview

This chapter contains the qualitative analysis of interviews based on interviews collected from 7 participants in different financial firms in Ireland, the table below provides the demographic information of the interviews, due to the principle of anonymity only the initials of names of participants and their workplace were documented.

Table 6. Respondents Biodata

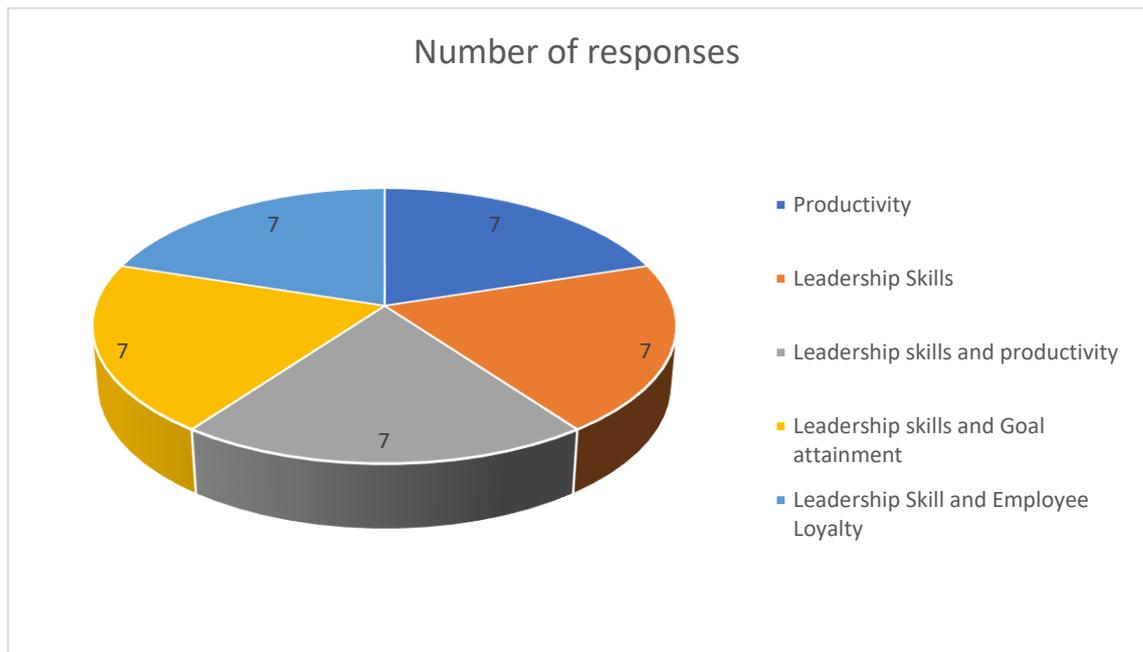
S/N	NAME	WORKPLACE	WORK EXPERIENCE
1	OS	Bank of Ireland	2 years
2	SL	Deloitte	2 years
3	TL	Deloitte	3 years
4	WR	Deloitte	3 years
5	AI	Allied Irish Bank (AIB)	8 months
6	HN	Allied Irish Bank (AIB)	8 months
7	DN	Allied Irish Bank (AIB)	2 years

The interviews were analysed using the thematic analysis process as explained by Braun and Clark (2006). Using the process,

Phase 1: the researcher re-listened to the interviews in other to familiarise herself with the data and also make notes of different opinions of interviewees

Phase 2: The next phase was to turn the name of participants into initials due to the principles of anonymity, codes were then generated by using identifying similar statements, this was done in Ms Excel the pie-chart below reveals the similar responses and the number of responses gotten.

Figure 6. Number of Responses



From the pie chart, 7 participants had similar views relating to productivity and how they viewed their opinions of productivity, 7 participants also shared similar views relating to leadership skills and what makes their leaders successful. 7 participants also mentioned how leadership skills has enhanced their productivity. Furthermore, 7 participants aired their views concerning the impact of leadership skills and goal attainment i.e how skills possessed by their leader has enabled them to attain goals set by the organisation. Finally, the 7 participants explained the way the skills possessed by their leader has enhanced their loyalty and commitment to the organisation.

Phase 4: the generation of themes was done by combining codes, thus 4 major themes where generated. Themes therefore were based on the explanations given by participants concerning leadership skills.

Phase 4: Evidence was discovered from explanations of participants that supported themes. The table below shows a breakdown of several sub-themes discovered from the compilation of responses

Figure 7. Themes and Subthemes

Theme One: Leadership Skills that Make Leaders Successful	Theme Two: Leadership Skills essential for Employee Productivity	Theme Three: Leadership Skills to enhance Goal Attainment	Theme Four: Leadership Skills that provoke Employee Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal skills(Ability to motivate, interact and communicate) • Expertise, and experience, • Cognitive and strategic thinking skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision, • Ability to communicate of required results • Training staff to handle certain responsibilities themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralisation and delegation, • Ability to strategise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing non-material motivations • Exemplary leadership

Phase 5: Included a comprehensive explanation of the themes and how they contributed to understanding the research objectives. This was done later in the research, see section (4.3)

Phase 6: As noted in the research methodology, due to timeframe, the researcher was unable to undertake a “member check”, however, through the aid and scrutiny of the supervisor, the researcher was able to ensure that whatever data collected was an accurate representation of what was attainable

Analysis and discussions were made based on the themes as discussed below;

4.2. Analysis of Themes

4.2.1. Theme one: Leadership Skills That Make Leaders Successful

Leadership skills are important to a leader as they determine the leader’s success and the effectiveness of a leader in motivating and driving his/her followers to achieve organisational goals. All the interviewees had their opinions about the skills that made their leaders successful

For DN, his leader could treat everyone like a family and take interest in both job and family roles, he stated that “*my leader would ask personal questions and give suggestions on how employees can meet up with family and job roles*”, this shows good interpersonal skills of his leader. He also explained that “*my leader was a good motivator as she pushed*

people to go further and achieve more goals, she also supportive and tries to enhance everyone's ability to meet up to targets". This shows the ability to motivate. He further noted that his leader was humble however was strict when she needed to be especially with those who were "*slacking on the job*". This shows the ability to discipline and be serious when it is needed.

AI stated that his leader was "*friendly and easy-going*", signifying good interpersonal skills. He also noted that his leader was "*an expert in what he did, he knew what he did and adopted the hands-on approach to achieving goals*". He explained that his leader led by example, whatever he told others to do, he also joined in, this shows expertise and ability to lead by example. He further noted that a skill that made his leader successful was "*his ability to approach and handle every situation strategically and think things through strategically*". This reveals the cognitive and strategic skills of his leader.

WR noted that her leader was "*appreciate, supportive, and hardworking*", she noted that her leader "*will keep late nights with other staff just to ensure that the job is done*". She noted that her leader was "*approachable, humble and communicative, when anyone encounters a challenge on the job, they could go to the leader and ask for advice*". This reflects good interpersonal skills. She further noted that her leader had good successfully communication skills as she could pass out "*what she wanted to be done with much clarity, especially in giving directions with needs to be done*". Furthermore, she noted that an essential skill that made her leader successful was the hardworking spirit especially in meeting up to deadlines, she explained that her leader never defaulted in meeting up to deadlines, this was partly due to her leader's ability to communicate and carry everyone on the job to ensure that everyone successfully achieves the roles.

OS explained that the skills his leader posed that was key to his success were "*patience, friendliness, ability to bond with other team members, develop the talents of others, vision to achieve task and communication*". He noted that his leader was "*easily approachable to listen to opinions and answer questions of others no matter how silly they are*". He further noted that the skills listed enable his leader to give "*adequate guidance to other staff members, enable them to take ownership of work, and achieve a task most efficiently*".

TL noted her leader was "*friendly, clear and strict about meeting expectations, the way an employee was treated was how well the employee met up to expectations and job roles*".

To her leader had “*good communication skills, was able to build and maintain relationships based on job and personal terms*”. She also noted her leader had good time management skills; she was able to manage time properly for the benefits of achieving projects. Furthermore, the ability to accommodate and understand every other team member was essential in driving oneness unity and the feeling of being among.

From the above data, it is evident that the skills leaders need to be successful are interpersonal skills, ability to motivate, expertise, and experience, communication, cognitive, and strategic thinking skills.

4.2.2. Discussion of Theme One

The value of leadership skills cannot be overemphasised in terms of leadership success, this is because the true test of a successful leader depends on the extent the leader can mobilise or stir the human elements of an organisation towards the greater achievement (Buil, Martínez and Matute, 2018). Leadership skills thus essentially make a leader successful (Chaimongkonrojna and Steane, 2015). Based on the data analysis it has been discovered that a combination of interpersonal skills, ability to motivate, expertise, and experience, communication, cognitive and strategic thinking skills are important skills a leader needs to possess, this is in line with findings on leadership skills in the literature review, within the literature review (section), it was discovered that essential skills a leader needs to be successful are (interpersonal, intrapersonal, social skills, cognitive skills, technical skills, etc). findings from the interviews reflect this, however in an in-depth perspective;

a. Interpersonal Skills (ability to communicate, interact and motivate teams)

Interpersonal skills refer to the ability to communicate and interact with people both as individuals and groups. Leaders with good communication skills tend to be very successful as WL pointed out that “*an essential skill I believe my leader has that is significant to her success is her interpersonal and communication skills as if leaders negatively approach you, you will be reluctant to get the task completed*”, also OS in the same vein with WL but not in the same words noted that an essential skill for his leader's success was “*the ability to communicate and bond well with individuals, providing answers to questions no matter how silly they are*”. From the two it can be noted that interpersonal skills are important for a leaders success, this is collaborated by Abbas

(2015) and Dai, Dai, Chen et al (2013), who pointed that people with strong interpersonal skills can work well with people in team settings or individually, likewise Buil, Martínez and Matute, (2019), and Chaimongkonrojna and Steane (2015), noted that people with interpersonal skills can effectively communicate with employees thus enabling them to do what is expected. Furthermore, Singh (2013), noted that with good interpersonal skills a leader can build positive relationships with employees thus enhancing a positive, cordial employee-employer relationship which is essential for a healthy workplace environment.

b. Expertise and Experience (Cognitive and technical skills)

Another important skill needed for leadership success as discovered by the interviews was expertise and experience, this was a discovery in line with the literature review which is classified as technical skills. According to Charles (2013), a leader needs to display expertise in his field of endeavour to show subordinates a better way to get the job done. Expert leaders give a positive impression to employees as they make better decisions, give better guidance and make better strategies, this is evident in the view of AI who stated that *“you cannot be a successful leader without expertise, my leader displays expertise in the area of mathematical coding, he knows the area very well thus he can adopt a hands-on approach to achieving goals”* This is further collaborated by Ertugrul and Krishnan (2011) and Haung (2016), who noted that for a leader expert power was more important than reward-based or coercive power, as with expert power, subordinates become more open to leader's efforts to guide them, also expert power enables leaders to easily motivate employees to reach their full potentials. Finally, expert skill is closely related to cognitive skills which makes a leader take better strategic decisions for the overall success of the organisation, this is supported by SM who stated that *“my leader has over 10 years work experience, he is an expert in his job, this makes him better at strategizing for company success”*.

Interpersonal skills enable leaders to communicate well, motivate, and bond well with employees, technical skills enhances decision making, ability to proffer guidance, and take strategic approaches toward tasks. These skills are thus important for leadership success.

4.2.3. Theme two: Leadership Skills Essential for Employee Productivity

To the different interviewees' productivity meant different things. Also, the type of leadership skills that enhanced their productivity varied

For SL, productivity meant *“being able to deliver on project deliverables on time, with the desired quality and standards, I work on several tasks including reviewing, auditing and doing gap analysis, productivity to me will be my ability to meet up with all this task at the required time”*. He noted that the right skills his leader possessed that enhanced his productivity was supervision, thus he stated that *“my leader constantly checks up on the team to discover if we had issues while performing tasks, he will then put you through on the right thing to do”* he also stated that my leader *“had a lot of experience on the job, this enhanced the ability of my leader to provide qualitative technical advice on how to perform certain tasks”*, furthermore, he stated that *“my leader coaches me on the right things to do while at work, he is very approachable and always willing to offer help”*

HN noted that productivity was *“ability to meet up with and achieve set targets as determined by my workplace, productivity to me will also be exceeding expectations of the bank. Due to my work in the credit and loans department, I could not stop the different request for loans that come in, however, it is my duty to ensure that loan request is being processed, thus how effective and fast I can work on loans determines my productivity”*. To her, leadership was able to enhance her productivity through *“constant involvement in tasks set for the day, my leader always tries to enable members of the team to work for themselves, she teaches us how to manage several responsibilities, take initiatives and carry out proper transactions. She has confidence that employees will carry out tasks effectively based on what she has taught them”*. To her, her leader aided her productivity by *“instilling leadership responsibilities in us which helps us properly execute task”*.

DN stated that to him *“productivity was keeping up with customers, ensuring that customers were satisfied with the kind of services delivered and also teaching customers on self-care services, how many calls I was able to pick per day and solve the challenges faced by customers determines my productivity. My leader is able to enhance my productivity by keeping track of targets, thus making everyone in the team achieve the desire targets set in a day”* He further explained that *“there are usually lots of targets to meet daily, weekly, monthly and yearly, sometimes the team ends up forgetting some of the targets, however, my leader always reminds us of the targets, making sure we did the right thing”*. Furthermore, his leader was straightforward and explicit, *“she will tell you when you are dwindling or declining in meeting targets, this enabled everyone to sit up to meet up with targets”*.

To AI, productivity was *“ensuring all statistical tasks were carried out with the appropriate mathematical assumptions and techniques. Since my job is mainly coding and interpreting statistical data for my company, how well I reviewed and presented data in readable forms determines my productivity”*. He noted that his leader enhanced his productivity by *“offering tangible advice when needed, my leader is an expert in mathematical and statistical analysis hence, he offered grounded advice on the most efficient way to analyse data”*. AI further noted that *“when I am unclear about anything, I could always walk up to my leader and I was sure to get the appropriate answer, He was able to communicate effectively what needs to be done, share strategy, explain how different pieces of the work come together and further enable all members of the team come together in a manner that everyone feels important to the overall policy”*.

To WL, productivity was *“ability to achieve tasks with a 70% success rating, my task involves auditing, setting meetings with clients, training junior staffs, reviewing documents and communicating with management concerning the general performance of the workplace, achieving all this task with a high rate determines my productivity”*. She further noted that her leader enhanced her productivity by *“daily keeping track of what needs to be done. We have daily morning meetings where we discuss what task was achieved the previous day, which were carried over to the present day, and which task needs to be achieved in the present day. This enables everyone to keep track of tasks”*. Furthermore, she noted that her leader *“gave tangible advice, and communicated properly on issues that need to be done, she was able to give the right guidance on the right thing to do”*.

From the above, explanations, it can be said that productivity meant the ability to efficiently execute tasks within the required timeframe and with the best results. The extent to which tasks are completed in such a way that it meets up to the quality and desired standards determined the productivity of an employee. The skills leaders have that enhance productivity include; supervision, ability to communicate required results, provide guidance through experience, and training staff to handle certain responsibilities without needing guidance in other words developing leadership skills amongst employees.

4.2.4. Discussions on Theme Two

Employee productivity is an important factor in organisational performance, as the productivity of employees determines the extent to which tasks are carried out both effectively and efficiently. The findings from the interviews concerning productivity is in line with the discovery made from the literature review, productivity for most of the interviewees meant the ability to perform tasks well and in an acceptable and quality manner, this is in line with the findings from the literature review (section,) which revealed that productivity was the ability of staff to meet up with tasks and achieve the desired output. This is further collaborated by Hughes, Ginnett and Curphey (2012), and James (2017), who explained that productivity ensures that objectives of the organisation are being met which leads to the progressive growth of the organisations, furthermore productivity of the employees increases the profit of the business, this, in turn, elevates the success of the organisation and leads to more salaries and better working conditions for employees. The productivity of employees thus is essential to organisational performance.

It has also been discovered by the analysis of interviews, that leadership plays an important role in the productivity of staff, this discovery is in line with the literature review, however, findings from the interviewees reveal better explanations of the process leadership influences productivity of staff. These findings are explained in the sub-themes below;

a. Supervision

One-way leaders enhanced employee productivity from the interviews was through supervision. In explaining the process of supervision, Kearns, Livingston, Scherer et al (2015), notes that accurate supervision includes; planning and allocation of work, making strategic decisions, monitoring compliance of staff to task, laws, and performance, ensuring workforce involvement, and building teamwork. Supervision of employees is important in ensuring productivity as it enhances how employees are being guided, instructed, and level of compliance to work (Noor, Mohamad and Abdullah, 2017), supervision thus minimises the risk of errors on the job which can cause delays in executing tasks.

b. Communication

Another skill required for leaders to enhance productivity as discovered from the interviews was communication. The value of effective communication by leaders is an

essential, Ertugrul and Krishnan (2011), note that leaders must be aware of the impact of communication on employees, effective communication aids in planning, organising, leading, and controlling. Effective communication enables employees to know “*what to do, how to do, where to do, and when to do*” tasks. For communication to elicit a positive result on the employees it must be guided by the 7 C’s of communication which are; clarity, correctness, completeness, concrete, conciseness, considerable and courteous (Ulrich, Zenger and Smallwood, 2013). Communication enhances the flow of information between leaders and employees and vis-versa, therefore enhancing the relationship, trust, and synergy between a leader and members of the team, thus improving productivity.

c. Training staff to handle responsibilities themselves

These skills were important to productivity as leaders who could train their staff on what to do were assured that staff would get the job done, especially when they are not around. Kearns, Livingston, Scherer et al (2015) explained that training staff to handle responsibilities further improved on staff loyalty through stimulating the feeling of importance and significance to the work environment. Also, Ertugrul and Krishnan (2011), explained that the ability for leaders to train team members shows a replication of leadership skills hence leaders enhance the ability of staff to be more productive.

The above skills have been discovered from the interviews to be essential for effective leadership, according to James (2017), ineffective leaders were the major causes of low employee productivity, ineffective leaders could not properly coordinate affairs of employees thus leading to low morale, low motivation, satisfaction, and productivity, James (2017), further noted that 75% of employees in the US quit their jobs because of their leaders or supervisors. However, good leaders were able to keep employee motivation high, reward employees, inspire, and coordinate employees for better productivity.

4.2.5. Theme Three: Leadership Skills that enhance Goal Attainment

Goal attainment is linked with employee productivity, however, goal attainment is broader than productivity, as while productivity centres on individual work task, attainment of goals desired a more collective effort, hence, to attain goals employees must work in a team (Jong and Hartog, 2007). Furthermore, goals are effectively attained through strategies, several of the interviews explained how their leaders had enhanced their capability to work in a team and made strategies for goal attainment

OS noted that his leader enhanced teamwork through *“regularly discussing objectives, keeping track of tasks on each employee, and having collective discussions on how goals can be effectively achieved, my leader encouraged team members through career and personal development endeavours hence enhancing how they tackled goals”*. he noted that his leader gives *“priority to the team roles by constantly reminding team members the need for teamwork”*. Furthermore, he noted that another way his leader enhanced teamwork was through *“decentralisation of duties, this enhances teamwork through collective sharing of duties, decentralisation enhanced the speed by which task was achieved, thus enhancing the achievement of goals”*. He explained that his leader was good at *“developing strategies, as he was a critical and pre-emptive person always anticipating and desiring to achieve greater goals”*.

To TL, her leader enhanced teamwork through the *“sharing of projects and tasks, my leader shared task to the team, however, kept us on check to always discover how efficiently we were at carrying out tasks. Delegation ensured that staffs did the right thing, as we constantly had to report to the leader on how tasks were managed. Delegation also enhanced the quick completion of tasks which affects the overall goal attainment levels”*. In drafting strategies, she noted that her leader was good at *“developing strategies, by looking for different ways to achieve tasks, which included listening to other perspectives on how to strategize and make goals achievable”*

SL noted that his leader *“supported both teamwork and individual work, teamwork through regular training and collective meetings with different roles in the team. Individual work by setting sessions for performance reviews, by this, my leader to knows how each member of the team had achieved a task and what problems they were currently encountering or had encountered. Collective sessions also gave room for other members of the team to proffer advice on how tasks could be better achieved and challenges efficiently tackled”*. He further noted that *“through delegation, his leader ensured that all members of the team efficiently learned how to tackle tasks, work together on a project, and finally meet their objectives”*. He also noted that his leader took a *“pragmatic and critical approach towards strategizing”*

HN explained that her leader enhanced teamwork through *“improving the value of working in teams, i.e bringing certain tasks and coordinating the team to work together to achieve the task. My leader was able to create a balance between teamwork and*

individual work by creating tasks for both teams and individuals. Through decentralisation, my leader was able to create the team spirit amongst employees, as decentralisation gave staff the feeling that they were valued and had sufficient knowledge to carry out tasks". In a departure from other opinions about their leaders, HN noted that her leader was *"effective in setting out task however was ineffective in following up with tasks. The level of freedom her leader gave team members was too much that it led to many not achieving goals and tasks"*.

From the above, it can be concluded that leadership skills of decentralisation, delegation, promoting cooperation during work were essential for building team spirit, hence, enhancing teamwork. Furthermore, through critical thinking and enhancing collective decision-making leaders were able to make better strategies for goal attainment.

4.2.6. Discussions on Theme Three

Goal attainment refers to the extent to which organisational objectives and targets are met. Goal attainment is broader than productivity, as while productivity is achieved when employees work individually on separate tasks, goals are attained based on collective efforts i.e teamwork (Jong and Hartog, 2007). From the interviews, it was discovered that for leaders to effectively achieve goals, they must possess skills that enhance teamwork spirit, cooperation, and coordination through decentralisation and delegation. Furthermore, leaders must be able to strategize effectively to create plans and implement them for the efficient achievement of goals. These two subthemes are discussed below;

a. Decentralisation and Delegation

From the analysis of the interviews, it was discovered that decentralisation, delegation and promoting cooperation during work were essential for building team spirit hence enhancing teamwork, this is a rare discovery that is not contained in the literature review, Abbas (2015), explains that the task of many leaders has been evolving and expanding in the 21st century, leaders now have to manage several tasks which if not managed properly may result in the sluggish attainment of goals, hence, decentralisation and delegation becomes important as it breaks down tasks into a smaller section which team members can handle thus enabling the entire team to participate in tasks. Decentralisation and delegation also enable information sharing amongst teams, since each member of the team had to work on a collective task, however, in different stages, there is more synergy between teams, hence, improving teamwork. Decentralisation and delegation also enhance

performance feedback, where collective appraisals are done on the task. Jong and Hartog (2007), studies revealed that decentralised or delegated teams were more productive, had better record-keeping abilities, and increased revenue of the organisation. Decentralisation and delegation further motivated teams as they were given a sense of value and responsibility to carry out tasks (Lalatendu, 2016). Decentralisation and delegation is a significant technique in quickly achieving goals, however as discovered from the analysis of interviews, acute delegation or decentralisation without proper supervision may lead to nonchalance amongst staff towards achieving goals, hence adequate supervision is needed to ensure that staff keeps up to roles, expectations and their share of the vision to foster the achievement of ideal outcomes and goals.

b. Ability to Strategize

Furthermore, as discovered from the interviews, strategizing is important for the achievement of organisational goals, Paramova and Blumberg (2017), noted that strategic planning provides a sense of direction by outlining measurable goals and how to attain them. Furthermore, strategic planning was essential in governing daily decisions and evaluating progress and making changes while moving forward (Robbins and Judge, 2017). The ability of a leader to strategically plan through critical thinking, collective decision making, and pragmatic steps was essential in ensuring that organisational goals were achieved.

4.2.7. Theme Four: Leadership Skills that Stimulate Employee Commitment

Employee commitment is displayed in the loyalty of employees towards an organisation. Certain leadership skills and behaviours are necessary for influencing employee loyalty.

DN, noted that his leader was able to stimulate his loyalty to his workplace by “*instilling a sense of value to the workplace, due to my leader, I am always looking forward to resuming work, not considering the pressures of demanding nature of the work, my leader makes the job interesting and exciting*”. He further noted that though his leader “*did not provide material motivations, he was excellent with non-material motivations, such as warm handshakes, sharing of sweets, recognition, a round of applause, and allowing employees to go home early if they met up to tasks*”. DN also noted that his leader enabled him to abide by “*organisation values through constantly reminding them about organisational values and how they could meet them*”. This enhanced his loyalty to the

organisation. He noted that he was not considering leaving his current workplace even if offered another job with better pay, this was because of his leader.

To AI, his leader was able to stimulate his loyalty through “*setting exemplary leadership, he was experienced and had a good knowledge of what he did, this was encouraging that the higher management was able to discover someone with such talents as his leader and place him in a leadership position, this keeps me motivated that if I keep at my work I would one day become a leader too, this stimulates greater loyalty to my workplace*”. AI further noted that his leader did not provide any form of material rewards as it was not within his leader’s responsibility to provide material rewards, however, non-material rewards were provided, such as “*giving an avenue for growth, handling more task and job roles, recognition, and appreciation*”. He also noted that his leader was able to keep him abiding by organisational values through “*exemplary leadership, he was a walking reflection of organisational values hence I am convicted to do the same*”.

WL noted that her leader was able to develop her feeling of loyalty to her workplace through “*constant motivations and creating a sense of belonging. She provides me with both material motivations in forms of increased salaries, financial compensations bonuses, and non-material motivations, such as claps, appreciations, thumbs up, good working conditions, work leaves, extra annual leaves*”. She also noted that her leader provided both direct and indirect motivations “*direct motivations are material and non-material rewards, while indirect motivations were through hard work, expertise and an exemplary lifestyle which was worthy of emulation*”. Hence, she is indirectly motivated by her leader as she sees her as a mentor.

Like WL, OS noted that his leader was able to instil loyalty through motivations, however, he noted that “*material motivation was not provided by my leader but by higher management, however, my leader provided all forms of non-material motivations such praise, recognition, and trust, this improves my feeling of value and psychological importance to the workplace*”. He further noted that his leader was able to enhance his ability to keep up with organisational values through “*constantly reminding team members of organisational values, he designed tasks in methods which they could be easily achieved and assigning tasks to who is most suitable for the job, this enhances my feeling of importance as I was given the right task that matches my skills*”.

From the above, as DN, AI and OS revealed that despite material motivations were not provided to by their leader, non-material motivations such as handshakes, appreciations, going home early, etc made a significant impact on their feeling of importance hence increasing their level of loyalty to the organisation. Thus, this signifies that non-material motivations are essential for employee commitment and loyalty. Furthermore, in ensuring employee commitment and loyalty, leaders had to take effective steps to ensure that employees uphold organisational values, hence as DN and OS noted their leaders did this through the constant reminder of organisational values, while AI and WL noted that this was done through exemplary leadership

4.2.8. Discussions of Theme Four

a. Non-Material Motivations

Motivations are essential to keeping employees committed and loyal to an organisation, motivation creates an attachment between employees and the workplace. Motivations also allow employees to meet their own needs thus resulting in satisfaction and self-actualisation. It thus becomes important for leaders to appropriately keep their staff motivated for better commitment and loyalty. From the literature review, it was observed that the major sources of motivations were material (pay, salaries, monetary incentives) and nonmaterial (handshakes, appreciations, recognition, trust, leaves, etc). However, from the interviews, it was discovered that non-material motivations served an important role in influencing employee loyalty than material motivation. This is not downplaying the effects of material rewards, however from the analysis of interviews, though material rewards were not provided to employees directly by the leader, non-material rewards were a significant factor that stirred up loyalty. This is collaborated by Robbins and Judge (2017), and Kehinde and Banjo (2014), who noted that material rewards were only significant in keeping employees satisfied however non-material rewards are essential in creating a bond of loyalty between employees and the workplace. Kearns, Livingston, Scherer, et al. (2015), also explained that non-material rewards provided a form of an intrinsic feeling of value and importance in the mind of employees thus keeping them attached to the workplace. The attributes of leaders to provide non-material motivations thus enhances the loyalty of employees to the workplace.

b. Exemplary Leadership

Exemplary leadership is essential in stirring up loyalty amongst employees, especially in abiding by organisational values, exemplary leaders encourages employees to act the way they do, hence serving as good role models to employees (Abbas, 2015). Lalatendu, (2016), noted that through exemplary leadership, employee commitment can be instilled in the hearts of employees, further setting good standards of behaviour which is beneficial for the organisation. From the interviews AI, OS and WL noted this, that their leaders were good reflections of organisational value hence stirring them to do the same. Furthermore, in generating employee commitment through abiding by organisational values, leaders must be clear about organisational guiding principles and constantly remind employees to work with them. The easiest way to do this is through exemplary leadership. Leading by example is thus an essential skill that leaders must possess to enhance employee loyalty and commitment.

4.3. Summary of the Research Findings

In providing a summary of the research finding, it was worthy to make a recap of the major findings of the research and link them to the research objectives. This study is focused on discovering the impact of leadership skills on organisational performance, to achieve this, four (4) research objectives were posed, the findings of the research has successfully achieved the objectives. The below provides the explanations of the research findings in relation to the objectives of the study;

R O 1: To critically investigate the skills that make leaders successful

From the findings of the interviews, it was discovered that the skills needed to make leaders successful were; Interpersonal skills, the ability to motivate, expertise, and experience, communication, cognitive, and strategic thinking skills. Interpersonal skills were essential in communicating and relating with other team members, to enhance their productivity. Ability to motivate ensured that the team was always high spirited and possessed the adequate morale and drive to productivity, expertise, and experience enhanced the leader's ability to offer tangible advice and also help team members in overcoming difficult challenges. Furthermore, cognitive and strategic thinking skills enhanced the leader's ability to combine and analyse information further producing valuable results in the organisation.

R.O 2: To empirically discover the leadership skill that is shown to be effective in enhancing productivity amongst employees

From the interviews, it was discovered that the ability of leaders to supervise, communicate required results, provide guidance through experience, and train staff to handle certain responsibilities without needing guidance in other words developing leadership skills amongst employees was essential in improving productivity amongst employees. Employees productivity is improved when they are constantly being supervised to ensure they are complying to what is required on the job, also accurate two-sided communication is essential to inform employees on the intended results as well as feedback the leader on employee performance, developing leadership skills amongst employees is also a part of supervision which ensured that employees understood what is expected and implemented what is expected without much guidance. The combination of these skills enables employees to improve the quality and standard of tasks they perform.

R. O.3: To investigate the relationship between leadership skills and goal attainment

From the analysis of interviews, it is revealed that the relationship between leadership skills and goal attainment is a positive one, as leadership skills of delegation and decentralisation were essential in promoting cooperation during work and also for building team spirit hence enhancing teamwork which was pertinent for the achievement of the overall goals of an organisation. Furthermore, with leadership skills such as cognitive, critical thinking, and effective strategizing a leader was able to develop standard plans that foster the attainment of organisational goals.

R.O.4: To empirically investigate the influence of leadership skills on employee commitment

From the analysis of interviews, it was discovered that for leaders to be able to influence employees and get them committed, they must possess the ability to psychologically motivate employees and also lead by example. Psychological motivation is a more non-material form of motivation (handshakes, appreciation, a round of applause, and recognition). These forms of motivations enhance the feeling of value and sense of belonging amongst employees thus leading to greater commitment and loyalty. Furthermore, exemplary leadership was an important source of influence for commitment

as leaders who are the perfect reflection of humility, loyalty and commitment could indirectly motivate employees to do the same.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter provided the analysis of data based on interviews collected, the data was further collaborated with other secondary literature to provide poignant arguments and discussions concerning the findings. This was done in accordance with the research methodology as documented in chapter three (3). In an overall explanation, the researcher can accurately say that leadership skills are important for organisational performance, as without proper leadership skills, a leader will be ineffective leading to poor policies, strategies, unmotivated and unproductive workforce which was bound to culminate in low performance of the organisation, it was thus worthwhile for leadership to cultivate the appropriate skills.

Despite the above, some salient issues need to be addressed, from the data gathered, it says technical skills is important. There is however a difference between technical skills and managerial skills. Technical skills refer to the application of experience and skill knowledge in executing a task, managerial skills, however, refer to the overall ability to administer a group of people (Abbas, 2015). Both skills were significant in this research.

Furthermore, this research has been a departure from the past literature and research, as it investigated leadership skills from the perspective of the employees instead of the leaders. Most skills necessary for leadership success discovered by this research was similar especially interpersonal, technical skills, expertise and experience communication and strategic thinking. However, the new set of skills discovered from the employee perspective were exemplary leadership, ability to give non-material motivations, decentralisation and training team members to handle responsibilities themselves. The next chapter provides the conclusion of the research.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF THIS RESEARCH, ITS

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1. Implication of The Research Findings from the Research Questions

Leadership skills are essential to a leader as they provide a set of influential qualities and abilities which enhance the ability to motivate, coordinate, and drive individuals or team members towards a greater purpose, vision, and achievement of goals. In the first chapter of this research, it was discussed that leadership skills had been an area of academic research especially in the 21st century since the rise of corporate organisations, scholars like Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, (2008) and Kalsoon, Khan and Zubair (2018), have investigated the need for leadership in the 21st century and discovered that leadership was an essential sphere of humans especially in 21st century which is grossly characterised by business organisations. With adequate leadership, business organisations can improve their performance in the marketplace further generating more profits that lead to the success of the leader. By and large, the success, prosperity, and positive performance of an organisation are significantly linked to the success of a leader and a leaders' success is judged by the success, prosperity, or positive performance of the organisation or team which he/she leads. Despite the availability of much research on leadership, this study identified a major gap in existing studies, as the centre of most academic analysis on leadership such as the works of Ahmed (2005), Boatright (2009) and Edersheim (2007), focused mainly on the leaders perspective of leadership skills, thus looking at leadership skills from the internal perspective. This research, on the other hand, tried to investigate leadership skills from the employee perspective thus looking at what employees “have to say about their leaders” and how it influences organisational performance as against previous investigations which mainly looked at “what leaders themselves have to say concerning their success”. To achieve this, the research posed two research questions. The below reveals the questions and discusses the implication of the research findings on the research questions

R Q 1: What are the effects of leadership skills on productivity amongst employees of financial firms in Ireland

This question was drafted in relation to Huusko (2006), and Ahmed (2005), who noted that leadership skills could significantly impact the extent to which employees achieve their task, effective leadership could significantly aid in the quality and standard completion of jobs, however ineffective leadership could significantly demotivate employees thus causing a decline in task completion rates. From the literature review, it was discovered that skills such as; cognitive and technical skills, interpersonal and communication skills were essential for enhancing productivity.

The findings from the literature review and results from the analysis of interviews were in harmony. The findings of the study revealed that Interpersonal skills improved the relationship and bonding between leaders and other team members, communication skills further enabled the leader to pass information across accurately thus eliciting the desired results. Cognitive and strategic thinking skills aided the leader in better decision making, technical skills which were manifested in experience and expertise enhanced the leader's ability to provide useful guidance and advice to employees needing help to overcome a work-related challenge. The overall findings thus reveal the answer to the research question which serves as the implication of the findings of the study to this particular question, in the sense that the impact of leadership skills on employee productivity is positive as leadership skills such as interpersonal skills enables leaders to be more approachable and friendly thus giving employees the freedom to approach him/her and get solutions to problems, communication skills, on the other hand, enhanced the leader's capacity to pass the message across thereby resulting in positive actions from employees, technical and cognitive skills enables the leader to offer grounded guidance based on experience and expertise which enables the employees to carry out better. This question has thus been adequately answered by the research findings. The research findings are also in line with what organisations are saying as the same skills needed for successful leadership as discovered from the employees are the same skills noted from leadership perspective.

R Q 2: How does leadership skills influence employee commitment towards organizational performance

This question was posed based on the findings of Bennis (2003) and Dixon and Hart (2010) who explained that leadership skills served as a major influence to employees, which was capable of stirring up commitment leading to organisational performance. Leadership to Batool (2013), means the ability to influence and inspire people, hence leadership skills served as a form of stimulus that stimulates employee commitment and loyalty to the organisation. This was further discussed in the literature review, as employee commitment signified loyalty and obedience to organisational values which are significant in improving the performance of the organisation. The results of this study revealed that leadership skills such as the ability to motivate (via non-material forms of motivation) and lead by example served as a significant influence to employee commitment, this is because non-material forms of motivation give employees a sense of belonging and value, they feel they are important to the organisation, thus they become more loyal and are not likely to quit their job. This is in line with both Maslow's theory of needs and Herzberg's two factor theory, as they both discussed that non-material forms of motivation are essential in keeping employees committed and loyal in the long-term Lalatendu (2016). Furthermore, exemplary leadership encouraged and instilled a sense of purpose in employees, employees are more loyal to leaders who "do as they say", furthermore, exemplary leadership instils a form of responsibility on the side of employees thus "if their leader does it, they should also do it" this is significant in provoking employee commitment as if a leader displays loyalty to an organisation, employees are likely to do the same. This finding on the research question implies that the most form of influential leadership is leadership that impacts on the psychological nature of employees and leaders that lead by example.

5.2. Contributions and Limitations of the Study

The essence of all academic endeavour is to provide new knowledge or upgrade knowledge; hence, a significant aspect of any research is how well its findings can be adopted by academia or for practical. This research has provided contributions to both knowledge and practice;

In contributing to knowledge, the research has upgraded knowledge to discover that leadership skills play an important role in organisational performance, leadership skills resonate positively with employees thus enhancing their productivity, loyalty, and commitment to goal attainment. Leadership skills such as interpersonal skills and communication skills were essential to building a positive relationship between leaders and teammates or employees when leaders can successfully bond with employees, they can drive them towards achieving better goals and organisational success. Leaders that were also approachable, friendly, and motivators were better chanced to develop a more committed workforce that strife for better organisational performance. This research also contributes to knowledge by looking at leadership from the perspectives of employees, thus discovering that employees relate better to leaders who “lead by examples”, employees further appreciate a leader who delegates duty and accords them with leadership opportunities, in order to grow their skills and sense of responsibility. Furthermore, this research has contributed by noting that supervision plays an important role in leadership, leaders should be able to delegate duties however still find time to supervise employees as an acute delegation or decentralisation may result in lazy workers taking advantage of much freedom and not meeting up to their task.

Leadership skills such as interpersonal skills and communication skills were essential to building a positive relationship between leaders and teammates or employees when leaders can successfully bond with employees, they can drive them towards achieving better goals and organizational success.

In contribution to practice, this study has discovered ways by which leaders can be effective and lead their organisations on the road of better goal attainment and productivity. The research has contributed to practical aspects of leadership by providing a set of skills that leaders need to develop to enhance their capacity for motivating teams and driving them towards greater goal attainment.

5.2.1. Limitations

Despite the successes of this research, certain limitations were encountered, the major limitation was in the choice of methodology (interpretivism philosophy, qualitative surveys, and interviews) this research methodology provides an in-depth explanation with a limited number of samples; thus, the findings cannot be generalised. This is because qualitative studies do not provide an adequate representation of a phenomenon hence its

findings cannot be generalised, thus the findings of this study may differ when conducted a different sample size. Also, time-limited research, as the researcher was working based on an academic calendar that did not provide ample time for longitudinal studies which are better reliable in terms of findings and discoveries.

The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown also served as a limitation as the researcher was unable to source enough data through the conduct of interviews due to the restriction of movement and social distancing regulations

Another limitation was that the researcher is a nervous researcher, perhaps or maybe a skilled researcher may have been able to discover a deeper meaning from the interviewee's responses.

The final limitation is in relation to the focus of study which is the financial sector in Ireland, the reason for focusing on this sector is due to the financial failures which can be attributed to the demise of leadership, however, this does not rule out the fact that the results of the study would have proven differently if another sector was the centre of analysis.

5.3. Recommendation for Practice

Based on the findings of this study, that reveals that leadership skills are important for organisational performance, the following are recommendations for leaders to adopt

- i. Leaders should be experts in their field as employees relate more to leaders who display expertise, knowledge, and experience on their job roles.
- ii. Leaders should develop positive communication skills, leaders should be able to pass information across properly and also receive feedback, furthermore, leaders should be able to tell employees to “do something” in way that employees possess the internal conviction to do it rather than do it as a form of necessity.
- iii. Leaders should be continuous students, continually learning how to improve relationships with subordinates and stir subordinates towards better achievement.
- iv. Leaders should imbibe the act of leading by examples, employees and subordinates root more for leaders who “act as they say” rather than act differently from “what they say”

- v. There is a need for the development of technical and managerial skills amongst leaders and managers alike. This will ensure that leaders have both the technical expertise required to lead teams and managerial skills needed to administer a team.

5.4. Recommendations of Future Research

Based on the limitations of the study which were mainly methodological, the following are recommendations for further research;

- i. Further research can be conducted using quantitative analysis i.e using questionnaires, larger samples, and statistical tools, this will enhance the ability of leadership studies to get a wider range of responses that can be adopted for generalisation
- ii. Research can conduct longitudinal studies i.e studies different samples at different times further drawing data and making comparisons, this will be essential in testing the reliability of studies
- iii. The findings of this research can be converted to a hypothesis and tested on a particular population to discover areas of similarities or differences.
- iv. This research can further be conducted to test for the reliability of its findings, thus proving or disproving its findings.

5.6. Conclusion and Reflections

In concluding this research, it is worthy to note that leadership is an integral part of human society, humans have since time immemorial lived under groups headed by a leader, despite this research focusing entirely on business leadership, essential qualities of leadership as discovered by the research such as interpersonal skills, communication skills, leading by example can be imbibed by different leaders across every field.

This research has successfully fulfilled its objectives by discovering the impact of leadership skills on organisational performance, thereby noting that leadership skills are essential to every leader, leaders should, therefore, learn and practice the skills pointed out in this study as they significantly can boost a leaders capacity to motivate team members towards better performance.

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Appendix A: Plain Statement



GRIFFITH COLLEGE DUBLIN

Griffith College GBS

Plain Language Statement

I. Introduction to the Research Study

Research Study Title: An Evaluation of Leadership skills on Organizational Performance in Financial Firms in Ireland.

University and Department Involved: GRIFFITH COLLEGE/ GRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOL / MASTERS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Principal Investigator: Seyi Ayomide Adesanya 3009559

II. Details of what involvement in the Research Study will require

This dissertation aims at **evaluating leadership skills on organizational performance in financial firms in Ireland**, this research will involve conducting interviews with selected employees of financial firms to get indepth information concerning this research study. This research will be done remotely via zoom, skype or phone interviews. The interview will be recorded for the purpose of this study and this. Information will only be used for the purpose of this study. This will further be used to answer research questions.

III. Potential risks to participants from involvement in the Research Study (if greater than that encountered in everyday life)

As participants in this research, this research study bears no risk to you or your workplace as data is protected by law.

IV. Benefits (direct or indirect) to participants from involvement in the Research Study

Participants will derive significant benefits from participating in the research, as the study itself has a latent objective of discovering ways to improve leadership skills, hence when the research is completed it will serve as a good source of information to

leaders and managers on how to improve on their leadership skills which will translate to better working conditions for employees.

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations

This interview will be recorded for the purpose of this study and as a result, every information provided by the participants will be protected and used for the purpose of this research only. I will make sure that there is confidentiality of information for all the data gathered and it will be protected by the law. Also, the participants will confirm that I have interviewed him or her so as to takeaway every form of doubt.

VI. Advice as to whether or not data is to be destroyed after a minimum period

Data collected for this research is not to be destroyed as referrals may be made to it, to authenticate that the student collected the data from reliable sources, and also to keep for future reference and example as to what empirical data involves

VII. Statement that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary;

I confirm that participants are in no way forced to be part of this study, they may choose to withdraw from the research at any point in time with justifiable reason, also participants are interviewed at their own free will and not under the use of force or duress. Your involvement or non-involvement in this project will not affect the ongoing assessment or grades of the researcher irrespective of the relationship with the researcher.

VIII. Any other relevant information

The research will be conducted using best ethical practices to ensure safety of participants. However, if participants are concerned about the research process or need further clarifications, please contact;

Please contact:

Dr Garrett Ryan,

Griffith College Research Ethics Committee

South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Ireland

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Appendix B: Consent Form



GRIFFITH COLLEGE DUBLIN

Griffith College GBS
Informed Consent Form

- I. I MN voluntarily agree to participate to participate in this research study**
- II. I understand that the title of this research study is ‘An Evaluation of Leadership Skills on Organizational Performance in Financial Firms in Ireland’**

University and Department Involved: **GRIFFITH COLLEGE/ GRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOL/MASTERS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

Principal Investigator: **Seyi Adesanya**

- III. Clarification of the purpose of the research**

The central purpose of this research is to investigate the link between leadership skills and organizational performance, thereby drawing conclusions on what best leadership skills can improve organizational performance in financial firms in Ireland

- IV. Confirmation of particular requirements as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement**

Requirements of this research will include interviews and audio for authentication that the research was duly conducted

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

<i>I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>I understand the information provided</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>I am aware that my interview will be audiotaped</i>	<i>Yes</i>

- V. Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary**

I hereby confirm that involvement in this research is purely voluntarily and I can withdraw from the study at any point with justifiable reasons.

VI. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations

I confirm that I have been advised that my actual name and contact details will be protected, and all effort will be made to ensure my anonymity and data collected will be stored safely and analysed only by the researcher.

VII. Any other relevant information

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

VIII. Signature:

Participants Signature:



Name in Block Capitals: MN

Witness: YZ

Date: 19 Jul, 2020

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

Hello,

Thank you once again for your participation, please can you confirm you read the plain language statement and consent form? And also confirm that you're participating at your own free will and also aware that this interview will be recorded for transcription accuracy purposes only?

Also, I am reaffirming that your responses are entirely confidential and your name and any other name mentioned this interview will be stated as anonymized.

QUESTIONS

1. What does productivity mean for you?
 - i. **How will you explain your task in your place of work and how you are able to meet them?**

2. Does your leader/manager help you to be productive?
 - i. **Does your leader/manager enable you to achieve task better?**
 - ii. **What skills does your leader have that influences you to achieve your task more efficiently?**

3. How has your leader or manager enabled you to overcome challenges and barriers at your workplace?

4. How will you describe your leader or manager?
 - i. **Does your leader/manager maintain strict contractual relationship?**
 - ii. **Does your leader/manager stir you to achieve goals for the benefit of your workplace?**

5. How good is your leader in maintaining relationship with subordinates?
 - i. **Is your leader/manager strict, jovial or?**
 - ii. **Is he/she aggressive, ruthless, and friendly?**

6. In your opinion will you say your leader/manager is successful? If yes why? If no why?
 - i. **What skills or qualities will you say are the most important in making your leader/manager successful?**
 - ii. **What skills or qualities do you think your leader/manager should develop to make him/her more effective?**

7. How does your leader/manager stir you towards goal attainment?
 - i. **Does he/she value teamwork over individual work? Or Vis-Versa? If yes how? If no why?**

- ii. **Does he/she appreciate decentralisation or delegation? If yes how? If no why?**

- 8. How effective is your leader in setting plans, making decisions and developing strategies
 - i. **Is he/she critical, dogmatic or ideological?**

- 9. How has your leader/manager made you more loyal to your organisation?
 - i. **Does he/she provide both material and non-material motivations, if yes how? if no why do you say so?**
 - ii. **Does he/she help you to abide by organisational values?, if yes how? if no why do you say so?**
- 10. If you were offered another job with a better pay than your current job will you take it? If yes how? If no why?
 - i. **Does your leader/manager have anything to do with your response above?**

Open-ended question: Please do you have any additional opinion or response which has not been contained in this interview.

Thank you.

Appendix D: Transcript of HN Interview

I: Thank you once again for your participation, please can you confirm you read the plain language statement and consent form please?

R: Yes I did

I: And also can you confirm you are participating at your own free will and also aware that this interview will be recorded for transcription accuracy purposes only

R: Yes I am aware

I: Also, I am re-affirming that your responses are entirely confidential and your name and any other names mentioned in the course of this interview will be stated as anonymous. Just making that clear once again

I: So can you tell me where you work and your job role please?

R: Okay I currently work as a contractor at AIB, that is Allied Irish Bank and what I do for the bank is I work on the credit side of things, so we deal in loan application, processing it from start to finish but my team in particular would handle all the card loans request for the bank.

I: Okay so I will just start with the questions now.

I: What does productivity mean for you

R: Productivity means we have set out target we want to achieve and been able to achieve that within the agreed days with the bank and even exceeding the expectations of the bank, so daily as we go into our daily task we should be looking towards achieving everything that we have set together as a team and that's a productive day for me when we have met all those objectives.

I: How will you explain your task in your place of work and how you are able to meet them?

R: Because we can't control the number of loan applications that comes into the bank, I just try to go in thinking it can be a busy day, it might be a light day, just being prepared for whatever day is going to be because you can't really have any control over the loan applications, so I try to set a target for myself, that when I go into the office every loan application that comes into the my tray is going to be looked at by me, so yes that is how I am able to meet my target, and my task in my team is like the very first part of when the loan applications comes in, I just look through the loan and try to do the very first process by running the loan, if it is going to be accepted, if it's going to be rejected or if we need further information from the dealer submitting the request.

I: Does your leader/manager help you to be productive?

R: Oh yes definitely, she set the pace for team goals, she is determinant in how the goals will be able to go through, so yes she does help me to be productive

I: Does your leader/manager enable you to achieve task better?

R:

Yes I would say yes for the most part, her leadership style is a bit different from what I am used to, coming from a different financial institution in a different country, however in an Irish financial institution settings, I would say yes she does help me to be productive in a way that is cultural to institutions here.

I: What skills does your leader have that influences you to achieve your task more efficiently?

R: So her leadership style that I was saying earlier question is one where she guides you to lead yourself, so all she does is just set a general tone for what she wants the team to

work at, so you do most things on your own , like you basically manage yourself. She teaches you to take responsibility. So you can go through the day without having to touch points with her, so she does not micromanage you, and that has helped me to be productive because I am able to take initiative, it makes me bolder and confident because I know she instructed me to just carry on and power through my transactions by myself, so the characteristics that helps me to that is that she is very laid back and she completely trust that she's trained you enough to manage yourself.

I:How has your leader or manager enabled you to overcome challenges and barriers at your workplace?

R:Yeah it is just pointing to the last question I answered , like I said I am coming from institution in a different country and the difference is clear, like previously you'll be micro managed where your leader has to like breathe down your neck at every step the your transaction while here in Ireland I find that the managers are a bit laid back and completely trust you after a very short training to be able to handle things by yourself, so that has been able to get me more confidence before I was a bit worried that is she just going to let me handle transactions, like you trust me enough? And just knowing that yes she is behind me believing I can handle that transaction has helped me to be confident and be able to handle transactions from start to finish and it increases my knowledge because all she does is, she continually makes sure that you are trained and in doing those you are able to be confidence and in a very short amount of time handle transactions in a way that she would like.

I:How will you describe your leader or manager?

I:Does your leader/manager maintain strict contractual relationship?

R:Oh no there is nothing strict about her with her style of management at all, she is a bit casual, very laid back, she is more like I want to be your friend than any bit of strictness.

I:Does your leader/manager stir you to achieve goals for the benefit of your workplace?

R:oh yes perfectly, she does. She tries to give what the goal of the bank would be because the bank can be a redundant place, so to be able to align those goals with our own personal teams she tries to give us the bigger picture involves us in meetings even though we are not personally concerned just to be able to hear what the goal and visions of the bank is, so yes she does stir us to achieve goals for the bank.

I:How good is your leader in maintaining relationship with subordinates. Is your leader/manager strict, jovial or.Is he/she aggressive, ruthless, and friendly?

R: Oh no, she is the opposite of strict, she is very very jovial, she is very very laid back as I have set the tone for the whole interview, I have tried to explain how she is, very quiet, very friendly, very... what's the options? She is definitely not strict. It bothered me a bit but like now I understand that is her management style, she is very quiet, she trust you a lot to be able to handle things by yourself, she doesn't question you except you have a challenge that you brought to her. So generally she is just a very laid back and very friendly person.

I:In your opinion will you say your leader/manager is successful? If yes why? If no why?

R:I would say her leadership style is successful, it might not be the one you agree with in initially like when I came in to the team, I was not big of her fan of the fact that she was a bit cut off from the team she just stood on the side lines and allowed us run the team but I began to understand that at the end of the day, I realized that it was an intentional thing for her to allow us lead ourselves, to be able to guide ourselves and to be confident in us being able to be leaders, so I believe her management style is setting up leaders that can take over from her as oppose to where I was used to being micro

managed but here no sort of micromanaged, so yeah I will say her leadership style is really successful.

I: What skills or qualities will you say are the most important in making your leader/manager successful?

R: I would say is just that ability to be able to instill leadership qualities in her subordinates, so you would find that we are a team of over 20 people, a young team but you would see very confident people that could easily step into her shoes, when she is not around.

I think it really has made her successful when other leaders will want to be in charge totally and might not train other people to take their place. She is not someone that is afraid, she is really confident so she is training a team of 20 leaders, she steps aside and she is not afraid of anyone being able to step into that position as well, so its really made her very very successful.

I: What skills or qualities do you think your leader/manager should develop to make him/her more effective?

R: I think the confidence as well, sometimes when you are too laid back it causes a wrong message to your team and it causes a situation of moral hazard, where some people might not take accountability, so she might need to toughen up a bit and be a bit more strict because there is a fine line of being your boss and being your friend, so you kind of lose some sort of oversight function when you try to be friends to your subordinates, so you have one or two, three team members who might not be pulling their weight or are not being told off and it causes the other people carrying the weight in a certain type of weight, so yeah she can work on that.

I: How does your leader/manager stir you towards goal attainment? Does he/she value teamwork over individual work? Or Vis-Versa? If yes how? If no why?

R: It's a balance of both, she tries to get us to work on our own like she values individual work but it's a balance, she tries to get us to touch points again as a team, especially now with the working from home situation, she tries to touch and improve our working together as a team like I said we deal in loan that passes through different stages and passes through different hands in the team, so there is that need for us to work together as a team but she still pushes for the individual work load and tries to have one on one meeting with us as often as possible.

I: Does he/she appreciate decentralisation or delegation? If yes how? If no why?

R: Definitely delegation, delegation is her thing. Like I have set the tone for the meeting and said over and over again, she is a big believer in decentralization and delegation, she does not believe in concentration. risk, when one person or herself is in charge of everything, she likes to delegate and make sure everybody's knowledge of the job is improving continually, so I would say she is very very big, one of the biggest pillar of her leadership styles.

I: How effective is your leader in setting plans, making decisions and developing strategies?

R: She is very effective in setting plans but not necessarily effective in following through. She is the kind of person who makes a lot of decision on time, like tell us okay this is the path we need to follow, what we need to change, SHE get a lot of feedback from the team, she set the agenda but she is not effective in following through the plans or developing the strategies, I don't know if that makes sense.

I: Is he/she critical, dogmatic or ideological?

R: Definitely critical

I: How has your leader/manager made you more loyal to your organisation?

R: She set me to be a leader myself and it made me definitely look into what the goal of the bank is because some other team that I have been a part of, you just do your job. You go in, you come out, you just feel like a worker but my boss currently tries to ensure you breathe and take in the goals and values of the company, she carries you along in every single part of the bank's decision so you don't really feel cut out from the decision process so I don't just feel like worker anymore, I feel like an actual staff that knows what is going on in the bank.

I: Does he/she provide both material and non-material motivations, if yes how? if no why do you say so?

R: Oh yes she does, in the form of training especially and checking in with me to see what more I want to do on the team because being part of those who hired me and was in my interview stages, she kind of remembered what my ambitions are, so she constantly checks in with me I am getting the most out of the experience, and the way she does this is to ensure that I get the training I need, I just tell her this is what I am interested in, I like so so so and so task and I would like to be part of it, and immediately she is very responsive and she set up training and the next day, she is like okay go ahead and shoot for the task, try it out and see how you feel, so yeah I feel that has like been a very big motivation for me on the team. Because of the organization I work in, it's more streamlined she wouldn't be able to do material motivation but she is very very vocal, when we take projects from a different team, she is that person who would get in touch of the head of that team to let the person know your contributions are, so you would be getting a lot of thank you messages, a lot of commendations from other team members which might not be material but equally important, she appreciates everything you do and she tries to constantly check in on you to tell you what your contributions are and how grateful she is for that.

I: Does he/she help you to abide by organisational values?, if yes how? if no why do you say so?

R: Yes she does by constantly reminding you what the values and goals of the bank is, because we have a statement as well that you might forget when you are doing your daily task but she is the kind of person who would want to constantly remind you that at the end of the day, this is the vision of the bank, this is how we can do it because we are dealing with cash, people seeking loans, you might want to have some fraudulent applications and that is not in line with the bank codes and if she helps you see more than the ones that written on paper but she tries to help you understand the spirit of the law of the bank, so when you are taking risks in giving out loans you will be able to understand what the risk that affects the statement of the bank is, so she constantly reminds you what the bank visions and goal is and when you do this and have it at the back of your head everyday it helps you abide by organizational values.

I: If you were offered another job with a better pay than your current job will you take it? If yes how? If no why? Does your leader/manager have anything to do with your response above?

R: Yes, definitely I will take the job and it has nothing to do with my manager but definitely look better into my long term goals, to be able to earn better I mean you will be able to improve assets and get houses. It is not personal to her She is a fantastic leader but im sure she will jump on the offer herself as well

Open-ended question: Please do you have any additional opinion or response which has not been contained in this interview.

I would say from the questions you asked you have been able to get what her impacts is and her leadership style, I think questions were very good and targeted towards how she

allows subordinate to performance and help them attain their goals, which I think in the grand scheme of things they are good questions

I:Thank you.

R:Thank you seyi for letting me be part of this research