INSTITUTIONEN FÖR PSYKOLOGI

Contributing to Leadership Literature through a Nigerian Perspective

Angelica Marino

Supervisor: Farida Rasulzada

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Abstract

Nigeria's inability to use its resources to increase the country's development status has raised questions about the leadership within the country. Investigations show though that there is a not much research performed on leadership within developing countries. The objective of this study is thus to contribute to existing leadership literature's ability to understand leadership in Nigeria. This is performed in three parts. The first part uses a grounded theory method to interview 27 Nigerian leaders about leadership and to analyze their perceptions. The three relevant categories of how a leader is perceived, how political leaders are perceived, and explanations as to why political leaders are perceived as destructive emerged from the analysis. The second part takes the findings from the analysis and examines how the existing leadership literature corresponds with them. It is revealed that the existing literature corresponds with how a leader is perceived except that the participants put an emphasis on transparency not found in the data. The findings also show that the participants described their political leaders as egocentric and corrupt, with which the literature on destructive leadership corresponds. Lastly, it is revealed that the explanations provided by the participants as to why their political leaders are destructive are related to the individual leaders themselves, the political context, and the culture. Some of these explanations are found in the literature, but the explanations that political leaders are perceived as destructive because of multiethnic variety, democracy, religion, and poverty are not found. This study thus presented suggestions for looking at the moral development of leaders and followers, the relations surrounding ethnic diversity and democracy, as well as the culture influences of religion and poverty, if leadership literature wants to be applicable to the Nigerian country.

Keywords: Nigeria, leadership, developing countries, African perspective

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1.   Introduction

Leadership as a theme and concept not only recently flooded both organizational and business magazines alike, but it has been a topic of research for centuries. The desire to unravel what separates leaders from others spurs directly from the relevant impact that leaders have on the world. Harry Truman, a famous American president, was quoted as saying, "Men make history and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better" (Truman, as cited in Maxwell, 2008, p.78).

When looking at the importance of leadership in the role of a country's development, Nigeria is a highly interesting case. Nigeria is argued to have enormous development potential due to its abundant natural resources, but the continuing corruption and failure of the state has led some to blame the leaders for the country's current condition (Obono, 2003; Larvie, 2007; Falola, 2001; Agboola, 2009). Agboola (2009) writes,

> Our (Nigeria's) problem basically is that of the leadership. It is today acknowledged that Nigeria is a potential giant of some sort of promises; the country has all it takes to rank with the rest of best world economies, but the leaders the nation has produced have all lacked the wherewithal to position it in this avenue because of certain vices which are associated with these leaders.

Other indicators of leadership issues in Nigeria is that 70% of the population is living below the national poverty line, which is an overwhelming number in correlation to the resources the country has (The World Bank, 1996; Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). In addition to this, the Nigerian president himself was quoted as saying, "We cannot blame our inadequacy on material poverty, but on poverty of leadership" (Obasanjo, as cited in Shehu, 2004, p. 77). These items show the importance of leaders, and the need for leadership literature to help understand and improve the situation within Nigeria, and other developing countries alike.

Despite the tremendous amount of literature on leadership, when looking for leadership literature focusing on Nigeria, or on developing countries in general, there is a huge deficit. There are many trusted sources in the literature that study leadership in relation to developed countries (see Collins, 2001; Goleman, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2003), yet there are not many studies on leadership within developing countries. Jim Collins' (2001) *From Good to Great* argues that one of the main keys for transforming a company from good to great is a leader whom is humble and has will, but his study was performed on American businesses. Hogan and Kaiser's (2005) empirical literature review is another example that argues, "Leadership… is the key to organizational effectiveness. With good leadership,

organizations (governments, corporations, universities, hospitals, armies) thrive and prosper" (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005, p. 169), yet none of the studies in their review were conducted in a developing nation. Lastly, a search in the Lund University's electronic database Elin shows that when doing a basic search on leadership there are approximately 146,581 articles. A search of leadership and the United States elicits 11,368 articles, but a search of leadership and developing countries returns only 336 articles. It seems that although leadership is a common theme to study in the Western world and that there are indications of the importance of leadership in developing countries, studying leadership in relation to developing countries such as Nigeria has simply not become a focal point.

Due to the lack of leadership literature in this area, the question then surfaces whether when wanting to assess leadership in Nigeria, if it is possible or applicable to simply apply Western leadership theories to Nigeria. Blunt and Jones (1997) argue that when applying Western leadership theories to developing nations, cultural assumptions are made that assume and label humans as rational, economic actors. They argue this is due to the leadership literature being ethnocentric and promoting the North American view. In their quest to understand whether current leadership theory could be applied cross-culturally, they conclude that it is quite unlikely that any of the developing countries defined by the 1993 Human Development Report as developing countries would match the cultural profile necessary in order for it to be effective to apply the current leadership theories to them.

Despite Blunt and Jones (1997) having a well-formulated argument that one should not apply Western leadership theories cross-culturally, they do not provide much insight with respect to where the existing leadership literature may potentially be useful when investigating leadership in developing countries, nor do they indicate in which areas it is not useful. It would be fair to assume that some of the points from existing literature are applicable, yet there is no overview with regards to which approaches may be cross-culturally applied and which ones may not.

The information above shows that if wanting to understand or investigate leadership in developing countries such as Nigeria, there are two problematic areas. One is that there is a lack of research performed on leadership in developing countries. Two is that there is no guidance regarding when it is problematic to apply existing leadership literature to developing countries and when it is not. The intention of this thesis will therefore be to address these two problematic areas, with the overall objective being to contribute to the existing leadership literature's ability to deal with leadership in Nigeria. In order to do this, this thesis will be divided into three main parts.

Since part of the problem is that existing leadership literature is based on Westerners input, the first task must be to understand Nigerians' firsthand perspective on leadership. In order to do this, the first part of the thesis will focus on gathering and analyzing a group of Nigeria leaders' perceptions about leadership by using a grounded theory method, as the focus of this method is to generate an understanding of peoples' perspectives on a certain topic. The intention of the analysis in grounded theory is to stay close to the data and allow relevant themes to emerge. The results of this analysis showed that there were three topics that emerged on the perceptions of leadership. These topics focus were:

1. What is a leader to you?
2. How would you describe your current Nigerian political leaders?
3. Why do you think your political leaders are performing in the way that they are?

The analysis on these three topics allows the study to start with a first hand account of what leadership is to leaders in Nigeria, instead of approaching the topic with an already constructed hypotheses based on Western literature. These results will be used to for the basis of the second part.

Although an analysis of the data from the first part gives input on how to contribute to existing literature's ability to understand leadership in Nigeria by presenting leaders' perceptions about the questions, the problematic area of where existing leadership literature can be used in relation to understanding leadership in Nigeria is still not addressed. Therefore, the second part of the thesis will take the analysis generated from grounded theory presented in the first part of the thesis and examine how existing leadership literature corresponds to the data presented in the results. This part will be the basis of the discussion and will provide an explanation with regards to what degree existing leadership literature can be used when wanting to look at leadership in Nigeria.

The last part of the study will make final contributions to existing literature's ability to understand leadership in Nigeria by using the findings found in part two of where the leadership literature did not correspond to the participants' perceptions, and it presents topics not currently discussed in the leadership field that may potentially assist leadership approaches to having a more encompassing view of leadership in Nigeria.

It is relevant to highlight that although there are three separate parts of the thesis whose analyses entail a variety of disciplines, the overall focus of the thesis is to contribute to the existing leadership literature's ability to deal with leadership in Nigeria from a psychological angle. Psychological in that the center of the study focuses on individuals' perceptions of leadership. This entails focusing on the Nigerians' perspectives regarding the

three topics, and this means that this thesis will not be addressing leadership from an economic or political perspective, meaning that the specific political theory relating to good governance will not be discussed either. Good governance deals with how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in order to guarantee the realization of human rights, and although it has some connections with leadership, is an area outside of this thesis (UNESCAP, 2010). In conclusion though, it is important to note that the topic of political leaders appears in this thesis, but that it is approached from a psychological perspective.

Referring back to the three parts of the study that emerged from the grounded theory analysis, the intention is to examine perceptions surrounding the three topics, examine how existing leadership literature corresponds to the data found on these results, and then present topics leadership literature might want to consider if wanting to give a more complete picture of leadership in Nigeria. A list of examples are provided below that illustrate why these three parts are relevant and will prove to be valuable to literature regarding leadership.

One example that demonstrates the relevance of these three parts is shown when reviewing Ghanaian Kofi Annan's, Secretary-General of the United Nations, leadership style. As one of his advisors reported to a journalist, "He runs the U.N. like an old fashioned African village, with long discussions among the elders, periods of reflection and eventually a decision" (Watson, 1998). When considering how leadership literature could be used to explain a leader such as Kofi Anna, there is lack of literature that addresses a leader that is acting in a chief-like manner. Annan's role at the United Nations shows that individuals from varying cultures may perceive and exhibit leadership in a completely different way than where the concentrated research is. This means that both thorough investigations regarding how individuals of a developing country perceive leadership and how these perceptions correspond to the literature may be beneficial (Smith, 2005).

In addition to this, there is one very simple example that illustrates why the three parts of this thesis are necessary, and it stems directly from a general overview of the leadership literature that is available. 90% of the organizational behavior literature is based on research performed in the USA (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). This overwhelming number illustrates that there is a strong bias for leadership literature to be performed in the Western world. Therefore providing empirical data on leadership from a developing country, providing a more specific outline as to where the leadership literature does and does not correspond with the results, and providing topics for leadership literature's to consider will help balance to bias of the current literature.

Lastly, with regards to the development arena, a look into leadership development and developing countries uncovers that the World Bank does set some focus on the role of leaders within development. They write, "…effective leadership is a critical prerequisite for ownership and accountability for development results" (The World Bank, 2008, p. 7). A capacity day at the World Bank's headquarters used the theme of "Leadership Matters: Vision, Effectiveness, and Accountability" to try and better understand the impact of leadership in development (The World Bank, 2007). The final outcome of this day was that despite the acknowledgement that leadership is important, many questions remained unanswered as well as presented ideas remained unexplored (The World Bank, 2007). The following study can assist the World Bank's efforts to incorporate leadership in development programs by giving a developing country's perceptions on leadership, indicating where Western approaches do and do not correspond to the data, and giving suggestions of topics that may be applicable to consider before approaching leadership in these contexts.

Although this is a minor scale study in comparison to some of the leadership investigations and research previously performed, the information presented in this thesis is highly relevant for Nigeria and potentially for developing countries in general. As Hicky and Mohan (2005) explain "Although initially a marginal concern within development, most development agencies now agree that some form of participation by the beneficiaries is necessary for development to be relevant, sustainable, and empowering" (p. 237). This thesis is a step in allowing the Nigerian leaders speak out in reference to what leadership is to them, in order to create an understanding of leadership from their perceptions, not from Westerns' perceptions. If a development program is going to make the decision to try and develop leaders or leadership in Nigeria, the following information can provide great insight as to how the current leadership literature lines up and present suggestions for topics for where further investigation is needed. Lastly, due to the perceptions of the political Nigerian leaders provided in the data, some new insight maybe discovered in relation to leadership, which may be applicable to helping developing countries as well as developed countries alike.

1.1. Background

Before delving into the depths of the thesis, it is necessary to outline the context in which the research has taken place. Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa, and with an approximate estimation of 149 million citizens, Nigeria is the eighth most populous country in the world (The Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). There are 36 states that divide the nations, with a varying make up of complex ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences.

There are three major tribes within the country, the Fula, the Igbo, and the Yoruba, yet an estimated number of 200 or more ethnic groups in total (Uwazie, 1999; The Central Intelligence Agency, 2010).

In addition to being one of the more diverse nations in Africa, Nigeria is also one of the most natural resource laden countries of the continent, although not the most developed (Economist, 2007; Shehu, 2004). An article in The Economist (2007) writes, "There must be few other countries on earth with such a glaring mismatch between their actual state and their extraordinary potential. Some call Nigeria Africa's slumbering giant. It more often behaves like the continent's suicidal maniac" (p. 12). This statement refers to Nigeria's continuous squandering away of income generated from oil. Nigeria is not only Africa's largest oil exporter, but is the world's eighth largest oil exporter, earning Nigeria approximately $233 billion in revenues over the past eight years (Economist, 2007). This figure is much larger than the country's $9.7 billion external debt, yet the leaders have failed to use this resource to its advantage (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009; Economist, 2007). Ironically, Nigeria only stands "scarcely less poor than before its oil boom began" (Economist, 2005, p. 1).

In addition to a lack of economic growth, Nigeria ranks 158 out of 182 on the human development index, which is considered quite low in reference to its GDP per capital. The human development index is a system commonly used to gauge a country's overall development including social and health care aspects, and Nigeria's low ranking on the scale shows that the overall state of development classifies Nigeria as a developing country (United Nations, 2008).

Many people argue that one of the major causes that Nigeria remains in its current state of underdevelopment is corruption (Economist, 2007; Shehu, 2004; Smith, 2007). As Shehu (2004) argues, one of the greatest constraints to developing countries after finance is corruption, and Nigeria is commonly associated with corruption. Nigeria is ranked 130th out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perception Index of 2009, denoting its high level of perceived corruption (Transparency International, 2009). UK Financial Services Authority and the London Metropolitan Police reported that over $1.3 billion naira (6.7 million Euro) of Abacha money (Nigerian Head of State) had passed through London, also with no explanation as to where this money was obtained from, nor why it was stored in London indicating the potential for corruption (Shehu, 2004). In addition to this, corruption levels in Nigeria have not improved after more than eight specific anti-corruption programs (Chamberlain, 2002). With statements such as 70% of Africa's problems are due to

corruption, it seems obvious how the topic of corruption is unavoidable in reference to Nigeria (Shehu, 2004; Robinson, 1998; Riley, 1998).

The information provided in this background section and the introduction illustrate why investigating leadership in Nigeria is interesting. It is a country that is filled with potential, yet the state cannot seem to climb out of its economical or social issues in order to use its resources to benefit the citizens (Economist, 2007; Shehu, 2004; Smith, 2007).

1.2.   Theory

Now that some background surrounding the situation in Nigeria has been provided, the following section will provide some background theory and definitions, before the results and discussion pertaining to this study's objectives are given. The methodology selected for this study is grounded theory, and according to its requirements, theories are not to be investigated and reviewed until the data is collected. Therefore, the following section will provide relevant definitions in order to present an introduction to the topic of leadership as well as give a basic overall understanding of what leadership is based on the common leadership theories.

There are a total of three subsections within the theory section of this study. The first subsection of the theory section will simply define terms that will be used throughout the thesis. This is done to help avoid potential confusion related to conflicting perspectives regarding what something is, as well as to make clear any potential terms that may not be previously understood.

After definitions are provided, and due to the vast amount of leadership literature on leadership, the remaining two subsections will highlight and review some of the prevalent approaches surrounding leaders and leadership in order to present the reader with some background information on the topic. The first of these subsections will outline some of the Western mainstream leadership approaches. These approaches are the leadership approaches that have been created based on studies done in developed nations (mostly the USA and Europe). They are the approaches that are most commonly known when investigating leadership, and they are important because it is an objective of this study to understand where the findings of this study fit in with the existing literature. The last section in the theory part will take a more explicit look into leadership approaches relating to Africa, as they are the most applicable in relation to this study because it was conducted in Nigeria.

1.2.1. Relevant Definitions

The following section will provide some clear definitions to some of the widely used concepts within this study in order to avoid confusion. The first of these will be definitions for leadership and leader, followed by definitions for a political leader and a follower.

It must first be noted that leaders and leadership are two of the most studied concepts yet their literature has received little consensus. As Bolden and Kirk (2009) write, "Despite the current level of interest in leadership, it remains an elusive and contested concept on which general agreement is highly unlike" (p. 70). The purpose of this study, as outlined in the above, is to contribute to the existing leadership literature's ability to deal with leadership in Nigeria. Therefore, a definition of leadership as well as a leader is necessary in order to be clear about what the study is researching.

Janda (1960) writes that term leadership carries a variety of "extraneous connotations" (p. 346) creating confusion regarding its definition. There has been an endless list of explanations listing what leadership is and after a comprehensive literature review, Stogdill (1974) found that "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept," (p. 259). Yukl (2001) gives a list of eight representative definitions he has piled together that have been presented in the last 50 years but summarizes that "most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structures, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group of organization" (p. 3). With all this information, it seems a difficult process to even decide what leadership is before performing a study on it.

It is not the purpose of this thesis though to resolve the debate regarding which is the best definition of leadership. The main interest of the thesis, as stated above, is to contribute to the existing leadership literature's ability to deal with leadership in Nigeria. Due to Nigeria not being part of the mainstream leadership research conducted in the USA, Canada, and Western Europe, it is necessary to consider the implications when selecting a leadership definition for the basis of this study that was developed in a Western nation (Yukl, 2001; Conte & Landy, 2007). House et al. (2004) performed a cross cultural study on leadership, and it seems using their definition of leadership is most appropriate as they explained their desire to create a definition of leadership that reflects diverse viewpoints, which would consider cross cultural distinctions. Their definition describes leadership as, "The ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members" (p. 15). This has been chosen as

the definition used within this study when referring to the term leadership due to it considering cross-cultural implications, as it is relevance to this thesis topic.

A leader then, placed within the context of this definition, would be the individual of the organization that performs the influencing and enabling described in the definition. It is necessary to note that when referring to what a leader is within this thesis, a leader is the individual(s) that are involved in the process of leadership with other people or followers.

Although the above provides a general definition for what a leader is, it is important to be aware that there are varying types of leaders within this study. There are the participants, who are leaders within NGO organizations, and there are also the political leaders, which the participants' perceptions about are related in the results. These are two different types of leaders than the leadership literature normally addresses. The literature normally centers on leaders from the business world. Despite them all being seen as leaders, it is necessary to highlight that these varying arenas obviously influence these leaders and their necessary qualifications in a variety of ways.

The majority of the current leadership approaches used in this study were performed on leaders of corporations or businesses. This type of leader is normally selected into their position by other members of the business and typically refers to managers of other employees in which the goal together is often to increase or maintain effective business practices (Yukl, 2001). A leader of an NGO differs slightly from this, as their overall goal tends not to focus on making money, but it revolves around the successful completion of projects typically with the intention to help society. Lastly, a political leader is a part of the government and is involved in influencing public decision making. In situations where there is democracy; a political leader is elected by the people

The similarities and differences between these leader types is an extremely large topic, and it is not the intention of mentioning their differences to create confusion. The intention is to illustrate that there are differences to recognize despite the literature not having much concentration on them. In fact, Peele (2005) argues quite strongly that in relation to psychology, "… that the general phenomenon of political leadership is still understudied" (p. 190), finding only a few relevant studies in which it is a particular focus (see Blondel, 1987; Kavanagh, 1990). Therefore, it is simply necessary to mention the possible similarities and differences, even though the study will be comparing leadership literature performed on business leaders to the perceptions of political leaders.

Now that clarifications have been established regarding what a leader and leadership represent, it must be noted that there is no particular focus in this study about effective

leaders or effective leadership. The debate distinguishing an effective leader from a leader is a common topic in leadership literature and although commonly measured by whether the goal the leader tries to accomplish is achieved, one may understand how the word 'effective' may have various interpretations (Conte & Landy, 2007; Yukl, 2001). It should be noted though that within the context of this study, there was no distinction made between the two categories when discussed in the interviews.

Lastly, the provided definitions of a leader and leadership illustrate that there is a process between the leader and followers, so it is also necessary to define what a follower is. "The term follower is used to describe a person who acknowledges the focal leader as a continuing source of guidance and inspiration, regardless whether there is any formal relationship" (Yukl, 2001, p. 6). When discussing followers in reference to this study, the term, if not otherwise specified, will refer most often to the general public for whom the political leaders are serving. For example, the followers of the president of Nigeria would be all the Nigerian citizens.

1.2.2. Western Mainstream Leadership Approaches

The above section gave a brief overview of the definitions to the terms that will be used throughout the thesis. The following section will summarize some of the Western mainstream leadership approaches in order to provide an introduction to leadership.

One of the first approaches regarding leadership emerged in the 1920s and 1930s was called the trait approach. The trait approach had an emphasis on discovering which traits and characteristics were exclusive to leaders. Conte and Landy (2007) concluded that a set of around forty characteristics had been studied in relation to leaders when the trait approach was most popular, and they argued that this number was still not a complete set. The trait approach began to lose its popularity though as there were no consistent findings, and literature reviews provided by Stogdill (1948) and Mann (1959) demonstrated that the trait approach results were not conclusive. Hollander and Julian (1969) note in addition to the inconsistency in the trait studies, other researchers began to realize that the trait approach failed to recognize the other relevant actors involved in the leadership process such as the situation and followers. The eventual findings of the trait approach will be discussed below.

Following the trait approach, a behaviorist approach to leadership took center stage, where studies began focusing on the actions of leaders. One of the main set of studies accredited to the behaviorist approach are the Ohio State University studies (see Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Fleishman, 1967). Researchers at Ohio State discovered and argued that there

are two main dimensions which leadership behavior could be divided into, *consideration* and *initiating structure*. *Consideration* describes the notion that leaders exhibit behaviors that show concern for group members' needs. *Initiating structure* is a category that depicts leaders exhibiting behaviors that organize and define the group activities and his or her relation to the group (Halpin & Winer, 1957; Fleishman, 1967). There are other behaviorist studies, but their findings more or less confirm these findings (Grint, 2005; Conte & Landy, 2007). Although the behaviorist studies "presented a leap forward in the study of leadership" (Conte & Landy, 2007, p. 509), results still were inconsistent, and many argued there were often biases involved in the study designs (Day, 2001, Yukl, 2001).

Following the behaviorists, research around leadership branched out in many directions. Some other leadership approaches include the power-influence approach, the leader-member exchange, and a path-goal approach. Leadership approaches began to also be integrative though, combining ideas from varying approaches (Day, 2001; Conte & Landy, 2007). One of the more popular approaches like this is the transformational leadership approach. Transformation leadership is "the interplay between leaders and followers in which each raises the other to higher levels of morality and motivation" (Conte & Landy, 2007, p. 519). This approach emphasizes that the leader transforms others into helping and improving each other and the organization. Bass and Avolio (1997) argue that there is a focus on morale and motivation in this type of leadership, and there are generally four strategies used by a transformational leader. Summarized, these strategies are:

1. Idealized influence – Provides a vision and commitment as well as communicates and reflects on the ethical implications of their actions
2. Inspirational motivation – Communicate dreams and visions in optimistic and moving manner, provides encouragement and support
3. Intellectual stimulation – Promote creativity and thinking outside the box and encourage followers to do the same
4. Individualized consideration – Considers each individually, their thoughts, needs, and desires by listening and helping

Transformational leadership is an approach that took a somewhat different angle to leadership by touching on ethics, as well as returning slightly to traits and qualities of leaders. Following this theory, an interest to the trait approach returned though, where some researches found that there were flaws to the earlier criticisms to the trait theories and that there were actually results showing that certain traits do apply to leaders (Yukl, 2001).

One of these new trait theory studies is an empirical literature review on personality, leadership, and organizational effectiveness by Hogan and Kaiser (2005). Hogan and Kaiser argue that there are four common competencies necessary for effective leadership. The four

domains that they categorize competencies in are intrapersonal, interpersonal, business, and leadership. Their descriptions can be found in table 1.

Table 1

The Domain Model of Competencies

Domain	Definition and examples
Intrapersonal	Internalized standards of performance; able to control emotions and behavior (courage, integrity, ethics, and values, patience, emotional stability)
Interpersonal	Social skill role-taking and role-playing ability; talent for building and maintaining relationships (listening, negotiating, communication, approachability)
Business	Abilities and technical knowledge needed to plan, budget, and monitor organizational activity (technical skills, priority setting, and quality decision making)
Leadership	Influence and team-building skills (providing support and direction, developing direct reports, motivating others, building effective teams, and managing diversity)

Adapted from Hogan and Kaiser (2005)

Their findings returned to the trait theory, arguing that particular traits can be attributed to after all.

The above section provides an overview of some of the major leadership approaches conducted in the Western world. Despite the variety of angles and numerous ways to categorize and describe findings, reviewing the information shows there are common themes that surface from this literature and that overall the concept of leadership has developed over time. According to these studies, it appears that a leader possesses certain traits, skills, and behaviors that make him or her a leader. It is apparent that these traits and skills must not only focus on effective, strategic, and managerial like attributes, but these findings illustrate the need for traits and skills to also include items such as understanding feelings, being honest, and having integrity. Also, it is shown that there is an assumed positive angle used when investigating leadership, or in other words, approaches assume that a leader is someone that is bound to help or improve an organization. This positive laden idea carried within these studies will be addressed later in the discussion.

1.2.3. African Leadership Approaches

The previous section looked at leadership approaches based on research performed in the Western world. Due to the nature of this study wanting to explore leaders within the African country Nigeria, it is obviously relevant to look at leadership literature pertaining to Nigeria or the African continent. Bolden and Kirk (2009) write regarding collecting information for a literature review regarding leadership in Africa though, "Empirical data on leadership in sub-Sahara Africa is fairly limited," (p. 72). Despite the limited references, House et al.'s (2004) *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies* is an exception, as it is a large cross-cultural study on leadership in 62 societies. It, along with Hofstede's (2001) *Culture's Consequences* and a literature review performed by Bolden and Kirk will be reviewed in this section. Hofstede's findings are reviewed because despite not focusing on leadership, there is reference to leadership and the role of cultures, which are both relevant to this study. Bolden and Kirk's study is reviewed because it does focuses on leadership in Africa and discusses implications of cross cultural applications.

Hofstede (2001) performed a major well-known study to investigate the similarities and differences between 50 modern nations' and three regions' cultural values. Within his study, Hofstede discovered that there are five main dimensions in which countries' cultures differ. These five dimensions are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, and long-term vs. short-term orientation. Although not a study based directly on leadership in Africa, the findings indicate that that there are cultural differences that need to be recognized when addressing this leadership within nations. Hofstede writes, "Ideas about leadership reflect the dominate culture of a country. Asking people to describe the qualities of a good leader is in fact another way of asking them to describe their culture" (p. 388).

To further clarify Hofstede's (2001) study, a brief summary of the dimensions found in his work is given. The first dimension, power distance, refers to inequality and how well individuals of lower positions respond to individuals of higher positions. The second dimension, uncertainty avoidance, deals with how individuals deal with uncertain or unstructured situations. The third dimension, masculinity, deals with how a society follows traditional male and female roles. The fourth dimension, individualism or collectivism, deals with whether individuals are orientated towards group processes or individual ones. Lastly, short-term vs. long-term orientation deals with how far into the future planning is done. Nigeria was placed in the West Africa region studied by Hofstede, and in reference to these dimensions, Nigeria ranks in the middle on the scale regarding uncertainty avoidance and masculinity, but high on the categories of collectivism and power distance. Nigeria was not

studied in reference to short-term orientation though. A more thorough look into these dimensions in relationship to leadership will be discussed later in the thesis. (Hofstede, 2001)

House et al. (2004) also performed an extensive cross-culture study, and this study did directly target leadership differences across the globe. The findings from this study are extensive, and the study does provide some insight regarding perceptions of leadership in Africa. House discovered that there are 21 primary leadership dimensions that are considered by almost all societies related to effective leadership. In addition to this, House found six culturally endorsed leadership theory dimensions. These were charismatic/value-based, team oriented, self-protective, participative, humane oriented, and autonomous. These dimensions explain the ways in which varying countries describe what is and is not an effective leader. Based on these six categories, Nigeria rates high on the humane orientation value (which focuses on the attributes regarding humane orientation and modesty) but rates mid-range on all the other dimensions, illustrating their importance but not high relevance.

Bolden and Kirk (2009) write about House et al. (2004) and Hofstede's (2001) studies that despite adding valuable knowledge to the field that they "…may inadvertently reinforce a rather functionalist approach that underestimates the individual and contextual differences and impose western frameworks of analysis" (p. 71). Bolden and Kirk therefore performed a qualitative study in order to investigate further conceptions of leadership in Africa. Although the findings of their study agree with House et al. and Hofstede's conclusions that Africans' place an emphasis on humanistic principles and participatory styles, Bolden and Kirk's findings also highlight that leadership within African countries places an emphasis on service of the community. They also argue that when discussing leadership in Africa, there is a need to pay attention to the "rhetorical and sensemaking functions of the leadership discourse in shaping identities and mobilizing action" (p. 83). The authors argue for an approach to studying leadership in Africa that allows the Africans themselves to actively participate, so that new dialogues are formed that actually shape the knowledge produced in the literature.

Despite the above illustrating that there have been some studies on Africa leadership, overall there are still many angles with regards to leadership in Africa that can be investigated, and it shows that there are no studies that give an understanding of whether or when Western approaches are applicable.

2.   Methods

The above section reviewed definitions and approaches pertaining to leadership in order to provide background information for the thesis. The following part of this thesis will review the method used in order to gather and analyze the data used in the study, as well as explain why the method was selected. The first section in the methods part is the theory and method type section and contains two subsections covering qualitative research and grounded theory. The second section involves the design and analysis and is divided into three subsections explaining the interview method used, the participants selected, and how the analysis was done. The final section will discuss the overall validity of the study.

2.1.   Theory and method type

The following two subsections will discuss the method type and theory used for the basis of this study.

2.1.1. Qualitative Research

The decision of whether to use qualitative or quantitative research should be based on the objectives of the study (Strauss & Corbin, 2007). A brief summary of the objectives of this study will therefore be provided in order to illustrate why the decision to collect qualitative data was made. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the existing leadership literature's ability to deal with leadership in Nigeria. This will be done by examining how existing leadership literature corresponds to data collected on three themes of perceptions of a leader, perceptions of a Nigerian political leader, and explanations as to why Nigerian political leaders are performing in the way they are, and to present topics as suggestions for future leadership research to use to improve its coverage of Nigerian leadership. The objectives of this study call for data involving perceptions and descriptions, which indicate the need for a qualitative approach.

A qualitative method is more appropriate because this thesis intends to come to terms with the meaning of phenomena in the social world (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999; Van Maanene, 1983). To be more specific, the Nigerians' perceptions about what a leader is, how their political leaders are, and the explanations as to why the political leaders' are perceived are their meanings in relationship to what leadership is, and a qualitative method is conducive to helping understand these meanings. These perceptions are a construct of their reality that is best discovered through dialogue and observation, and they cannot already be found in an already constructed measure used through quantitative analysis. Qualitative data helps by

bringing an "…understanding of the actual human interactions, meanings, and processes that constitute real life settings" (Mello & Flint, 2009, p. 108), by providing information that is unattainable through quantitative methods.

In addition to this reasoning, qualitative methods are appropriate in this thesis because there is little research available regarding leadership in Nigeria, and in addition to this, there is a lack of information regarding Nigerians' perceptions of leadership. Due to this lack of information, a qualitative method is more appropriate because there is not one specific hypothesis being tested, but rather the desire to uncover information to create hypotheses that can be then potentially be tested by quantitative data in later studies.

2.1.2. Grounded Theory

After deciding that the study should use a qualitative research approach, the grounded theory method was selected as the basis for the method. Grounded theory is one of the more powerful types of qualitative methods (Crewswell, 2003). Based in the sociological interpretative research field, grounded theory "seeks to discover and understand the meanings and concepts used by people and assumes that people are continuous problem solving actors" (Mello & Flint, 2007, p. 108). Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed grounded theory as a systematic methodology yet with flexible guidelines to be used in research to help formulate conceptual theories that are grounded in the data. A brief description of grounded theory as well as how it was specifically used in this study is provided below.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) created grounded theory in the 1960s with the intention of developing a methodology where the researcher was allowed to step beyond the level of description in order to create a verifiable theory that would be grounded in the data. Grounded theory has been created to allow the researcher the freedom to examine phenomenon from many directions and follow up on what emerges. Not only does grounded theory produce a new way for researchers to take their qualitative analysis to the next level, it is also a way to refute criticisms of qualitative methods by providing a systematic approach using comparative analysis to produce results that were grounded in the data, meaning that the final theory is directly linked to the collected data. (Charmaz, 2006)

A closer look at the objective of this study illustrates why grounded theory was an appropriate methodological choice. The first part of this thesis is based on contributing to the research literature by investigating leadership in relation to the three questions previously stated. Grounded theory was a relevant choice, as it not only would help understand the data, but it will also provide theory from the data that can be used in the second part of the thesis.

In addition to this, grounded theory craves that the researcher come close to the field of investigation to interpret life situations, which also matches well with the study's intention to get firsthand accounts from the participants about their ideas on leadership to contribute to existing theory. Lastly, grounded theory has been explained to be like a "journey of discover", where the research can change based on the information gathered (Mello & Flint, 2009, p. 109). This aspect was especially relevant due to the dynamic nature of interacting with the Nigerian participants regarding such a complicated theme.

It is relevant to note that despite the development of grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss together, their perceptions of the theory later split from one another. Strauss's later work involved creating a coding paradigm to provide the researcher with more of a guided approach to the method. Glaser (1998) argues that Strauss' approach actually takes the theory away from the data, as the research forces codes instead of the codes emerging themselves from the data (Charmaz, 2006). Melia (1996) recommends though if the researcher is new to grounded theory, following Strauss' more structured approach is more appropriate as it assists with confusions or uncertainties and makes the coding process less overwhelming. In addition to this, it is argued that this systematic approach from Strauss makes the results less subjective, which in turn increases validity (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Therefore, this study followed these recommendations and uses Charmaz's (2006) modified version of Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory approach.

2.2.   Design and Analysis

Following the description given above as to why qualitative research and grounded theory were chosen, the following section discusses the specific design and analysis used. The following section on design and analysis will be divided into several parts in order to describe how the research was conducted. There will be three subsections that specifically do this; they are based on the participants, the interview format, and the analysis.

2.2.1. Participants

The following section will give information regarding why and how the participants were selected, in addition to their demographics. It is important to remember that it was an intention of this study to contribute to literature by looking at Nigerian perceptions on leadership and in order to place an emphasis on the leadership aspect, a group of leaders were intentionally selected as participants, instead of interviewing individuals that were not currently leaders. The reasoning behind interviewing leaders was to collect a group of

individuals that have experience in a leadership role as this gives them a firsthand experience regarding what leadership is. In addition to this, education level in Nigeria is still low, with estimates in 2005 that roughly only 35.1% of children between 12-17 were enrolled in high school. With educational levels of this nature, it also seemed appropriate to find individuals that had a higher level of education, as this increases their ability to communicate their opinions and ideas in a more coherent fashion. Not surprisingly, Nigerians that have completed some type of higher education almost always end up in a position of leadership.

The leaders interviewed were recruited through a partnership formed between the researcher and the Canadian NGO One Sky. One Sky is currently running a program entitled Leading from Within – Integral Leadership for Sustainable Development. The idea for this program spawned from previous One Sky work in Nigeria, where it was realized and felt that designing a program focusing on enhancing leadership capacity would be beneficial to Nigeria. They also stress in their explanation of the program that their program was not to be based only on training leaders in practical skills such as fund raising, but the program was to build new mental models and expand the participants' ability to take perspectives (G. Hochachka, personal communication, November 2, 2009).

One Sky selected 33 NGO leaders to be a part of their program. Although there were a variety of applicants, One Sky decided to only admit applicants that were current leaders in local Nigerian NGOs, as one of their goals was to enhance leadership capacity in the environmental NGOs in Cross River State, Nigeria. In addition to this selection criteria, One Sky also tried to have a balanced set of participants, making sure that close to half were women, as well as having them represent a fairly diverse age range.

Due to this project's partnership with One Sky, the researcher was thus granted access to speak with the participants in the Leading from Within program to ask whether they would like to take part in this study. Although it could be argued that a set of leaders in the business sector could have been interviewed as well, the fact that the participants were involved in a leadership training even furthered supported using them, as it demonstrated their interest in leadership.

Of the 33 participants in the One Sky program, 27 participants were eventually interviewed. In total, 12 of this study's participants were females and 15 were males, having an average age of 38.16 (youngest being 23 and oldest being 57). 22 of the participants were decedents of the Igbo tribe, 3 of the Fula tribe, and 2 declined to answer. With regards to education, 25 of the participants had completed some form of higher education, meaning a bachelor's or master's degree, where as the other two had some type of training certification

after high school. Their leadership positions within their organizations varied somewhat. There were 11 project coordinators, eight executive directors, two financial administrators, three program directors, and three non-categorized roles. The participants had been working for their current organization for an average of 5.32 years (longest being 15 years and shortest being 1.5 years).

One Sky's office manager organized the scheduling of the interviews with the participants when the researcher arrived to Calabar. Despite not receiving any leaders that were unwilling to participant in the study, there were a total six of the participants in the One Sky program that were not interviewed. Three of them were not interviewed due to the costs involved regarding travel and time, as they worked outside of the Calabar area. The other three participants that were not interviewed had interviews scheduled initially, but each canceled for reasons unknown to the researcher. Rescheduling of appointments did not happen due to the researcher no longer being in the country.

2.2.2. Interviews

As previously state, the data collection method used was interviews. This choice was made based on the grounded theory suggestion that the research be conducted through in-depth interviews (Charmaz, 2006). In addition to selecting interviews because of these suggestions, interviews were chosen because they provide a reasonable way for the interviewer and interviewee to interact in a way that facilitates more easily understood communication (Strauss & Corbin, 2007). An interview allows the researcher to not only clarify him or herself if necessary, but it also allows the interviewer and interviewee to read each other's body language, which increases the ability to understand one another. Using interviews was a benefit to this study, as although many Nigerians speak English regularly, it still is their second language, and obvious confusions were expected. In addition to this, both Nigerians and the researcher have varying accents when speaking English; therefore, using semi-structured interviews allowed to help clear up any misunderstandings.

With this in mind, the study involved 27 semi-structured interviews lasting between 30 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes. An interview guide was used (see appendix A). As will be seen when the results are reviewed, "There is a relationship between the overall themes found in the results and the interview schedule" (Coggins & Fox, 2009, p. 61). The interview was not completely unstructured because there were obvious needs to have structure due to the topic of the study. A rigid interview though, may have limited the depth of analysis. A semi-structure interview therefore proved to be the best format as it provided the appropriate

balance to ask questions about the topic of leadership, but allowed the researcher to react to answers and ask more questions accordingly (Crewswell, 2003).

The interviews took place either at the office of the participant or at One Sky's office, based on the participants decision. This was to allow the participant a selection where they felt most comfortable. They took place over a space of five weeks in which the researcher was in Calabar, Nigeria, and they were all digitally recorded. The interviews were transcribed word by word after all data had been collected. With regards to the transcription though, if it was clear that the participant was not answering the question that was asked or went off the topic of the question due to a misunderstanding of the English accent or phrases used by the researcher, these parts of the interviews were not transcribed.

As described above, there was quite a lot of data gathered in the interviews, as the transcription process took approximately 100 hours to complete. There was a final section within the interview that related to solutions suggested by the participants' regarding how to better the political leadership situation. After the analysis began, it became evident that this portion of the study would turn this into a much longer, time intensive study, and therefore this data has not been included in the analysis or discussion.

2.2.3. Analysis

The objective of this study is to contribute to the existing leadership literature's ability to understand leadership in Nigeria. In order to do this, the first part of the thesis performs a grounded theory analysis on the three topics regarding perceptions of a leader, perceptions of Nigerian political leaders, and explanations as to why the Nigerian political leaders are seen as destructive. The following section analysis section will outline how grounded theory was used in order examine the data collected on the topics listed above.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Charmaz (2006), grounded theory consists of four levels of data analysis. The first level is initial coding, the second level is focused coding, the third level is axial coding, and the fourth level is theoretical coding. Coding is an essential part of grounded theory because the final outcome of grounded theory is to create a theory grounded in the data, and coding is used as a step to link the processes. Charmaz (2006) writes that coding "…is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emerging theory to explain these data" (p. 46). The four levels of coding done in this study are based on the recommendations of Charmaz (2006) and will be explained step by step below.

The first step of initial coding in the analysis involves the researcher sticking close to the data and creating codes for it. This is done in a line by line fashion in order not to miss nuances. The initial coding allows the researcher to explore the data by categorizing segments with a short name that summarizes and accounts for it. For example, the statement "Half the country is Christian and half is Muslim. They can make a law in the north and people in the south may not want to do it due to religious reasons." is coded *problem is religious division*.

After all the initial coding is done, focused coding takes place. In focused coding, the researcher finds the most significant and frequent codes found in initial coding. This process is much more directed coding, and its intention is to explain larger portions of data by analyzing and reviewing the initial codes. The focus coding in the study was performed in the following manner. All the codes that were created in the initial coding were written on an index card. The amount of times each separate code appeared was kept track of on the card. For example, *patient* was a code that appeared frequently when asked to describe a leader. For each time the code *patient* appeared, it was marked on the card. After this process was completed, any initial code that only appeared once was removed from the coding process, as its relevance seemed minor, and the purpose of focus coding is to compare and condense. After these codes were removed, the process of comparing codes across interviews allowed the relevant categories to emerge. For example, the code *transparency* appeared fifteen times and became a focused code. Thus, the focused coding allowed the more relevant codes, such as transparent, to present themselves.

The third step of analyses is what is termed axial coding. Charmaz (2006) does not follow directly Strauss and Corbin's (1998) recommendations for axial coding as she argues it can be quite cumbersome. This study followed her recommendation of creating subcategories of the more frequent codes found in the focused coding. She explains, "...develop subcategories of a category and show the links between them... to make sense of the data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 61). In order to do this, the frequent codes from focused coding were studied in order to see if there were emerging themes between them. After sorting through all the frequent codes, subcategories emerged. For example, the codes of *transparent* and *participatory* were two frequently seen focus codes that when compared simultaneously fell under the larger category of perceptions of a leader.

The last step in the analysis is the theoretical coding. Theoretical coding involves seeing how the axial codes relate and specifying categories between them. It is the process used to "help tell the story" (Charmaz, 2006, p.63) or to bring together all the codes.

Coggins and Fox (2009) write in regards to the theoretical coding process that often the interview questions asked emerge as the theoretical codes. They state, "…that is an inevitable outcome of asking each participant the same set of questions" (p. 61). Within this study, a similar process surfaced, as there is obvious overlap between the interview questions and the first two theoretical codes. It seems that from the question, what is a leader to you?, the theoretical code of perceptions of what a leader is surfaced, and from the question, how would you describe your political leaders?, the theoretical code of perceptions of Nigerian political leaders emerged.

The last theoretical code regarding explanations as to why the political leaders are performing in the way they are followed more closely to grounded theory specifications and arose from the direct analysis of the data. Seeing that grounded theory is a comparative methods approach to data analysis, this means comparisons should be made between the data at each level of the work. Data is compared with data initially, both within interviews as well as across interviews. This process allows the researcher to be aware of the actual data surfacing, instead of using prior conceptions to dictate what is being found. Due to this process, the first five interviews were examined and investigated while in Nigeria. It was seen that there was a continual dissonance between how the participants were describing a leader and how they were describing their Nigerian political leaders. Therefore, the interview began to include questions asking the participants to explain why they felt their political leaders' descriptions did not match their leader descriptions. This ultimately led to the final question pertaining to why do political leaders perform they way they do, which turned into the theoretical code *explanations as to why Nigerian political leaders are perceived as destructive* in the results.

It must be noted with regards to grounded theory analysis that the point is to condense and then bring the data together. It may be argued, once the results are read, that some of the codes could have given different labels, logically been placed in other categories, or arranged differently. Although this criticism to grounded theory is recognized, it is not the concentration of this study to place codes correctly. The intention is to build relationships within the data and that it must be noted that:

> We construct our codes because we are actively naming the data—even when we believe our codes capture the empirical reality, it is our view: we choose the words that constitute our codes. Thus we define what we see as significant in the data and describe what we think is happening (Charmaz, 2006, p. 47).

The codes purpose therefore is not to be right, but to be a bridge between the data and analysis.

2.3.   Validity

The information thus far regarding the methods illustrates that a qualitative approach using grounded theory was selected. Due to this study touching on multi-disciplinary themes, this study has an intricate nature that creates a slight difficultly when selecting the appropriate methodology. Mikkelsen (2005) writes, "The complexity and the purpose of specific development studies generally warrant tailor-made research designs that cannot be defined a priori even for studies on similar themes" (p. 141). The following section will assess the validity of this study based on the methods described above.

There are several areas in which the validity of this study is questioned. The validity of any qualitative study is often debated due to the inability for it to be replicated, as well as the lack of experimental nature. A discussion of some of the potential problem areas with this study seems important so that the reader is aware of specific problems with the methods. The Research Methods Knowledge Base (2006) presents a structured way to evaluate validity in a qualitative study by looking at the four categories of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The validity of this study will be evaluated below by using these suggestions as a guiding framework.

Credibility entails whether or not the participants confirm the results of the thesis. Although none of the participants have evaluated the final work of this thesis, grounded theory calls for a rigorous approach in which the results may not stray far from the data, thus assisting in maintaining the credibility of the study. In addition to this though, it is relevant to state that there are always issues regarding data analysis and translation that may lead to the participants not agreeing with the results.

Transferability refers to whether the results found can be transferred to other settings and situations. This concretely refers to whether the results can be transferred to other places in Nigeria, as well as to other countries overall. First, looking at the transferability within Nigeria, it is seen that due to the somewhat specific background of the participants interviewed, the transferability is questioned. All the leaders interviewed were leaders in local NGOs in Calabar, Nigeria, meaning that there is a potential characteristic that binds them together causing their responses to be similar. In addition to this, all of the participants classified themselves as Christians with the exception of two. As stated before, the Nigerian population is 50% Muslim and 40% Christian (Uwazie, 1999), and the bias in the participants' religion may mean that the findings, especially those dealing with religion, may not be transferred to other non-Christian Nigerians. Lastly, the participants are mostly from

the Igbo tribe, making it difficult to say whether the results can be transferred to populations outside of this ethnic makeup. Overall, the lack of a more diverse population is an issue, and future studies could benefit from interviewing a more varied group of leaders. On the other hand, it will be shown later that some of the results coincided with other studies' findings, which may mean some results are transferable.

It is also relevant to address the transferability of the findings to countries outside of Nigeria. Hofstede's (2001) study reviewed earlier places Nigeria in a region with Ghana and Sierra Leone, arguing that they have enough similarities to refer to them as a region instead of as individual countries. It can be argued that the results of this study might partly be transferred to these African countries, keeping in mind the makeup of the participants and its impact on transferability. Although it is never possible to say that the results are 100% transferable, it still could be beneficial to take this study as a case of reference to apply to other developing countries to perhaps formulate their own study, as it is not the objective of the study to say that all members of developing countries think this way about their leaders.

The third category of dependability considers the potentially changing context occurring during the time of the study. According to this section, it is relevant to note that the dynamic nature of developing countries means they are unstable, and the possibility of something impacting the participants' feelings does exist. There were no major events found by the researcher linked to political leaders six months prior to this study nor during this study that may have impacted the participants' responses to the questions asked though.

Lastly, confirmability deals with how the researchers' background and perspectives influence the study. The assistance of the thesis' academic advisor improves confirmability, as using her guidance and editing throughout the study helps to eliminate opinion or unfounded conclusions. In addition to this, Charmaz (2006) argues, "The subjectivity of the observer provides a *way* of viewing. Instead of arresting analysis at the coding stage, researchers can raise their main categories to concepts… We (researchers) choose to raise certain categories to concepts because of their theoretical reach" (p. 139). It is obvious that subjectivity is involved, but with grounded theory, it is limited through the continual cross comparisons and way in which the analysis is performed.

These four categories provide an organized manner to look at the validity of this study. It is relevant to note that although the analysis method followed through grounded theory is supposed to reduce subjectivity, this being the researcher's first study with grounded theory, this was a challenging task to accomplish. It seems that despite using only data provided by the participants, it was hard to avoid coding or organization bias due the

researcher's frame of reference. Although often the situation in research, it must be stated that the results and discussion presented may not be the only ways to interpret the data.

3.   Results

The above section reviewed the methods involved in collecting the data for this study. This section will discuss the results, meaning the outcome of the grounded theory based analysis of the data. The results will provide an understanding of how the participants as representatives of Nigerians perceive leadership. In addition to this, it will give us the basis to the discussion that follows regarding to what degree existing leadership approaches can be used when dealing with leadership in Nigeria as well as the basis to the suggestions for topics not currently discussed by the leadership literature that may potentially assist it to having a more encompassing view of leadership in Nigeria.

In order to first provide an overview of the results, figure A is presented below. The figure illustrates that from the topic of perceptions of Nigerian leadership, three main theoretical codes emerged. To avoid confusion with the word "codes", the three main theoretical codes will now be referred to as categories and are labeled as follows:

- perceptions of what a leader is
- perceptions of Nigerian political leaders
- explanations as to why Nigerian political leaders are perceived as destructive.

These three categories are made up of groupings of other codes, which will now be referred to as subcategories. In figure A, the subcategories are listed in bold. Lastly, under the third category of explanations as to why Nigerian political leaders are perceived as destructive, the subcategories have been broken down into more specific codes. This was necessary in order to give a structured overview, as the types of codes found in this category were varied so much that additional structure was needed. These codes are listed under the bold subcategories individual, political context, and culture.
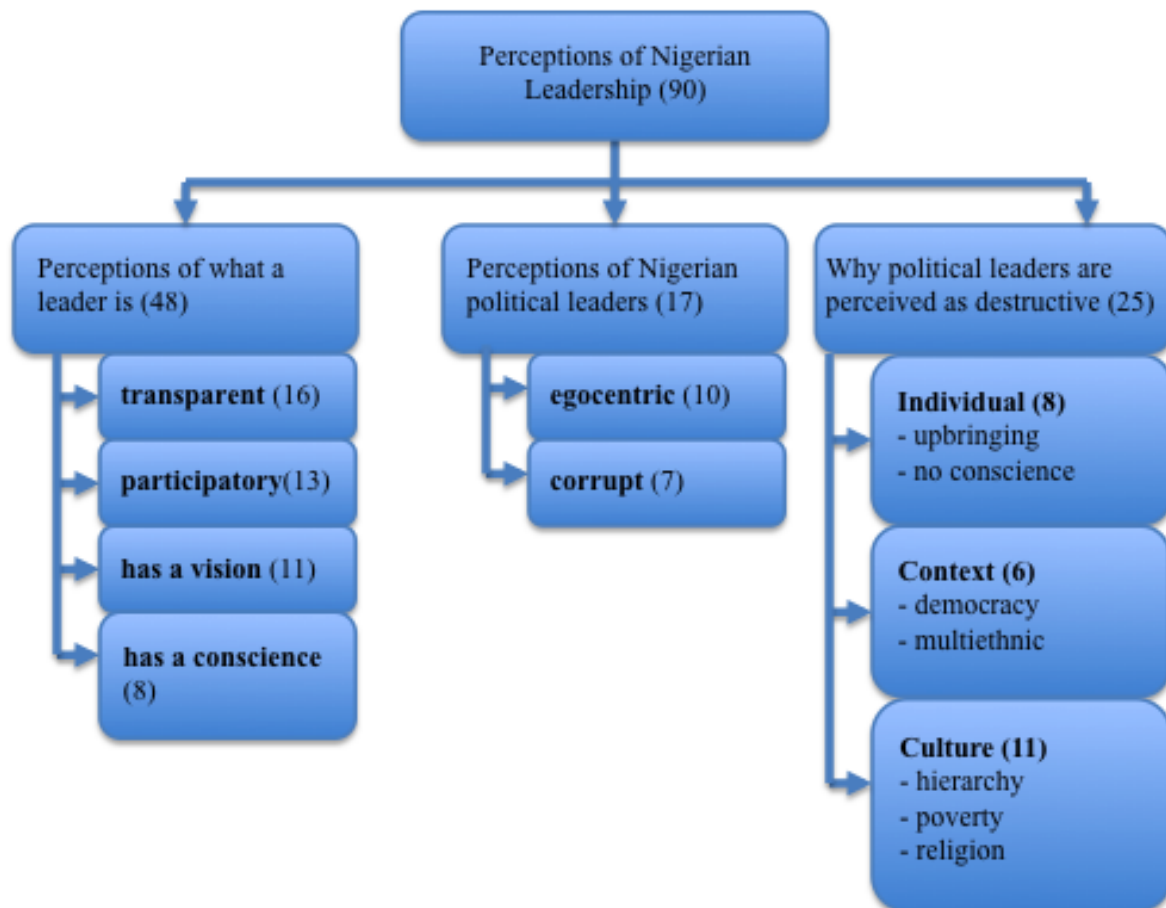
Figure A – Results diagram with code representation

In order to get an overview of how many codes fell within each category and subcategory, the figure also presents in parentheses the number of codes that were related to each category. This number does not pertain to frequency in which the codes were revealed but merely provides an indication of how many initial codes were discovered that were compiled to make up the category. In the beginning of each of the three sections, a table with an overview of the subcategories belonging to the category will be provided, along with their definitions and with examples of codes that make up the subcategory.

3.1. Perceptions of what a leader is

This section contains the information regarding how the participants describe what a leader is to them. This includes values, traits, and qualities. After coding of the data was completed, there were 48 different codes used by the participants to describe what a leader is. As the codes were compared and analyzed, the four subcategories of transparent, participatory, has a vision, and has a conscience emerged. Each of these titles was a code in itself that was touched on by the participants, and the remaining codes found in this category

were then organized under these four subcategories. The decision of which subcategory to place the remaining codes was decided based on their relation to the definition of the subcategory's definition. It is relevant to restate though that the potential for there to be overlap as to which subcategory each code belongs does exist. Table 2 presents the definitions of each subcategory plus examples of some of the codes in parentheses that fell into the subcategory. Following the table, each subcategory is described more in detail. The order in which the subcategories are presented relates to the number of times each specific subcategory (e.g. transparent) was directly stated, thus showing its relevancy to the participants.

Table 2

Codes for perceptions of what a leader is

Sub-category	Definition and examples
Transparent	Being open about your decisions and actions (do what I say I do, role model behavior, straight forward, honest)
Participatory	Interacting with followers to reach a joint decision (listening, enduring, empowering, humble)
Has a vision	Having a goal or dream that is desired to be achieved (determined, take decisions towards goal, systematic)
Has a conscience	Having the ability to understand morally what is right and wrong (empathy, perspective taking, being aware)

3.1.1. Transparent

The central subcategory that surfaced from the coding process was transparent. 15 of the 27 participants used this exact word in reference to how they perceive leaders, while the remaining 12 also highlighted its relevance with codes that fell within the subcategory such as, "do what you say you will do" and "straight forward". In addition to this, nine of the 27 participants said, "a leader is a role model" or "someone that leads by example". These codes fell under the subcategory of transparent because the participants explained that leading by example means doing what you say you will do, which matches the definition of transparent.

To understand what was meant by transparent, some definitions provided by the participants are given. "Being transparent means I should practice what I say I will", or "Being transparent means being open about what I am doing". Some participants noted that transparency was similar to accountable. As one participant said, "There is transparency and accountability. Nothing is done in secret. Everyone knows what will be done all the time."

Due to the definitions provided by the participants, some of the other codes not mentioned above that fell in this subcategory are open, not corrupt, straight forward, and honest. These codes fell within this subcategory because they relate to the definitions of transparent provided by the participants. It can be argued that they may have fallen other places, but these codes show that there was a focus on the idea that a leader is someone that is honest and responsible regarding his/her actions.

3.1.2. Participatory

Following transparent, the next most commonly discovered subcategory was participatory. Of the 27 interviews analyzed in this study, 14 of them directly stated that a leader should be participatory. The subcategory of participatory consists of a wide variety of other codes as well that the participants used to describe how leaders carry out participation. These codes include good communication, patient, enduring, empowering, accommodating, does not leave anyone behind, does not impose ideas, and brings people together.

When asked for clarification regarding what participatory meant, explanations are summarized into participatory means that a leader is someone that interacts with the followers to reach a joined decision in a cooperative manner. For example a definition provided was, "Participatory means people take part in the decision making." In conclusion, the participants conveyed that this participatory interaction between the leaders and followers was a defining characteristic to what a leader is. "He is not a leader until he has followers. It takes the two of them, they are interdependent."

3.1.3. Has a vision

Following behind transparent and participatory, participants also related that a leader is someone that has a vision. Out of the 27 participants, eight mentioned a leader is someone that has a vision. This, as defined by them, meant that there was a tangible goal that the leader had the desire to fulfill. "A leader is someone that gives followers direction on how to achieve a particular goal." Or when focusing on vision, one participant stated, "A leader has a vision and articulates the vision to other people in the group."

In conjunction the subcategory of has a vision, codes such as determined, makes decisions, persuasive, assigns roles, and produces results also fell under this category. These codes were placed here because they deal with the certain steps involved in realizing the vision.

3.1.4.   Has a conscience

Although the direct quote, "A leader is someone with a conscience" only appeared in the data once, many codes around the descriptions of a leader having a conscience surfaced in the analysis. The definition of having a conscience provided was the ability to know what is right and wrong; therefore, codes such as empathy and perspective taking fell under this subcategory of has a conscience, as they related to the ability to know and judge what is right and wrong. "You have to… have empathy by putting yourself in their position. This is important as a leader," was a quote given by one participant.

The codes of empathy (mentioned by eight participants), perspective taking (mentioned by five), being conscious (mentioned by four) and aware (mentioned by four) have been placed under the subcategory of has a conscience. These codes indicated that the participants felt it was important for a leader to be able to relate to their followers and make decisions based on this relation. "You also do a lot of empathizing, putting yourself in their position. You try to reason the way they are reasoning and then go from there." In addition to these codes, a code understanding the poor was mentioned by five of the participants.

3.2.   Perceptions of Nigerian political leaders

The following section contains the category titled perceptions about Nigerian political leaders and contains a summary of the codes and descriptions used by the participants to describe the current political leaders. It is relevant to note that no particular group of political leaders was specified within the questioning, but that each participant spoke at will regarding whichever political leaders came to their minds.

After the coding was completed, there were 17 initial codes that were placed into this category. It will be shown in the table below that the two subcategories of egocentric and corrupt emerged under this category, and the remaining codes were organized under them according to how the aligned with their definitions.

The subcategories of egocentric and corrupt are both negative in nature. It is relevant to point out though that there were seven neutral or positively themed initial codes, but these initial codes were only recorded once, thus they were not included in the analysis. Table 3 provides definitions and example codes in parentheses for this category that were gathered from the analysis. The codes were placed under egocentric and corrupt based on their relation to the appropriate subcategory's definition.

Table 3

Codes for perceptions of Nigerian political leaders

Sub-category	Definition and examples
Egocentric	Putting one's own wishes and desires before others (do not serve the people, greedy, selfish, satisfy only themselves)
Corrupt	Using power inappropriately and taking the government's money (not transparent, not accountable)

3.2.1. Egocentric

Of the 27 participants interviewed, nine of them stated directly that they thought their leaders were egocentric. Others also indicated this trait through statements such as, "They focus first on their own immediate environment". In addition to this, other codes such as greed (mentioned by nine participants), selfish (mentioned by six participants) and not carrying others along (mentioned by three participants) fell under egocentric.

Egocentric was defined by statements such as, "it means they only care about themselves" or "do things for themselves and not others". Based on this definition, another code placed in this category is "does not serve the people", and 11 participants reported this as a trait of Nigerian political leaders. This was expressed in ways such as, "Nigerian (political) leaders are not willing to serve the people," or "They (political leaders) don't take their positions to help the people, they take them to see how they can satisfy themselves." As shown by the reporting the results, the majority of the participants shared the perception that Nigerian political leaders are egocentric.

3.2.2. Corrupt

In addition to egocentric, the other subcategory under this category is the code corrupt. Eight participants stated specifically that they thought their current political leaders were corrupt, and seven stated that they were not transparent. Corrupt, as described by the participants, means taking the government's money, accepting bribes, or using power inappropriately.

One participant stated, "You (political leaders) shouldn't evade questions or try to cover up. You should be accountable, especially in financial matters, when something is done, someone should give a run down of how that money was spent, as honestly as possible." Based on definitions such as these, the codes unaccountable and not transparent were also placed under the subcategory of corrupt.

3.3. Explanations as to why the political leaders are perceived as destructive

As shown by the data presented above, there is a strong contrast between how the participants perceived what a leader is and how they viewed their current political leaders. As reviewed in the analysis section of the methods part, this became apparent and therefore the interview was modified to include questions asking the participants why they were not describing their current political leaders in the same way they were describing a leader. When the data was analyzed, roughly 25 codes became the basis of this category, which was labeled as explanations as to why Nigerian political leaders are perceived as destructive. By destructive, participants were referring to the negative impact the political leaders were having. Due to the variation amongst the codes, the structure of this category varies from the previous subcategories. The 25 codes that fell into this category were split into three subcategories of individual, political context, and culture in order to organize the data. Then relevant codes were selected from the subcategories that represented the data. Table four gives a summary of these subcategories and presents the codes used to represent them.

Table 4

Codes for explanations as to why the political leaders are perceived as destructive

Sub-category	Definition and examples
Individual	Characteristics associated with the leader themselves Codes: upbringing, no conscience
Political Context	Government type plus other influences relating to political environment Codes: democracy, multiethnic variety
Culture	Shared values and practices of Nigerian people Codes: hierarchy, poverty, religion

3.3.1. Individual

The first subcategory under explanations as to why Nigerian leaders are perceived as destructive is individual. This subcategory deals with the explanations that the participants mentioned regarding the characteristics of the political leaders themselves. There were a variety of different codes that were compiled together for this subcategory that were ultimately combined into the two codes of upbringing and no conscience.

Five participants argued that the leaders were destructive due to their upbringing, indicating that factors such as parents' influence in the childhood and teenage years of the

political leaders may have influenced how the leaders were now. "Maybe their parents didn't raise them with any values, or maybe they were just born into money so they always got what they wanted", was one explanation provided about upbringing.

In addition to this, participants brought up other codes such as "political leaders are lacking a conscience" or "they are greedy" that were compiled into the code of no conscience. Although it may be argued that these are qualities and not explanations, these were actual codes that surfaced when the participants were asked to explain why they think their leaders are this way.

Thus a quick summary shows that upbringing and no conscience were the codes in the individual subcategory.

3.3.2. Political Context

In addition to the subcategory individual, the political context is a subcategory under explanations as to why the political leaders are perceived as destructive. This subcategory deals with the government type as well as other factors that influence the political environment. The codes falling into this subcategory were condensed into the two codes of democracy and multiethnic diversity.

Many participants stated that the lack of a real democracy is the reason that political leaders are destructive. Further explained, participants said that if there were an actual democracy, Nigeria would have leaders that were selected by the people, not leaders that have been "assigned" their roles. The participants explained that if the people could select leaders, they would not select corrupt leaders. As one participant clarified,

> It has to do with the way and manner they came to their position. A lot of them knew very well that there was no way that the people had an opportunity to cast the ballot. These people were selected and appointed without the input of the people. That is why there is no transparency or accountability.

The other code in this subcategory is multiethnic diversity. This was explained as the participants saying that the country is divided into three major tribes, the Fula, the Igbo, and the Yoruba, and due to this division, the participants expressed that leaders play favorites according their tribe. Participants explained that political leaders also then see it fit to not serve other tribes that they are not affiliated with. One participant said,

> These three tribes are the driving forces of the economy and everything. Each develops trust. So if I am coming from one, I will do everything for that group first. If I am from one, and try to do something for another, you will get pressure from your group. So you influence your neighbor to do something they don't want to do.

Therefore, a small conclusion to the political context shows that the participants felt the democracy and multiethnic diversity were explanations as to why the leaders were perceived as destructive.

3.3.3. Culture

Lastly, under the category of explanations as to why the political leaders are seen as destructive is the subcategory culture. Within the context of this study, culture refers to the shared values and practices of the Nigerian people. There were a variety of codes that were placed under the culture subcategory, which were divided up into the three codes of poverty, hierarchy, and religion.

Many participants said that the Nigerian culture is one that focuses on wealth as the reason political leaders were destructive. Four of the participants highlighted that due to the poverty plaguing the nation, many individuals value people with money. They explained this by saying that people respect and look up to those with money; therefore, a Nigerian leader must have money to be successful. As one person stated, "But with the poverty level where it is, people come to leaders for money, and they expect them to have it." Due to statements like these, the code *poverty* fell under the culture subcategory, as it is the influence that poverty has on the values of the people that creates the destructive nature in the leaders.

Another explanation from the participants regarding culture was the code *hierarchy*. Some participants explained that Nigeria is a country where one is not allowed to ask someone to be accountable. This was further explained in that people of lower rank within the hierarchy may not be allowed to ask someone above them to be accountable. Seven participants stated there is a large amount of fear surrounding accountability. One participant told this from their experience,

> The people are trying to question. But if the media plays it, they (Nigerian political leaders) will go after that media and shut it down. You are not allowed to ask. We all know that they are chopping our money, but we just accept it because everyone is scared to speak up.

In addition to this, one participant explained that sometimes if you are of a higher rank, people of lower ranks will not let you be accountable.

> Accountability to some people is reducing their status. In our society, the elder is always right. In fact I had an issue with this. Some people don't let you be accountable, when you try to be open about what you are doing, they say it is not necessary. They expected me to have done the right thing due to my higher status.

Due to this information, the code *hierarchy* is placed under culture, because the hierarchical system is influencing the practices of the people.

Lastly under the subcategory of culture is the most commonly referred to code amongst the participants, *religion*. Six different participants explained that their leaders were not matching their definition of a leader because the political leaders did not fear God. Eight of the participants thought that although the political leaders were religious, they did not practice their religion. As one interview indicated, "They are using the religion as a look, but they don't practice it." Another participant stated, "They are superficially religious. People see them go to church but I don't know if they internalize what they are hearing. They go to church because society says they should. I go to church because I believe." It is therefore shown that according to the participants, the religious values are influencing the leaders.

In conclusion, the subcategory culture indicated that the participants felt the hierarchy, poverty, and religion in Nigeria were all explanations as to why the political leaders were perceived as destructive.

4.   Discussion

The previous section gave an overview of the results discovered by using the grounded theory method. These results complete the first part of this study in the sense that there is now an understanding of Nigerians' perceptions of leadership. Based on the input from the participants, the qualities of transparent, participatory, has a vision, and has a conscience were the subcategories that surfaced when assessing perceptions of a leader, which was the first topic. The results showed that the participants' perceived their current Nigerian political leaders as egocentric and corrupt, which was the second topic. Lastly, the participants explained possible reasons as to why their political leaders were performing the way they were, which was the third topic. These reasons included the attributes of upbringing, no conscience, democracy, multiethnic diversity, hierarchy, power, and religion.

The following discussion section will take the above results and examine how the existing leadership literature corresponds with them and based on the outcome of this, present topics not currently discussed in leadership that may potentially assist leadership approaches to having a more encompassing view of leadership in Nigeria. The exact organization of the discussion will be presented in the next section.

4.1.   Structure of the Discussion

Before the discussion part begins, a brief overview of certain items regarding the method used when approaching the discussion are provided along with an explanation of how the discussion is organized.

The objective of grounded theory is to create a theory that is founded within the results. Within the following discussion, grounded theory has been used to create the categories in the previous results section, and these results will be used as the basis of this discussion.

Before the layout is given, a clarification of the word "corresponds" is provided, as it is an essential concept within in the discussion. When the term correspond is used, it is referring to comparing how well each separate theory examined matches with the results found in this study. Further explained, it is whether the theory brings up the same descriptions and/or explanations as the participants do regarding the topic being discussed. It is not a word for word comparison, but it is an overall investigation into whether the results and the theory are portraying similar information.

In conjunction with this, it is necessary to decide which leadership literatures' correspondence will be examined. Due to the number of leadership approaches, it is impossible to include them all; therefore initially, the mainstream leadership approaches presented in the theory section at the beginning of the thesis will be examined to see how they correspond to the findings. After this literature is reviewed, an examination of both African and other leadership literature will be performed to see how it corresponds.

There are seven sections in the discussion. The following three sections, after this section, will connect back to the three sections presented in the results: *perceptions of a leader, perceptions of Nigerian political leaders,* and *explanations as to why Nigerian political leaders are perceived as destructive.* Each of these sections will examine how leadership literature corresponds with the findings from each category. Within each section, the items will be organized a bit differently, but a brief description of the organization will be given under each heading.

The findings from this part will then be used to make up the fifth section of the discussion. This section will examine where the existing leadership literature did not correspond to the results and will use these results to present topics that may potentially assist leadership approaches to having a more encompassing view of leadership in Nigeria. After this, the limitations to the discussion and future research sections will be presented.

4.2.   Perceptions of what a leader is

Perceptions of what a leader is, whose main codes are transparent, participatory, has a vision, and has a conscience, is the second section of the discussion, and it is divided into three subsections. The first subsection will investigate how the Western leadership

approaches in the theory section of the thesis correspond to the codes found in the results. The second section will investigate the African leadership literature presented in the theory section to see how it corresponds to the data. The final subsection will be a summary of the findings. The overall intention is to uncover where leadership approaches do and do not correspond when looking at what a leader is in reference to how Nigerians perceive a leader.

4.2.1. Western approaches' correspondence to what a leader is

The leadership approaches presented in the beginning of the thesis highlight some of the common themes found when defining leaders. The following section will compare the findings of this study with the already presented leadership approaches in order to illustrate how they correspond.

The first theory considered how the leadership literature corresponds to the data consists of a comparison between this study and the study regarding personality and leadership performed by Hogan and Kaiser (2005) (see page 13-14).

Table 5

Hogan and Kaiser's (2005) findings compared to Nigerian leaders' perceptions

Hogan and Kaiser's Skills		*Nigerians' categorization*	
Domain	**Definition and examples**	**Subcategory within the results**	**Definition and examples**
Intrapersonal	courage, integrity, ethics, and values, patience, emotional stability	Transparent	honest, role model behavior, straight forward, honest
Interpersonal	listening, negotiating, communication, approachability	Participatory	listening, enduring, empowering, humble
Business	technical skills, priority setting, and quality decision making	Has a vision	determined, take decisions towards goal, systematic
Leadership	providing support and direction, developing direct reports, motivating others	Has a conscience	empathy, perspective taking, being aware

Table 5 shows a condensed version of Hogan and Kaiser's findings presented earlier along with this study's findings from the results *perceptions of what a leader is*. The table does not indicate that the findings are identical, but it is simply a way to present the findings in a condensed fashion.

When comparing Hogan and Kaiser's (2005) categories to the results categories from this study, it is obvious that there is not a direct overlap between the findings. In fact, the Nigerians' subcategories mainly fit into the first two domains, intrapersonal and interpersonal, given by Hogan and Kaiser. The two subcategories of transparent and having a conscience overlap with the intrapersonal domain example from Hogan and Kaiser that a leader is someone with integrity and ethics. One participant said, "Be conscious of the other person and what you are doing. A project is supposed to be beneficial to everyone around". The findings from this study also revealed that the participatory style was important to Nigerian leaders, and some of the examples listed in Hogan and Kaiser's intrapersonal and interpersonal domains, such as patience and communication, coincide directly with the characteristics provided by the participants regarding the participatory subcategory.

Overall, the table comparison shows that Hogan and Kaiser's model is an accurate representation of this study's findings, if only the first two categories of intrapersonal and interpersonal are to be included. A deeper look shows though that the Nigerian categories do not touch on Hogan and Kaiser's (2005) business and leadership domains. There may be some small similarities between having a vision and these domains, but the correspondence is not very strong. This observation illustrates that the participants, despite sometimes mentioning the more managerial aspects of leaderships, have a concentration on the domains of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills when speaking about what a leader is. Therefore, if one were to use Hogan and Kaiser's model to represent what a leader is to Nigerians, it would be a misrepresentation because there are categories in their model not found in the results. In addition to this, Hogan and Kaiser do not have a category that directly corresponds with the subcategory of having a vision found in the results.

In order to further understand how leadership theory corresponds to the data on how Nigerian leaders perceive a leader, the results from this category can be compared to the behavioral approach theory of leadership. The behavioral approach is a cornerstone to leadership theory, and this further comparison will help illustrate whether it is appropriate to apply these theories to Nigerian leadership.

Recalling from the theory section, the Ohio State behavioral leadership studies concluded from a factor analysis that there were two major categories of leadership

behaviors. These two categories were *consideration* and *initiating structure* (Halpin & Winer, 1957; Fleishman & Harris, 1962). When doing a comparison of the Nigerians' sub-categories to these findings, the Nigerians' subcategories of transparent, participatory, has a vision, and has a conscience do coincide with the category of *consideration.* The Nigerians' subcategories of participatory and has a conscience actually match quite well with this category. One participant stated in her interview, "A leader listens and empathizes, puts him or herself in their position and doesn't make others feel inferior", and another participant said, "A leader is someone that carries people along and is sensitive to the needs of the followers", which are both related to consideration by behavioral approaches (Halpin & Winer, 1957). Where there is no correspondence is that the Ohio State findings have a category *initiating structure*, which is not found in this study's data. Despite the participants mentioning items such as "a leader is someone that make decisions" or "someone that delegates roles" (behaviors related to initiating structure), the analysis from this study did not distinguish these as significant enough contributions to create a subcategory, which means applying the behavioral findings might be problematic, because there is a category represented that did not surface in the analysis.

In addition to the fact that the behavioral studies have a category that is not represented in this data, the participants highlighted specifically that a leader must be transparent and this quality, although aligning partially with consideration, has unique aspects that are not addressed by the behavioral findings. There is an emphasis from the participants that leaders must be honest, accountable, and that they do what they say they will do. "Be open, be open, be open. Don't hide anything," said one participant, indicating the importance of transparency. Therefore, once again, applying the behavioral findings to perceptions of a leader in Nigeria might be problematic, as not only is there a category in the behavioral studies not found in this study, but the behavioral studies lack the emphasis needed to completely cover the subcategory of transparent found in the results.

One final comparison of the current data with Western leadership studies looks how the transformational leadership theory corresponds to the perceptions of what a leader is to Nigerians. Recalling back to the theory section, transformational leadership deals with the leader conveying a message that he or she is passionate about, but also cares about and involves the participants in order to accomplish the goal. This style includes idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (see page 13).

Of all the presented Western theories, this one corresponds the most with the perceptions of a leader provided by the data. The categories presented by Bass and Avoilio (1997) state that being ethical is necessary, which matches the participants' request for leaders that have a conscience. Transformational leaders and the participants' descriptions also coincide by stating that a leader must have a vision and be participatory.

There are two situations in which the correspondence between the results and transformational leadership falls short though. The participants do not touch on the need of leaders to engage the followers in a thinking process, where as the transformational leadership theory highlights the importance of intellectual stimulation. In addition to this lack of matching, the code transparent is once again not covered as in depth by the transformational style, although somewhat implicitly implied. Bass and Riggio (2006) write, "…the ethical leader who is driven by sound values and good judgment and is focused not on personal gains but what benefits the followers is essential" (p. 233). But they explain that this type of leadership has received little research attention and "much more needs to be learned about the ethical and moral factors" (p. 233) involved in leadership. Thus, despite recent transformational literature starting to uncover the transparent subcategory labeled as so important by the participants (see Avoilio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009), it can still be argued as underrepresented in the transformational approach as for now.

These three comparisons of the findings of this study to existing literature performed on leadership in Western nations illustrate that many of the studies have a strong overlap with the categories found in this study. It comes to attention that the aspects of these studies dealing with the interpersonal and intrapersonal categories align most with this study's findings, yet there are often skills or traits in the prior literature that were not mentioned by the participants. It may possible that if asked whether or not they felt these addition qualities were necessary for a leader that the participants would agree, but it is relevant to point out that with no cueing, these traits are not mentioned and therefore not as significant to them.

Where the literature does not strongly correspond is with regards to the first and most common characteristic stated by the participants, transparent. Over half of the participants mentioned this exact word, and it was alluded to in all of the interviews. The focus on this central characteristic was apparent throughout the interviews, yet within the leadership literature examined, it is sometimes indirectly referenced to, but it never carries the importance found within the data. "If we have the value of transparency, you need to believe, not only say things with words", explained one participant in relation to transparency. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate why there is such a focus on transparency, but it

seems that leadership literature is beginning to head in that direction based on the findings of Avoilio et al. (2009). Overall though, it seems that if the existing leadership literature were to be used to address perceptions of a leader to Nigerians, there would be some problematic issues due to the extra categories and lack of correspondence to subcategory of transparent.

4.2.2. Presented African leadership approaches' correspondence to what a leader is

The following subsection will perform an investigation into how the few studies mentioned regarding leadership in Africa correspond with the findings. Although the literature pertaining directly to leadership in Africa is somewhat limited, the studies of House et al. (2004), Hofstede (2001), and Bolden and Kirk (2009) described initially can be used in order to assess how they correspond with the data regarding the participants' perceptions of what a leader is. This may potentially illustrate whether it is simply the Western leadership theories that have additional categories and do not focus on transparency, or if the leadership literature in general is this way.

To summarize the previously stated results from the African leadership approaches, all three of these studies had similar findings that a leader within the context of Africa is one that has a humanistic orientation and desires participation from the followers. The humanistic orientation as describe by House et al. (2004) is the degree in which a leader "encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and king to others" (p. 569). House et al.'s results confirmed those of Hofstede's found in 2001, and Bolden and Kirk's recent 2009 study reconfirmed these findings. The findings from Bolden and Kirk highlighted though that leadership should focus on service of the community as well.

The results from this study concur with all of these findings, demonstrating that the leaders interviewed place a high value on the humane orientation as classified by House et al. (2004). As seen from reviewing the results, the participants felt that participatory and having a conscience were essential traits of a leader. "As a leader, we are working with people, they form part of what you are doing, so their voice matters", explained one participant. These correspond with the African theories emphasizing considering the followers and working in a collective manner.

The analysis of the data shows though that despite great similarities, the particular emphasis found in this study regarding transparent or having a vision is not found in African literature either. This may be due to varying reasons, such as the designs and objectives of the studies not matching, but it is still relevant to note that even the studies with data from Africa do not highlight transparency like the Nigerians do.

4.2.3. Summary of discussion regarding perceptions of what a leader is

In summary, the findings above show when assessing how leadership literature corresponds when talking of perceptions of what a leader is to Nigerian leaders, it is difficult to come to an overall precise conclusion. Some approaches, such as transformational leadership, definitely are more in line with the data findings than other approaches are. The discussion illustrates that the participants placed a high emphasis on intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships when relating their qualities to Western leadership approaches, which more or less also coincides with the leadership studies performed in Africa.

It is relevant to point out that most of the approaches did not correspond with the results in that lacked the same amount of attention to transparency as the participants articulated. It therefore may be problematic to apply these theories in their entirety if wanting to understand what a leader is in Nigeria because they are lacking a subcategory that was quite relevant to the participants. In addition to this, they implore traits not mentioned by the participants that may also give a misrepresentation if used.

4.3. Perceptions of Nigerian political leaders

The following section of the discussion will look at the findings presented in the results referring to how Nigerian leaders perceive their political leaders and investigate how the leadership literature corresponds to it. The first subsection will investigate how both the Western leadership approaches and the African leadership theories originally presented in the beginning of the study correspond to the results, and the second subsection will then investigate other leadership literature to see how it corresponds to the data. The final subsection will provide a summary of the findings.

Before delving into the initially presented leadership approaches correspondence, a brief summary of the participants' perceptions of the Nigerian political leaders is provided. The participants perceived their political leaders as egocentric and corrupt. A look back at the definitions of egocentric and corrupt used by the participants in this result category stated that egocentric means an individual that places his or her interests above the interests of others, and corrupt refers to using authority in an inappropriate way for personal gain. These results will be used as the basis for comparison within this section.

4.3.1. Presented Western leadership approaches and African leadership approaches' correspondence to perceptions of Nigerian political leaders

The following subsection will investigate how the Western and African leadership approaches correspond to theses perceptions of Nigerian political leaders found in the data. It must be stated that the theories investigated are not directly investigating perceptions of political leaders, but they will still be used to see if there is any correspondence, despite not formulating their studies based on the same objective.

There is a negative connotation associated to both of the codes discovered in reference to the perceptions of Nigerian political leaders. Egocentric and corrupt both refer to actions and ideas that are unethical in nature (Kohlberg, 1976). Therefore the current comparison must look at how the previously presented Western theories deal with negative styles of leadership and relate these to the findings.

When reviewing the leadership approaches presented, there are not any studies that mention traits such as egocentric or corrupt. When considering the dimensions of intrapersonal, interpersonal, business and leadership provided by Hogan and Kaiser (2005) or initiating structure and consideration categories classified by the Ohio State behavior studies (Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Halpin & Winer, 1957) none of these groupings mention actions or qualities performed by a leader that potentially harm others. These approaches, in addition to transformational leadership and even the research conducted in Africa presented, seem to have a "positive bias" when approaching leadership and do not consider poor or destructive leaders.

In order to assess this situation, a further investigation into some leadership literature reveals that most Western mainstream approaches have "an inherently positive bias" (Kellerman, 2004, p.43) to leadership. Padilla, Hogan, and Kaiser (2007), Schaubroeck, et al. (2007), and Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad (2007) all agree that the negative aspects regarding leadership are understudied, and that the studies done on this area are still not mainstream or well noted. Although there are numerous leaders throughout the world that have created havoc, Peele (2005) points out that there is still a lack of investigated approaches that address this. This explains the bias of the presented Western approaches and illustrates that it is impossible to examine how the initially presented Western approaches or the initially presented African approaches correspond to the findings regarding the perceptions of Nigerian political leaders found in this study as they simply do not address the characteristics found in the data.

Therefore, when examining how the leadership literature corresponds in relation to perceptions of Nigerian political leaders, it is shown that it is necessary to investigate other leadership literature. There is simply no overlap between the findings of this study and the previously presented approaches because no literature presented thus far mentions negative traits associated with a leader, only in that some of the theories inadvertently suggest that these are unwanted qualities by endorsing traits contrary to them. This is a major finding in itself, as it illustrates that the common leadership literature may not cover all the necessary angles to provide an appropriate picture of leadership in Nigeria, as they definitely fall short in trying to relate how Nigerian leaders perceive their political leaders

4.3.2.   Other leadership approaches' correspondence to perceptions of political leaders

As shown above, leadership literature often focuses on leadership in a positive light, and therefore the previously presented theories did not correspond with the results' categories findings. It is therefore necessary to look at the leadership studies that do not have the positive bias to make a comparison to this study's findings. In order to do this, a definition of this type of destructive leadership plus brief summary of the leadership literature found within this area will be provided to give an overview before investigating how the literature corresponds to the participants' perceptions of Nigerian political leaders.

Recently, researchers Einarsen et al. (2007) saw the problematic nature of there not being many studies regarding poor leadership. They took the problem one step further and even criticized the available studies in this area, arguing that there was a lack of clarity when defining leadership that is not inherently positive. In order to improve the consistency within studies to come, they proposed an inclusive definition of this type of leadership in order to help the future literature dealing with this issue become more succinct. They have chosen to call this type of leadership destructive leadership and have defined it as follows:

> The systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor, or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organization by undermining and/or sabotaging the organisation's goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates. (p. 208)

The remaining portion of this thesis will use this definition in reference to literature referring to this type of leadership where the leadership is poor, negative, or destructive.

Now that a definition of destructive leadership is provided, it is relevant to assess whether this definition corresponds to the participants' perceptions of their Nigerian political leaders. Referring back to the data and definitions provided, the participants described their leaders as egocentric and corrupt. Both of these subcategories from the participants involve

describing a political leader that is "violating the legitimate interests of the organization". In addition to this, the participants label the leaders as corrupt, which subcategory states the leaders are sabotaging of the government's resources and goals for personal gains, matching directly with the destructive definition provided. It thus seems that the perceptions of Nigerian political leaders correspond to the definition of destructive leaders presented above.

Despite the definition being applicable, this is not enough information to decide whether all destructive leadership theories can be applied to leadership in Nigeria. It is necessary to further investigate destructive leadership literature to see if any other studies correspond to the data on perceptions' of Nigerian political leaders. Padilla et al. (2007) study provides a list of traits connected to destructive leaders. Their findings list the following items below as being related to destructive leaders:

1. Charismatic – portray a vision that becomes desired by others
2. Personalized need for power – use power in an unethical manner, promoting personal gain
3. Narcissism – pursuit of personal desires and control over others
4. Negative life themes – "speak about themselves in terms of negative life stories"
5. Ideology of hate – perception and vision of world centers around hate, has a personal need for power, is narcissistic, has negative life themes, and holds an ideology of hate.

When comparing these traits to those of egocentric and corrupt provided by the participants, none of them directly match. On the other hand, a more general comparison (not word for word) shows that the participants' description of egocentric matches somewhat with the description of narcissism and personalized need for power above in that it refers to having personal goals fulfilled by overlooking or ignoring others. The perception of corruption also relates to the personalized need for power trait in that it is an unethical use of power to pursue personal desires. "They want to hide behind the fact that they are the boss. They say the money they had, they just spent it, and give some weird accounts", explains one participant in relation to corruption.

It seems thus that there is some overlap between destructive leadership literature and the perceptions of Nigerian political leaders provided by the participants. The results mention egocentric and corrupt, which are both covered indirectly in Padilla et al.'s (2007) traits. There are some traits listed by Padilla et al. that are not addressed in this thesis; therefore, a more thorough investigation of potential destructive theories ability to support perceptions of Nigerian political leaders are necessary to understand these discrepancies.

4.3.3. Summary of discussion regarding perceptions of Nigerian political leaders

The first subsection of this part illustrated that the well-known leadership theories do not correspond to the perceptions of Nigerian political leaders, indicating the inability of mainstream leadership theories to cover perceptions of Nigerian political leaders. The second subsection showed there is some relevant leadership theory regarding destructive leaders that may correspond to the type of political leaders as perceived by the participants. Einarsen et al. (2007) write "…research on destructive aspects of leadership clearly documents that this phenomenon (destructive leadership) includes a variety of different behaviours that is not limited to the mere *absence* of effective leadership" (p. 207), and as shown, it is necessary when wanting to understand the data presented on Nigerian political leaders. Despite the general correspondence found, there are categories in Padilla et al.'s article not mentioned by the participants, and it is a fairly new topic of research, both suggesting the need for further investigation before stating that destructive leadership approaches are a good representation of perceptions of Nigerian political leaders.

4.4. Explanations as to why the political leaders are perceived as destructive

The previous two discussion sections investigated how leadership literature corresponded when discussing perceptions of what a leader is and perceptions of Nigerian political leaders. This following section will now examine how the leadership literature corresponds when examining the explanations as to why the Nigerian political leaders are perceived as destructive.

Due to the content of this section, the organization will be different than before. The section above discussing destructive leadership illustrated that the Western leadership approaches and African approaches presented prove to be insufficient if wanting to look at perceptions of Nigerian political leaders. Therefore, it can be stated that these approaches cannot be used either if wanting to see how the literature corresponds to the explanations as to why the political leaders are perceived as destructive found in the data. It will be necessary to examine how the destructive leadership literature corresponds with the results from this category as well.

Therefore, the organization of this section will be based on that conclusion, and will have two subsections. The first subsection will cover how the factors on destructive leadership from Padilla et al.'s (2007) article correspond with perceptions mentioned by the participants in the individual, context, and culture subcategories found in the category from

the results of explanations as to why the political leaders are perceived as destructive. There is a small side section within this first subsection that briefly examines the factors involved with culture more specifically, as it proved to be somewhat complicated subcategory. The second subsection of this section will then summarize the findings to this section.

4.4.1. Padilla et al.'s correspondence with the explanations from the results

Referring back to the literature on destructive leadership, the article written by Padilla et al. (2007) discusses certain factors in relation to destructive leadership. Although these factors have not been heavily investigated in other literature, they can be used as a starting point in explaining how destructive leadership literature correlates to this category's results. Therefore, this subsection will investigate the three codes of individual, context, and culture found in this results' category and see how they correspond to Padilla et al.'s factors of destructive leadership. First though, a brief summary of Padilla et al.'s model and factors is provided.

Padilla et al. (2007) created a model that outlines critical factors associated with destructive leadership. Where many leadership approaches concentrate mainly on factors centered solely on the leader, Padilla el al.'s model depicts factors associated with three categories that they argue are involved in destructive leadership. These categories are the leaders, the followers, and the environment. The factors Padilla et al. use to explain destructive leadership associated with these three categories will be taken from their study and used in order to see how they correspond to the participants' explanations of why their political leaders are perceived as destructive.

Within the first category of destructive leaders, the only factor that Padilla et al.'s model concentrates on is "a traumatic childhood" (p.182). Padilla et al. (2007) explain that childhood experiences of powerlessness and abuse may provide a foundation that later leads to someone being a destructive leader. Unfortunately though, there is not much attention paid to this area within the article, nor does the article go into detail regarding what a "traumatic childhood" actually entails.

Considering how the explanations provided by the participants correspond to these findings, it is seen within the individual section of this study's results that many participants also listed childhood or upbringing as an explanation to destructive leaders, as they stated the upbringing of the leader may have lead to their egocentric and selfish tendencies. "Maybe their parents did not teach them the right values" was a common reply found in the data. Unfortunately though, as there is limited research on destructive leaders, there is no detailed

study in the area investigating the actual childhoods of the destructive leaders in order to compare them more in depth. The factor of childhood has been mentioned in both studies though, meaning that the article and this study do correspond thus far, despite lacking a detailed explanation as to exactly how the childhood influences the leader.

When assessing the remaining explanations provided by the participants though in the individual subcategory, the code of no conscience suggested that the participants indicate there are more dimensions related to the leaders that might be causing the destructiveness, than just the upbringing. Padilla et al. (2007) do not mention anything like this within their study, illustrating that despite the upbringing matching in both studies, there is a lack of correspondence in relation to the remaining results regarding the leaders' role.

In addition to this, there are many causes indicated by Padilla et al. (2007) that link the environment to destructive leaders. They argue that an "unstable government that inconsistently implements rules, perception of threat against national security, insecurity, and the lack of an institution of checks and balances" (p. 185-186) are all potential factors explaining destructive leadership. Within the section related to environment, they also highlight that a particular culture may lead to destructive leaders, although they fail to define exactly what they mean by culture, simply stating that countries that fall into certain cultural categories established by Hofstede (2001) may be a setting for destructive leadership.

It seems somewhat complicated to make any assessment regarding whether these environmental explanations provided by Padilla et al. (2007) correspond to the explanations provided by the participants as to why their leaders are perceived as destructive because Padilla et al.'s factors are so diverse. Referring back to the results from this study though, the participants mentioned lacking a 'true' democracy as an explanation as to why their leaders are perceived as destructive. This may indirectly correspond to Padilla el al.'s (2007) mention of an unstable government and a need for checks and balances, as the participants indicate that without the ability to elect the proper officials, it is difficult to maintain order within the state. The participants also bring up Nigeria's poverty as a cause to the citizens valuing money, which in turn leads to corruption. "Our society thinks success is someone who has money, houses, and doles out money thus causing leaders to think they need money," was a way one participant explained it. This explanation does not directly match with Padilla et al.'s explanation regarding culture though because the participants are referring to poverty within the cultural context, and Padilla et al. do not mention poverty within the frame of culture but only explain that poverty may make followers easier to succumb to destructive

leaders. Thus, this brief comparison shows that Padilla et al.'s factors are much less specific than the findings of this study, and therefore, do not match very well.

Padilla et al. (2007) also mention culture within the context of Hofstede's (2001) culture dimensions, using the rankings here as a scale system for destructive leadership. Seeing as Hofstede's theory was discussed initially, an examination of how Padilla et al. and Hofstede's work correspond with this study's findings will show where the leadership literature stands in relation to the participants' explanations regarding culture of why their leaders are perceived as destructive. Due to there being a variety of information to cover, a small side section is dedicated to investigating the relationship of culture within destructive leadership.

Padilla et al. with Hofstede's dimensions compared to the results

As stated above, Padilla et al.'s (2007) article about factors relating to destructive leadership points out that culture is an aspect that needs to be considered when examining the category of the environment's role in destructive leadership. Despite having differing categorization methods between this study and theirs, an investigation between each work mentioning culture will show how they correspond with one another. Due to Padilla et al.'s findings being based on Hofstede's (2001) culture dimensions, a more in depth look at Hofstede's dimensions in relation to Nigeria is necessary before illustrating how Padilla et al.'s culture corresponds to this study's findings.

The arguments found within Padilla et al.'s (2007) article regarding culture are based on the findings of Hofstede (2001), which was referenced in the African theories section at the beginning of the thesis. Padilla et al. uses three of Hofstede's well-known cultural dimensions to describe cultures with destructive leadership. Padilla et al. writes that cultures "…that endorse the avoidance of uncertainty, collectivism, and high power distance" (p. 186) are prone to destructive leaders. This is basically as far as their explanation goes; therefore, the following will intermix Padilla et al.'s explanations combined with a more in depth explanation of Hofstede's dimensions.

Referring back to the theory section, which summarizes Hofstede's (2001) dimensions (see page 15), avoidance of uncertainty deals with how individuals deal with unstructured situations. If a culture is categorized as high avoidance of uncertainty, this means that people of this culture are not able to deal with uncertainty or unstructured situations. Padilla et al. (2007) clarify that this may lead to destructive leadership because a society that feels insecure looks to strong leaders to provide them with comfort. The

individualism-collectivism category refers to what orientation towards group or alone individuals have. A country that is high in collectivism has citizens that are group orientated, and people tend to be loyal to the group. This perpetuates destructive leadership, according to Padilla et al., because the people tend to depend on the leader as a conflict solver, allowing them to avoid potentially frustrating situations. Lastly, power distance refers to how individuals deal with authority. A culture that has high power distance has individuals that accept hierarchical systems, meaning those with less power accept the roles of those with more power. Padilla et al. say this contributes to destructive leadership because followers have a higher tolerance of authority, regardless of the consequences.

Looking back to where Nigeria falls within Hofstede's (2001) dimensions may then provide some insight as to whether it is a country that fits Padilla et al.'s (2007) description of a potential culture that leads to destructive leadership. As stated previously, Nigeria ranks middle in uncertainty avoidance, but high on collectivism and power distance. It seems with these findings that Nigeria matches two out of three of Padilla et al.'s requirements to have a culture that promotes destructive leaders. Although there is no formal suggestion from Padilla et al. regarding how many categories a culture must match, it does indicate that Nigeria's culture has a higher probability of causing destructive leadership than countries that match one or none of the dimensions.

Despite the above analysis illustrating that according to Padilla et al. (2007), Nigeria might have a culture that is conducive to destructive leadership, examining the results from this study in relation to these findings is necessary. Recalling back to the results, the category culture consisted of three codes from the participants' interviews. These three codes were *poverty, hierarchy,* and *religion*. When comparing the analysis above with these categories, it becomes apparent that the use of Hofstede's (2001) dimensions may only cover one of the participants' explanation categories. It may be argued that *hierarchy* may have some type of relation to high power distance because both are connected to hierarchical explanations. Power distance refers to how societies deal with inequality, meaning more specifically how individuals of lower ranking status in a society deal with and accept how power is distributed. The explanations involved in *hierarchy* had similar arguments in that individuals of lower rank may find it disrespectful to those above them to hear them explain their actions, as it is assumed due to their rank that they know better than those lower than them. In addition to this, individuals of higher rank may abuse their power, threatening and harming those that actual do request transparency, thus creating a fear in the society. In summary though, it seems that these are the only two comparisons that relate.

In conclusion to this small subsection regarding Hofstede (2001) and Padilla et al.'s (2007) arguments, it is obvious that the dimensions provided from them do not cover completely the *hierarchy, poverty,* and *religion* codes presented in this study. Suggestions as to what topics may be beneficial to look at in these areas will shortly follow.

4.4.2. Summary of discussion regarding why political leaders are destructive

In summary, the factors from the three categories of leaders, followers, and environment found from Padilla et al.'s (2007) study touch partially on some of the explanations provided by the participants regarding why they perceive their political leaders as destructive. Overall though, Padilla et al.'s study did not mention the code no conscience found in the individual subcategory in the results. They failed also to mention democracy and the multiethnic diversity codes, which were found in the political context subcategory in this thesis. Lastly, although they specified culture and the code hierarchy corresponded with some of Hofstede's (2001) dimension explanations, Padilla et al. (2007) did not pinpoint the two codes of poverty and religion found within the culture subcategory of this study.

4.5. Topics to investigate to help support leadership literature

As illustrated in the three discussion sections above, there were results in this study that did not correspond with any of the leadership literature reviewed. This following section of the discussion will address the last task of the thesis by presenting suggestions for topics not currently discussed in leadership that may potentially assist leadership approaches to having a more encompassing view of leadership in Nigeria. The intention of this is to use the findings from the three previous sections to contribute to the existing literature's ability to understand leadership in Nigeria.

A summary of the previous three sections is briefly provided in order to give an overview of what needs to be addressed in this last section. The first section showed that the leadership literature covers all of the qualities regarding how Nigerians perceive a leader rather well, except there was no emphasis found within the literature on transparency. The second section showed that with regards to the perceptions of the political leaders being egocentric and corrupt, the literature regarding destructive leaders partially covers these characteristics, but a further investigation into literature outside of leadership regarding egocentric may be beneficial. The third section showed that the destructive leadership literature covered some of the explanations as to why the political leaders were perceived as destructive, but the areas of democracy, multiethnic diversity, poverty and religion were not

addressed. These are the basis for the topics presented that might be used to help improve leadership literature's ability to cover leadership in Nigeria.

In order to present these suggestions that follow, literature from outside of the leadership field was investigated. Theories and information that explained and reinforced what the participants' perceptions are presented, and these findings make up the basis of this section. As will be seen, these findings are used to support and reinforce to the participants' perceptions, thereby supporting the argument that these topics need to be looked into by leadership literature if an accurate picture of leadership in Nigeria is desired. Based on this information, the challenge after this information is presented is for future leadership literature to create approaches that consider and include these topics so that together, with the other perspectives of the participants in this thesis, an accurate depiction of leadership in Nigeria can be formed.

The following section is divided into three subsections regarding the individual, the cultural, and the political contextual dimensions, altogether presenting the results where there was no leadership literature correspondence. It must be highlighted that although the quality of transparency was rather underrepresented in the existing leadership literature, it is not addressed here. It was decided the recent findings of Avoilio et al. (2009) arguing for a leadership approach that focuses on this area, further explanations as to why the participants' focused on transparency are not necessary, as it appears that the leadership field is becoming more and more aware of its relevance.

4.5.1. Individual

When dealing with the individual, the following subsection will examine the topic of egocentrism, as the participants denoted this as something not only their political leaders were, but also something that explained their destructiveness. This subsection will present possible literature outside of leadership that may explain why the participants focused on this, thereby reinforcing why future leadership literature should consider investigating this topic.

Starting specifically with the actual word egocentric provided by the participants, an investigation of where this term originates in outside literature may help understand more clearly what it means. Egocentric actually first appears within literature regarding development psychologist Jean Piaget's (1932) work of child development. Piaget developed a stage model for human cognitive development, and the model suggests that there are four stages of cognitive development: sensorimotor, preoperative, concrete operational, and formal operational. The sensorimotor stage covers typically the first two years of

development, and after this, Piaget argues that children are operating from within the preoperative stage of development are egocentric because they lack the ability to appreciate that others have a viewpoint of the world different from their own (Evans, 1973).

From Piaget's work on cognitive development spawned the creation of a scale dealing with moral development. Lawrence Kohlberg (1976) was one of these researches that used Piaget's work to investigate moral development and eventually developed stage model for moral development. The model Kohlberg created is divided into three stages: preconvetional, conventional, and postconvetional. The preconventional stage is where an individual has not yet internalized society's rules but focuses on what consequences an action may bring. An individual at the conventional stage judges actions by using the rules of society to decide what is right and wrong. Lastly, at the postconventional stage, actions are based on the individual's perception of right and wrong but are made to consider the world in its entirety (Kohlberg, 1976).

Despite this study lacking data that measures the cognitive and moral development of the Nigerian political leaders, it is beneficial to consider whether perhaps the cognitive and moral development of the political leaders may be an explanation as to why the participants are using the word egocentric to describe them. It would seem Piaget's remarks that it is only children around the age of nine and below that are operating at the preoperative (egocentric) cognitive stage indicates that the Nigerian political leaders are more than likely beyond this stage cognitively. Wilber (2000) further clarifies the relation between moral and cognitive development though by explaining that an individual must be cognitively developed in order for moral development to occur, but this does not mean that if one is cognitively developed that they are morally developed as well. In other words, this would explain then that even if the Nigerian political leaders were out of the initial preoperational cognitive stage qualified by Piaget, they still might be operating from Kohlberg's lowest preconventional moral development stage, where the expectations of society are not internalized and "putting yourself in another's shoes" is not possible, thus explaining the code egocentric that surfaced in the data.

It is important to highlight that in conjunction to this finding, referring back to Padilla et al.'s (2007) article, this study actually suggests that the moral development may be linked to destructive leadership. They refer to the moral development of the followers though, and not that of the leaders. They describe it as ego development and refer to development theorists Kohlberg (1976) and Cook-Greuter (1999), whom both have done investigations regarding moral development. Padilla et al. argue that the lack of moral development in the

followers leads to them allowing the leaders to be destructive. It is unclear as to why these authors did not consider the moral development of the destructive leaders themselves though. With this finding, it seems apparent though that theories relating to cognitive and moral development may help facilitate leadership theories, especially in regards to destructive leadership.

This brief individual dimension section shows that moral development of the political leaders may potentially explain why the participants repeatedly stated the political leaders are egocentric and that lacking a conscience is part of the reason they are destructive. The above classifications are based only on observations provided from the participants' explanations though, and a more in depth analysis combined with actual data collection regarding leaders' moral and cognitive development would give much more depth to this section. On the other hand though, the findings of this small section suggest that the development level of the political leaders may be a relevant area of investigation, not only regarding their destructive nature, but in reference to leadership in general.

Summary of explanations in relation to the individual

As illustrated, the ideas investigating cognitive and moral development in relationship to destructive leaders, or leaders in general, unfortunately have not received much attention. The information provided though may lead to a more complete understanding of the data from this study, as well as provide some input regarding the possible potential there is in using these ideas in order to create a more complete picture of what leadership in Nigeria entails overall. The results above also show that there is more to building a respectable and effective leader than simply education and training, as it is also may be a question of overall moral development. Therefore, this shows the is necessity for donors and designers of leadership training courses to understand the intricate nature involved in forming a leader, and consideration of the development level of both the leader and follower may provide valuable information to help establish programs that actually lead to leadership development.

4.5.2. Political Context

After presenting suggestions that cognitive and moral development may explain why the egocentric perceptions are found in the data, the following subsection will review explanations as to why democracy and multiethnic diversity were brought up by the participants and reinforce these topics with outside literature. There are two topics within this section, one covering democracy and one covering multiethnic diversity.

Democracy

The participants' explained that democracy influences destructive leadership because they argue if Nigeria had a legitimate democracy with open elections, the citizens would not elect destructive leaders. "If we had free and fair elections, not what they are doing now, then credible people will emerge, and they will be able to stand against the tide" was an explanation provided by one participant. Although no leadership research was found that corresponded with why the participants linked democracy with destructive leadership, there are some studies outside of leadership literature regarding democracy and corruption that may help explain why the participants spoke of democracy. In addition to this, there seems to be a slight correlation between destructive leadership and corruption, as destructive leadership refers to actions performed by a leader that sabotage an organization's goals and effectiveness, and corruption has been associated or compared to this because corruption is "the abuse of public roles or resources for private benefit" (Robinson, 1998, p. 4). Therefore, looking into democracy's relation to corruption may provide a good starting point when wanting to assess democracy's relation to destructive leadership.

When examining the relationship between democracy and corruption, it is initially seen that many assume democracy is associated with less corruption because it is logical to think that if there are free elections, people will elect officials that will not be corrupt. This is much the same explanation provided by the participants in reference to democracy's link to destructive leaders. Investigating the literature surrounding the corruption though, the results are actually somewhat ambiguous. Some studies illustrate a negative correlation between democracy and corruption (Hill, 2003; Chowdhury 2004; Bohara, Mitchell, & Mittendorff, 2004), but critics argue against these studies, saying that there are few to no control variables used in them, thus questioning their validity (Pellegrini & Gerlagh, 2008).

A recent review performed by Treisman (2007) regarding the findings of corruption and democracy concluded though, "Quite strong evidence suggests that highly developed, long-established liberal democracies, with a free and widely read press, a high share of women in government, and a history of openness to trade, are perceived as less corrupt" (p. 212). Being this is a very recent, structured, and well carried out literature review, it seems safe to believe in its findings and agree that a "long-establish liberal democracy" may lead to less corruption.

It is necessary to give some background information of the current democratic system in Nigeria though in order to understand the above information's application to this study. When investigating the state of democracy as involving free and open elections in Nigeria,

Larvie (2007) illustrates the pertinent and continuing issues the country has with the democratic election process. He writes in reference to the Nigerian elections in 2007,

> The recently concluded 2007 elections only succeeded in repeating the fraud and manipulations witnessed in the 1998 and 2003 earlier elections of Obasanjo and his PDP (People's Democratic Party) administration. The sorry outcome of these elections has indeed broken the hearts of many Nigerians, and Africans, too. When will Nigeria, and for that matter Africa as whole, conduct elections that would be transparent, credible and generally acceptable to all. Nigeria does not seem to be making progress at establishing a credible democratic electoral practice. This is sad given the size and economic clout that country commands in Africa. (p. 1)

Although the implementation of democracy in Nigeria took place over 10 years ago in 1999, researchers and others alike confirm Larvie's (2007) findings, also arguing that the elections were flawed (Bratton, 2008; Lewis, 2003; Oshodi, 2007). Oshodi's article speaks of continual problems throughout the elections in 1999, 2003, and 2007, with reference not only to the registered number of voters and actual tabulated votes, but as well as to primary winners whom were not always given the slot on the secondary ballot. Even more seriously, Bratton also mentions cases of cited violence against opposing parties, and he speaks intensely about the organizational complications that prevented smooth and successful elections. "The performance on election day 2007 was the worst since the military departed in 1999," summarizes Oshodi (2007, p. 628).

It is apparent from the information provided above that the Nigerian democracy of open and free elections is not stable, and actually demonstrates that it is questionable as to whether it is a legitimate democracy at all. According to Treisman (2007), a long established democracy is related to a decline in corruption, but the background information shows that Nigeria does not possess a long established democracy. This brief explanation relating to democracy and corruption indicates that the lack of a long lasting democracy in Nigeria may be a potential reason as to why the category democracy surfaced from the data when the participants were explaining why their leaders are perceived as destructive, thus promoting democracy as a relevant topic for leadership literature to investigate.

It is relevant to state that the above is showing democracy's relation to corruption, not to destructive leadership, but Kellerman (2005) has listed corrupt as one of the categories under bad leadership. This small segue denotes that using literature related to democracy and corruption support the data found in this study, but more importantly that a more in depth look at democracy in order to clarify its role in destructive leadership is needed.

Multiethnic diversity

In addition to democracy falling under the political context subsection within the data that was not addressed by the leadership literature, the participants also revealed that the multiethnic diversity in Nigeria might be an explanation as to why the leaders are seen as destructive. An investigation as to why the participants spoke of this in the interviews may uncover some information that should be considered by leadership theorists.

The category of multiethnic diversity within the data refers to the participants expressing that the wide range of tribes and regions within Nigeria leads some leaders to be perceived as destructive because they are forced to "play favorites" and implement laws that benefit their own tribes. One participant explained, "Leaders favor their own ethnic tribes or backgrounds, often neglecting the rights' of others due to this." Some background information regarding the actual multiethnic situation in Nigeria is provided to demonstrate perhaps why the participants placed attention on this situation.

Investigating the multiethinic situation in Nigeria, it is shown that there are estimates that Nigeria has anywhere between 250 to 370 ethnic groups, but the three major tribes of the Fula, the Igbo, and the Yoruba make up 57% of the population (Uwazie, 1999). Due to the vast diversity, Uwazie (1999) points out that between 1982 and 1999, 10 severe ethnic riots took place in five major cities within the country. He writes, "These violent clashes have caused untold economic, political, and social havoc in the country, plus unbearable person loss in human killings and injuries" (p. 1).

Ethnic conflict is something that not only plagues Nigeria, but the continent of Africa in general. Along with playing favorites, the ethnic diversity within Nigeria makes it difficult to implement a rule that is accepted by everyone. Uwazie (1999) writes in reference to this situation, "The process of mobilization of one group's membership along lines of ethnicity often involves the negative labeling of the other group. In many respects, each group's members view the other as an 'enemy' or unfriendly opponent" (p. 2).

It is thus obvious that the ethnic diversity has caused conflict in Nigeria, which has led to instability. Although there is no direct mention of multiethnic diversity in Padilla et al.'s (2007) article when writing of the potential causes to destructive leadership, they do write that instability may be a cause to destructive leadership; therefore connecting the potential links between multiethnic diversity which causes conflict that leads instability that leads to destructive leadership. The above suggestion thus clarifies why it is that the participants' mention the multiethnic situation in Nigeria and illustrates its potential role in

leadership in Nigeria. A suggestion thus to investigate multiethnic diversity in depth, potentially whether it creates conflict, seems appropriate for future research.

Summary of explanations in relation to the political context

This discussion shows that the democracy and multiethnic codes found in the data may be supported from literature not related to leadership. The information provided demonstrates that the mere implementation of democracy may not be enough to help eradicate destructive leaders, but an all encompassing approach that examines instability, ethnic conflict, and corruption, among other potential antecedents, in addition to their interactions together, is needed before any of these potential explanations should be discarded from the discourse. In addition to this, it can be understood why some participants felt that the ethnic diversity in Nigeria may lead to destructive leadership, as it is shown that the ethnic diversity has caused serious tension, as well as creates a political environment that is difficult to control. The results presented are by no means inclusive, but they do demonstrate how complicated contextual research can be, as well as give some insight into areas that future research should consider.

4.5.3. Culture

The two previous sections reviewed the results involving the individual and the political context and illustrated the need for them to be considered by leadership literature in the future. This last remaining subsection will now look at the topics found under the culture dimension to present explanations as to why they surfaced in the data. The two topics found in the results not addressed by leadership literature were poverty and religion, and hierarchy was only addressed briefly. Therefore, this last remaining section will provide some explanations as to why these topics emerged in the data.

Starting with *hierarchy*, the participants relate that due to the power held by the political leaders, many citizens are afraid to speak out against their destructive nature due to potential repercussions. There was only one concrete example that was provided during the interviews relating to political force using its power to shut down a certain media source due to the information it released involving accusations of corruption, but there are cited cases of situations of this nature in printed sources. Eboh (2007) specifically addresses fears of election protests due to power distribution. He writes, "Opposition leaders were reluctant to call for mass protests because they fear the demonstrations could be taken over by violent or criminal elements arranged by those in power…" (p. 1). These examples illustrate the problems potentially caused by hierarchy, and the existence of a culture with a hierarchical

nature may prohibit followers to speak out against those in power due to a fear that they may be harmed, thus allowing destructive leaders to maintain their positions.

The next topic is *poverty*. The explanations provided by the participants reveal that they think Nigerians look up to and respect individuals with money due to the poor state of the country. With nearly 70% of the Nigerian population living on less than $1.25 a day, the participants are implying that many Nigerians respect and revere political leaders because of their wealth (The United Nations, 2008). The participants explain that the leaders therefore become corrupt in order to obtain money so that they can continue to maintain their wealthy status and be revered by the people. It must be stated that there is no direct literature regarding a culture valuing wealth in this way in connection to destructive leadership, but there is some literature that does investigate heavily the role of corruption in relation to poverty. Treisman (2000) and Paldam and Gundlach (2001) both argue corruption is caused by poverty but with varying explanations. Therefore, the code *poverty* under culture provides a bit more insight into how a developing country's poverty level may inadvertently impact the values of the people leading to destructive leadership behavior.

The last code from this study under culture was labeled *religion,* and a literature review demonstrates that it is not mentioned in the research performed by those concentrating leadership. Despite the lack of literature regarding leadership and religion, more than half of the participants mentioned *religion* in their interviews; therefore, it is relevant to examine how the participants felt religion influences their current political leaders. They stated, "lack of the fear of God" and "they go to church but don't practice the teachings", as some of the explanations as to why their political leaders are destructive.

In reference to the role of religion in Nigeria, Toyin Falola, a native Nigeria, writes the following,

> Religion is connected with politics and social change in Nigeria. Islamic and Christian leaders condemn the country's political lapses, denounce corruption and negative social changes, and call on devout members to avoid moral excesses. In economic decay, religious leaders tell people to turn to their faith. Religion has been use to explain the Nigerian reality of poverty and political problems. Nigerians have turned to religious ideas to explain virtually all the country's problems. (2001, p. 48)

Reports confirm the statement above, revealing that nine out of ten Nigerians claim to attend church (NationMaster, 2010). With reports such as this, Nigeria has the highest church attendance rating of any country in the world, illustrating why it was such prevalent theme brought up by the participants (NationMaster, 2010). From these references, the code of religion that surfaced in the data is not surprising.

The work of Padilla et al. (2007) already presented though connected culture in relation to destructive leadership with Hofstede's findings, and despite Luthans, Peterson, and Ibrayeva's (1998) investigation of the role of culture causing "dark leadership" in communist countries, there is no mention of religion at all. A review of other mainstream leadership literature reveals that religion and leadership are not at all often mentioned together either. Service and Carson (2009) write,

> In these trying times of major religions vying for world domination and when almost all University schools of business have a course, if not a major or center, for ethics and values, it seems we are really missing a topic. In the name of political correctness and to avoid offending, we seem to ignore the impact religion has on not just the theory and study of management and leadership but also on the practice of those disciplines. (abstract)

Looking back at the original approaches presented, none of them state that a leader should be religious or believe in God as the participants do. "A leader should have the fear of God. If you fear God, what you don't want someone to do to you, you will not do to someone else" was a provided example from a participant. House et al. (2004) questionnaires include questions regarding religion, but in the results and discussion of their work, they briefly touch on its importance but overall simply collapse it within their humanistic orientation category.

This is a surprising discovery, as religion in general, is a very influential aspect not just of Nigeria, but the world in its entirety. The information regarding the role of religion illustrates that this is an area that leadership literature should consider, potentially not only in Nigeria, but any country where religion places a role in forming the values of society.

Summary of findings in relation to the culture

The above section addressed hierarchy, poverty, and religion from the culture dimension presented by the participants in order to try to further clarify their existence in the data. It revealed that hierarchy plays a role not only directly within political decision making, as it is often considered, but also indirectly in reference to potentially creating a culture of fear prohibiting people from challenging their leaders. The code referring to poverty demonstrated that poverty is not only a result of corruption, but that it is a state of being that influences those that are poor's state of mind. Lastly, in reference to religion, it was shown that the relation between religion and leadership has been overlooked and should be addressed in reference to Nigeria, as it plays a crucial role in their lifestyle. In conclusion, it is noted that not only the political context and individual are relevant, but that the cultural dimension is also necessary, and all of these topics are necessary to consider if a complete and accurate picture of leadership in Nigeria is to be given.

4.5.4. Limitations to the Discussion

Now that the discussion has addressed how the leadership literature corresponds to the results of the grounded theory analysis and how these findings were used to present topics to assist future research, the limitations that surfaced when performing the discussion will be presented.

As addressed in the discussion overview, in order to assess where two sets of studies correspond can be quite problematic, as there are many factors involved that can influence the findings. One of the major issues with this study is that when comparing prior leadership literature to the results found in this study, it can be argued that there is a lack of correspondence due to the fact that it was not the intention of the existing literature to examine leadership in Nigeria, as well as due to the notion that many of these theories did not specifically address the topic of political leaders. It must be noted again though that it was not the intention of the thesis to find a theory that was completely applicable in addressing leadership in Nigeria, but it was the intention to give an overview of whether it was really problematic to apply existing leadership literature to a country where not much prior data had been collected.

With regards to the interviewing process, despite trying to use grounded theory as best as possible, bias in the research is unavoidable. This includes not only the interview questions selected by the researcher, but also the interaction with the participants and the analysis of the results. For example, selecting to pose more or less specific questions may have influenced the responses, which would in turn influence the discussion. On the other hand, the longer visit to Nigeria by the researcher helped the interactions with the participants become easier and more understandable.

Although the researcher's lack of prior knowledge regarding leadership is seen as an advantage in the grounded theory methodology, there is a tremendous amount of leadership literature, and the lack of prior knowledge may have influenced the theories selected. In addition with this, the sheer number of leadership literature meant that some relevant theories may have been overlooked, which obviously would influence the discussion in that if other theories were selected, other findings may have been discovered.

Lastly, it would have been most beneficial to the study if all the data collected could have been analyzed. As explained before though, time constraints required that a section of the data be eliminated, and leaving this data out may have influenced the overall outcomes provided.

4.5.5. Future Research

Although a section of this thesis was directed at presenting topics for future research to consider if approaching leadership in Nigeria, it is still relevant to dedicate a small section of this thesis to relay lessons learned for future researchers to consider.

One of first issues that arose from this study was that the overall scope of the thesis may have been too broad. Although the common thread throughout the thesis was to show how to improve leadership literature's ability to understand leadership in Nigeria, it was realized that there is a wide variety of angles to consider when discussing leadership, and a more focused view may have been easier to work with and follow. The broad topic of leadership proved to present more intricacies and issues to consider than initially expected, and it is recommended to anyone taking on a similar endeavor to focus in on a more specific aspect or angle.

There are also a variety of other items to consider if wanting to perform future research in this area. A wider variety of participants, being leaders and not leaders, both in and outside of the NGO sector, with a variety of religious backgrounds would support a higher validity of the results and improve the likelihood for the perceptions to be considered relevant to other audiences. Future research could benefit from a more structured approach to the descriptions of leaders, such as through a factor analysis, as many qualities were presented that potentially have value correspondence.

Lastly, as the analysis was taking place, it was realized that the comparison performed would have been much stronger if a similar set of data was collected from a comparable cross set of leaders in a Western country and compared to this study's findings. Although this would have changed the thesis drastically, many of the limitations found in the discussion would have been addressed, and the correspondence and findings would have been much clearer.

5.   Conclusion

The introduction of this thesis showed that in Nigeria there is a need for leadership development, but that despite leadership being a highly researched topic, the literature has its basis in the Western world. Therefore, it is argued that the literature does not have much value for Nigeria, as Bolden and Kirk (2009) argued that if Western leadership theories were to be applied to Nigeria that "…a very real risk of oversimplifying cultural variations and neglecting other significant factors such as the influence of history, geography, religion, and individual differences" (p. 72) might occur. Despite it potentially being problematic though,

it is unknown if it is completely impossible to apply the existing leadership literature to other countries, or if it is potentially useful in some areas. With these problems in mind, this study set off to contribute to leadership literature's ability to understand leadership in Nigeria. This objective was carried out in three parts. First, Nigerians' perceptions were examined using grounded theory. Second, the three topics that emerged from the grounded theory analysis were used in order to evaluate how well leadership literature actually corresponded with the empirical data. Lastly, suggestions for topics were presented that leadership literature could consider if wanting to approach Nigerian leadership in a more encompassing manner.

From the grounded theory examination, the first two topics of perceptions of what a leader is, perceptions of Nigeria political leaders arose. The results illustrated that the four main categories used to describe a leader were transparent, participatory, has a vision, and has a conscience; but that the perceptions of their political leaders were that they are egocentric and corrupt. After it was seen that the political leaders perceptions did not match the perceptions of what a leader is, the last topic of explanations regarding why the political leaders were seen as destructive arose. It was found that the participants perceived their leaders as destructive due to a variety of reasons, including upbringing, no conscience, democracy, multiethnic diversity, hierarchy, poverty and religion.

Although the analysis above contributes to the leadership literature by presenting results not previously found, the question of where existing literature can be applied to Nigerian leadership is still left unanswered. Therefore, the second part looked at how leadership literature corresponded to the results from the grounded theory analysis. The analysis found that in relation to perceptions of what a leader is, existing leadership literature corresponded quite well to the results, except some leadership studies covered traits not mentioned by the participants, and that the participants put an high emphasis on transparency that is only now starting to become relevant to leadership literature. In relation to perceptions of political leaders, the analysis demonstrated that the mainstream leadership literature did not correspond to the results of this study. It was shown that leadership literature addressing destructive leaders was needed, and that overall this literature corresponded quite well, but due to the varying study objectives, it was not completely applicable and further research is necessary. In relation to the last category of explanations as to why the Nigerian political leaders are perceived as destructive, the analysis showed that the destructive leadership literature corresponded to the codes of upbringing and hierarchy, but the codes of multiethnic diversity, democracy, poverty, and religion were not covered. It was shown thus overall that there are potential areas of the leadership literature that could be used to deal with leadership

in Nigeria, but also that there are definitely some areas in which leadership literature does not address all the needed elements in order to understand certain aspects of Nigerian leadership.

The last part of the thesis therefore presented some specific topics for leadership literature to consider if wanting to present a more complete picture of leadership in Nigeria. These suggestions included considering looking at the cognitive and moral development of both leaders and followers, as this may be connected to their destructive nature. A suggestion to investigate the topic democracy was provided, based on the argument that despite Nigeria declaring a democracy in 1999, it is questionable how "true" this democracy is, and this may be impacting the current leadership. A suggestion to look at the multiethnic diversity was given as it was shown that conflicts based on ethnicity are common in Nigeria, perhaps leading some leaders to play favorites which obviously creates further problems. And lastly, a suggestion to look at religion was offered, as it was shown that despite leadership not investigating the role of religion on leadership, the far majority of Nigerians are religious and it impacts their daily lives, illustrating its potential role in leadership.

It was continually expressed in the interviews, and shown in the results, that the majority of the participants felt their political leaders were a reason to the state of underdevelopment that currently exists in Nigeria. In order to approach and tackle the leadership problems in Nigeria, this thesis reveals that a more in depth look into leadership from the view of the people is necessary, and that simply implementing ideas and suggestions based on leadership literature that is developed based on Western research may be ineffective. This thesis also demonstrates the link between psychology and development, showing the need for cross-disciplinary studies, in order to transfer and share knowledge.

In conclusion, this study has presented a perspective on leadership not previously presented, by speaking with Nigerian leaders directly about their perceptions of leadership. In wanting to contribute to literature on leadership in Nigeria, the main argument within this study is that it is not possible to simply implement or accept Western mentalities without considering the potential impact in doing so. In the case of this thesis, it is shown that the leadership field developed in the Western world is only partly useful to understanding the destructive leadership tendencies being seen in Nigeria. This thus suggests that in order to have a theory that can be used to understand and guide leadership in varying countries, the theory needs to be aligned with the perspective of this country. The findings of this study ultimately present a more accurate view of leadership in Nigeria that can potentially be used to assist the current leadership problems being faced not only in Nigeria, but hopefully in other developing countries as well.

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Appendix A

Semi-structured interview questions

1. What is a leader in your opinion?
   a. Describe a leader
2. What are the qualities that you feel are important that a leader should have?
3. What are the values that you feel are important that a leader should have?
4. What has taught you that the values you listed are important?
5. How would you describe your current political leaders?
6. What do you think makes them this way?
7. Why do you think they do what they do?
8. Do you think you are like they are?