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The Determinants of Follower- Leader Relationship:

A Cross-National Study of Follower- Leader Relationship in Nigeria and The Netherlands

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List of Abbreviations

AF	Authentic Follower
CGT	Constructivist Grounded Theory
CIT	Critical Incident Technique
CVF	Competing Values Framework
CTL	Cultural Tightness-Looseness
EI	Emotional Intelligence
IDI	Individual Depth Interview
IFT	Implicit Followership Theories
IL	Inclusive Leadership
ILT	Implicit Leadership Theories
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Approach
IT	Information Technology
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
KWIC	Key Words In Context
LMX	Leadership-Member Exchange
OCAI	Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument
SDT	Self-Determination Theory

Acknowledgements

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Abstract

While leadership research in recent years has seen a modest but growing recognition of the role of followers in the performance of leadership, the dynamics of the relationship between leaders and their immediate followers (some of whom may also be leaders in their own right), and the ways this relationship may be influenced by sectoral, cultural, and socio-economic factors, remains under-investigated, and this is the gap that the current research seeks to fill.

The trend in leadership research is progressively recognising the role of followers in the success or failure of leaders. For organisations to realise their potential, the ability of leaders and followers to work together productively is relevant to the relationship. This study sought to explore and identify the factors which influence follower-leader relationship, this will be done through in-depth narrative interviews with participants from thirteen (13) organisations from two case study countries: Nigeria and the Netherlands. In answering the research questions, the influence of factors such as culture and socio-economic factors on the ability of followers and leaders to build and sustain productive relationships is explored. A grounded theory approach was employed to generate themes which were then used to construct a framework. The developed framework details a thorough, yet practical presentation of how follower-leader relationship is perceived in case study countries using themes. Some of the themes identified from data are power differential, diversity and inclusion, social integration, economic independence among others were related to tight-loose theory to analyse follower-leader relationship.

Keywords: *leadership, followership, culture, values, relationship, tightness, looseness, enforcement, vision, competencies*

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

The follower-leader relationship is the most important and consequential relationship in any organisation and/or society (Kellerman, 2007; Adair, 2008), however, despite the importance of the process of following to followers and leaders, and also the crucial role followers play in the leadership process, followers and followership have not been successful in academic research and empirical studies when compared to leadership (Martin R. , 2015; Baker, 2007). The origins of leader-follower relationship can be traced to the earliest human lineage in which the primary purpose of the relationship is to solve problems; problems relating to information sharing and social coordination (Price & van Vugt, 2014). The focal point of this study is to understand which variables contribute to the improvement or deterioration of the follower-leader relationship; prominent in this study is the role that culture, social and economic factors play in the construction and sustenance of the relationship. This will be done by arguing that followership is not limited to followers, nor is leadership limited to leaders, this co-production arrangement is at the core of arguments for productive relationship between leaders and followers (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012; Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Shamir, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, the relationship between followers and leaders is progressively being subjected to critical review in academic publications and empirical research (Da'as & Zibenberg, 2021; Uhl-Bien M. , 2021; McKimm & Vogan, 2020). The leader-centric approach most scholars chose, neither has concerted efforts been devoted to clarifying the factors which are crucial to the relationship (Riggio, 2014). Therefore, the goals of this study are to investigate and explore the factors which influence how followers and leaders relate to each other. While followership and leadership are widely referenced in research, followers and followership have too often been viewed from leadership lens, this study by adopting a

bottom-up approach, aim to present followership as a robust phenomenon which is complex enough to be studied in similar manner as leadership, and equally, this study will use grounded theory to identify the influences that inform the follower-leader relationship. To achieve the aims above, this study will allow theories, patterns and/or themes to emerge from data, this in the opinion of the researcher is the safeguard against forcing data into any preconceived (favourite) analytic categories (Goddard & Melville, 2004).

As implied above, there is consensus that most attention and empirical study have been concentrated on leaders and leadership, part of the reason for this being that more people aspire to be leaders; although it is generally accepted that being a follower is not a choice, but rather the logical path in career development (Shamir, 2014). The question regarding whether followers and leaders are partners working for similar goals and objectives is commonly asked, but the answer to this question may lie in paying more research attention to followers (Crossman & Crossman, 2011; Epitropaki, Kark, Mainemelis, & Lord, 2017; Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). The contribution of leaders and followers to the success of organisations differs, this is dependent on the relationship between them and the circumstances in which they work. While not all followers work directly for leaders, the situation with followers who work directly for leaders may be different (Baker, Mathis, & Stites-Doe, 2011). This symbiotic relationship may need maintenance and continuous development in other for it to be productive and durable for all stakeholders.

In analysing follower-leader relationship, which is the focus of this research, it is imperative to start by briefly defining who a follower is and who a leader is. Followers are people in ranks below the leader in organisation who devote their time and commitment to the achievement of organisational goals by working together with the leader, there are different classifications of followers, but effective followers support each other and the leader. Leaders

on the other hand formulate the strategies and vision which are aimed at ensuring continuity in organisations. The achievement of these objectives requires, at least a working relationship between followers and leaders.

Research has shown that effective followers can influence leaders likewise effective leaders can develop and bring the best out of followers, however the prerequisite of these two assumptions is a relationship between the two (Suda, 2013). Due to the way organisations and the society are constructed, it can be argued that the initiative of follower-leader relationship should originate from the leader, this for the fact that leaders are hierarchically higher than followers and possess the power to get followers to listen to them, power which is an important element in the relationship is further analysed in the literature review chapter.

The continuously changing global environment is redefining follower-leader relationship, and it is almost unimaginable to have teams without with people of mixed cultural and social backgrounds. This means that new talent management and communication tools are required to understand and manage the changes required in integrating the different perceptions which are the consequences of the evolving relationship (Kellerman, 2007).

The desirability of follower-leader relationship is evidenced by the many theories and traits proposed which are all aimed at better understanding the dynamics and challenges of the relationship (Adams, 2015; Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Baker, 2007). Leaders and followers make differing contributions to the success of organisations. However, the effectiveness of their contribution is likely to depend on the relationship between leaders and followers, particularly those who work directly for leaders. The inability of followers to assert their relevance in organisations has mitigated against any attempts to make leaders recognise the invaluable contributions they make in organisations and consequently, to the work of leaders (Kelley, 1988).

The challenges of achieving results include focusing attention on the dynamic role of the relationship between leaders and followers, and the quality of the relationship directly impacts how organisations move forward in realising their potentials. The relationship is multifaceted between groups which work together and understanding the intricacies will not only help in building relationships but also make followers feel respected, valued and safe (Frazier, 2021). Healthy follower-leader relationship between followers and leaders is expected to produce and inspire productive leader-follower relationships bonding and the creation of vested interest in organisational goals (Frazier, 2021).

The respective roles of followers and leaders present a challenge, not only to leadership research but equally to research on followership, in that while all leaders were once followers, not all followers eventually become leaders. This provides interesting challenges in exploring the relationship between both phenomena. What distinguishes this study from most research on follower-leader relationship is the bottom-up approach it adopted in exploring the relationship between leaders and followers by focusing on the role of followers in constructing leadership. This approach is inspired by amongst others the fact that leaders are products of followership.

Followers are instrumental in the quest of leaders to achieve goals (Bastardoz & van Vugt, 2019), this raises the question of whether this makes them complicit in the outcome of the action(s) of the leader as enablers. The relationship between followers and leaders is desirable due to the mutual interests they have in the organisation they are part of. The primary approach of this thesis is to look at the different approaches to followership and leadership and make propositions on what is needed to realise a constructive relationship. Further this study aims to contribute to the agitation to enhance research on followership by advocating

that more emphasis should be placed on the study of followership, if even to increase the understanding of leadership.

However, the power to make decisions is concentrated in the leader, and leaders can alleviate the consequences of this imbalance by sharing, or delegating power to subordinates (followers), delegation of power allows the leader to give subordinates responsibilities in areas pertinent to their skills and jobs (Drescher, 2017; Schriesheim, Neider, & Scandura, 1998).

Several academic literature and empirical studies argued that the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers which is aimed at improving the development of followers and followership processes and aligning it with leadership processes, is grossly neglected and this, some studies argue, is due to the lack of empirical and academic interest in the study of followers in a manner comparable to the study of leadership (Crossman & Crossman, 2011; Epitropaki, Kark, Mainemelis, & Lord, 2017). Not much is known about how followers perceive themselves and their roles in organisations and indeed in the leadership process, or even in the followership process (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012).

Much of extant literature adopts a narrow view of followers and followership, by focusing attention exclusively on leaders and its roles in the society and organisations.

Perceptions have been identified as the stumbling block responsible for the negative image of followers (Meindl, 1995), and because perceptions are leadership-centred; then it is not surprising that leadership is viewed as independent while followership is seen as dependent. Concurring with Meindl (1995), (Shamir, 2014) identified five followership role orientations namely, one, that followers are recipients of the influence of leaders; two, followers as the moderators of the influence of leaders; three, followers as substitutes to leaders; four, followers as constructors of leadership, and five, followers as leaders (self-leadership and

shared-leadership) (Shamir, 2014). All these perceptions appeared to be designed to continue the hegemony and superiority of leadership.

There may be some positive outcomes to the neglect of followers, the neglect seems to shield followers from intense (public) scrutiny of their activities and responsibilities, but these may be outweighed by the consequences of the scapegoating for the inadequacies and failings of the leader. Understanding followership and leadership should start by initially understanding followers (Manning & Robertson, 2016), this is for the logical reason that the journey to being a leader begins by following, followership prepares followers with ambitions and the skillset to become potential leaders by providing a platform to learn skills and building network which are essential for leaders, and since leaders are a product of followership processes, adopting a situational approach which makes it possible to realign and apply the appropriate style which takes into cognisance the developmental level of followers is employed (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Taking into consideration the different factors such as culture and socio-economic factors, and their possible influences on followers and the leadership process, this study by adopting a cross-national comparative approach will explore follower-leader relationships and perceptions in Nigeria and the Netherlands. The choice of these two countries is deliberate because of the differences culturally, socially, and economically, the aim is to explore the influence of these elements on the manifestation and development of the phenomenon, and at the same time look for commonalities across samples in very different contexts.

The phenomenon of followership and leadership has become a challenge for researchers (Hantula, 2009; Zaleznik, 2004), while all leaders still are, or have been followers, not all followers are leaders or have been leaders. The reason researchers struggle on how to classify followers could be due to the confusion surrounding the roles and the different types or ranks

of followers (Lord, Brown, & Freiberg, 1999; Shamir, 2014); some followers can be viewed as potential leaders, some complement and/or facilitate the leader, some neither aspire to be leaders nor are enthusiastic about supporting leaders (Weber & Moore, 2014); and of course, some are content with following the leader.

Followers and leaders have distinct rather than independent roles, but they are relevant and complementary to each other, and these symbiotic relationship and relatedness present complexities in the situation between the follower-leader relationship. While the roles of followers has been championed by several scholars like Kelley, Chaleff, Zaleznik, Kellerman and others, the phenomenon still lacks recognition and attention in both academic literature and empirical studies. Baker (2007) summed up the disappointing progress followership has made since 1928, and his summary reflected the insurmountable challenges creating awareness about the importance of followership through empirical studies and academic publications faces (Baker, 2007).

Hurwitz and Koonce (2017) compared leadership and followership in organisations to a shoal (a large group of fish) with common identities and surviving under the same umbrella symbolised by the organisation (Hurwitz & Koonce, 2017). Similarly, Weber and Moore (2014) asserted that leaders are intrinsically a product of followership, this is against the premise that leaders are born not made. The leadership journey should start somewhere and that somewhere could be the platform where skills can be learned in the form of apprenticeship or experience gained during career progression (Weber & Moore, 2014).

Being a leader bestows on the leader the power and influence to create a vision and set goals, and to determine the course of organisational strategy (Bass & Bass, 2008), but the success of such a trust may be impossible without the engagement of followers (Jaussi & Randel, 2014). The steadily increasing attention to followers and the process of following seems to indicate

that researchers have accepted the fact that leadership is an activity that involves interdependent relationships with followers, if even due to their importance in organisations (Lapierre & Carsten, 2014; Baker, 2007; Kelley, 1988; Bligh, 2011; Bass & Bass, 2008).

As indicated earlier, the extent that all those who end up assuming leadership roles are once followers is predicated on the fact that our orientation and career which starts by following prepares us for the greater challenge of leadership (Adair, 2008), Adair (2008) further explained that the interaction and collaboration of followers with leaders and co-followers have exposed them to the roles of leaders within their follower groups, and this is why it is ironical that this stepping stone is not being given the prominence it deserves. Even the uneasiness and lack of interest about being a follower is noticeable by the amount of research and books written on the subject of leadership, in contrast to this is the negligible search results on followership on the internet when compared to leadership (Bligh, 2011). The image and perceptions of followers as that of subservient individuals and/or groups looking up to the leader to formulate ideas, create vision and direct them are neither complete nor accurate.

Rationale

As evidenced by academic literature and empirical studies, followership and its complexities remain a challenge in a leadership dominated environment (Adair, 2008; Offermann, 2004). Nevertheless, followership and leadership are constructed as independent but cooperative, collaborative, and interdependent phenomena, but attention to followers and followership as a process, which has been noticeably neglected (Bufalino, 2018), despite the necessity that neither can operate without the other.

But unlike leadership, there exists ambiguity about followers and followership regarding how, and even whether to study them (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Kuvaas & Buch, 2020). This study aims to contribute to the elimination of the gap in academic literature and

empirical studies on the followership phenomenon and consequently contribute to the increase in interest in the "*what, why and how*" about followers and their contribution to organisational development (Greyvenstein & Cilliers, 2012).

The rationale of this study is inspired by the view of Mary Parker Follett who contended that the dynamics between the follower and the leader relationship to achieve success is more important than the quest of the leader to dominate (Hollander, 2014). Followers and followership act as the steppingstone for prospective leaders, that effective followers can end up becoming leaders is a given, provided the basic pre-requisites such as ambition, motivation, skills are satisfied, however becoming a leader is not the only preoccupation of followers (Herold, 1977).

There are different types and classifications of followers, and this means that the study of followership can be as complex as leadership. Several studies have included followership in their quest to understand leadership, but few have attempted to do this by looking at how leaders evolve through followership. The assumption of the role of a leader means power and influence to create a vision and set goals, and to determine the course of organisational strategy, however, the success of such a trust will be impossible without the engagement of followers. The importance of the follower-leader relationship is crucial to the enactment of leadership, how followers react to leaders is important to the legitimacy of leaders and it can also determine the strength of their influence and power (Hollander, 2014), cultural and social influences are factors which are vital in the ability of leaders to exert and grow their influence.

Research problem

The motivation for this research was predicated on the seeming neglect of followers and followership when compared to leadership. The objective of this study is to investigate the

dynamics of the follower-leader relationship. Followers and leaders are crucial to the success of any organisation or society; however, the two parties do not enjoy equal recognition. This discrepancy is predicated on the understanding of each other. The objective of this study is to investigate the dynamics of the follower-leader relationship.

There are several ways to look at followers, a follower can fulfil the role of an alternative to a leader, a potential leader, a failed aspiring leader, and/or an essential complement to the leader. Central to answering the question this study intends to answer is whether followers and leaders are different but execute complementary roles, and how this affects their ability to build constructive work relations. Most studies on followers approach the issue of follower from leadership perspective, are followers just a lower version of leaders? And how do these factors affect their relationship?

If leaders and followers are seen as fundamentally different does that mean that follower and the process of following are respected as independent roles, or does it confirm the perception that followers are different and a lower caste when compared to leaders? A starting point in understanding this issue is to dissect the different roles followers and leaders play, and the dynamics of their relationships. Leaders are essentially followers who have advanced to leadership roles, the advancement could be induced by experience, skills, and/or career progression. By analysing the differences and similarities in the roles followers and leaders fulfil, and how these differences affect the relationship and their perception of each other, a pattern that explains the dysfunction may be discovered.

The roles of follower and leader are judged largely through perception, and the question is whether perceptions are objective parameters or criteria to judge followers. The main point of the followership-leadership role is the relationship, and varying levels of commitments and responsibilities playing both roles entail (Brewer, 2014). The problem with empirical studies

and academic literature on followership are leadership-focused and overwhelmingly designed to explore how followers (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009), and the associated followership processes can serve the purpose of leaders, and organisations without any consideration for the position of followers (Shamir, 2014). Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe and Carsten (2014) articulated that the confusion and misunderstanding of followers and their relationship with leaders may be due to the lack of attention given to followership in academic studies which has its root cause in how followership is being perceived (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014).

 This study will put at the centre of the research the examination of the relationship between both roles, and how the different followership approaches which are mainly formed by the way organisations are constructed affect the relationship (Benson, Hardy, & Eys, 2016).

For instance, followership and leadership in military organisations demand another type of skills and compliance than in a civilian setup. Part of the argument this study will investigate is whether the contents of the tasks followers are expected to perform have an impact on the level of maturity and independence they show. This study intends to examine why it is in the interest of leaders and the organisations to have a better understanding of followership (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010). Followers are usually viewed as appendages to leaders with little regard for their societal contributions which abound around us (Northouse, 2016). The contribution of followers is usually felt whenever they embark on industrial actions or similar manifestations which disrupt the services they provide, even this is not enough to raise their profile and earn them recognition.

The apparent lack of attention and curiosity for the followership phenomenon can be attributed to confusion about what followership is, and their relevance in organisational discussions, however, this neither diminish the undisputed fact that followers are a necessity

in organisations, nor their relevance as stakeholders; but it is equally a truism that they are viewed as being at the foot of the ladder, and always willing to do the bidding of the leader (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). This perception does not help in the attempts to elicit the importance of followers in organisations and the society (Hill & Jones, 2013).

Using co-production concepts which refer to the collaboration of followers and leaders to achieve organisational objectives (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, & Huang, 2018; Shamir, 2014), this study will place emphasis on three co-production domains, leadership, followership and relationship to encourage upward communication and collaboration between followers and leaders (Shamir, 2014; Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012).

Co-production in this context primarily promotes the idea that leadership is a two-way relationship involving processes in which followers and leaders co-create and attempt to analyse the intricacies and barriers inhibiting constructive relationship between followers and leaders (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012). Complementing the aim stated above, this research recognises the motivations, intrigues and other factors which characterise the process of following, their relationship with leaders and explore reasons why they may be regarded as inconsequential in academic and organisational discussions.

Research Questions

The research questions which will play a pivotal role in linking research problems and research instruments were chosen to collect data to answer the research problem (Bryman, 2007). Therefore, to provide focus to the study and answers to the problem this research has identified, the following central questions will guide this research:

- RQ1:   How do culture, socio-economic and sectoral factors affect the relationship between leaders and followers?

With the question above, the broad perception of the influence of culture, social and economic factors, and their effects on the ability of the leader to stimulate or encourage followers with leadership ambitions is explored.

- RQ2: Are there any differences and similarities in collaboration between followers and leaders in case study countries, the Netherlands and Nigeria, and how do any possible differences impact the ability to build effective and productive teams?

This question seeks to explore the effects of any localised differences and their effects on the ability of followers and leaders to work together productively; with each of them recognising their roles and interdependence in the achievement of organisational goals and objectives.

These questions will be answered empirically by studying and evaluating leadership and followership behaviours, reviewing and analysis of secondary data collected, and the responses of participants during interviews/discussion.

Structure and scope of the document

This sub-chapter lays out the structure of this document. This study consists of six major sections namely: introduction, review of the literature; research methodology; presentation of findings; analysis of findings and conclusion.

The first chapter of this study has provided a brief introduction to the study, thereafter a summary of the problems which necessitated this research study will be presented. This will be followed by the rationale which contains the principles, context, and logical reasons for making certain assumptions that underpin this study. The research questions, also included in this chapter, will serve two purposes. Firstly, as a guide to where the focus and purpose of this research is, and secondly, the research questions will be used to guide this research by setting out goals and expectations it hopes to achieve.

The second chapter on literature review which is divided into sub-chapters reviews existing literature and knowledge on followership and its relationship with leaders, this chapter looks at how followership is viewed by both the followers themselves and the leader. The goal of this chapter is to investigate what is already known about the subject and discover any possible gaps in academic literature and empirical studies.

The chapter looks at the relationship between the stakeholders; followers, leaders, and the organisation, and contrary to most literature, the study adopts a bottom-up approach to investigate and explore followership from the perspective of followers. In doing this, different leadership, and followership approaches and how they impact followership is examined, also an attempt is made to present followership in the case study countries, to present the similarities and/or divergences in perception.

In the third chapter, the research methodology including the choices made regarding research design and strategy are discussed; this includes where, and how data used to understand the perceptions of participants will be collected, the mode of collecting, collating, analysing, and processing of data taking into consideration COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on data collection is outlined, this chapter further includes the participants and their roles in this study.

This chapter includes data analysis in which how the data collected will be analysed is set out. One of the most important parts of this chapter is the research design which details the methodology and the methods used to answer research questions, and the motivation for choosing the selected methodology is outlined (Blessing & Chakrabarti, 2009). This chapter ends with the modalities for conducting and implementing field research, this is particularly relevant due to the cross-national comparative nature of this study and the challenges it may pose.

In this chapter the data collected is presented, interviews and themes which emerge from data is presented using the words of participants. This section is concluded with ethical consideration and reflexivity in which the experiences and decisions made to ensure data collected during field work research and findings resulting from the analysis will be presented. The chapter, analysis of findings contains analysis of data collected and its application to the purpose of the study, here a conclusion of the main results and an overview of the expected contribution to knowledge forms the conclusion of this chapter.

The conclusion of the study will be presented in the last chapter. A general view of the research journey will be presented in this chapter. In chapter 4 the opinions and views of participants were presented using their own words, findings presented in this chapter is based on the analysis of data collected, in the succeeding chapter, chapter 5 the findings presented in chapter 4 are analysed and the emerging themes from data related to how they explain follower-leader relationship.

The analysis of data collected, this includes verbal and non-verbal communication, is used to develop a framework to identify the peculiarities of follower-leader relationship,

CHAPTER 2:   Literature Review

Introduction

There are in every organisation and society hierarchical structures which sets out the tasks and responsibilities of employees/citizens, however none of the tasks and responsibilities exist in isolation; there are often areas of ambiguity and areas of overlapping responsibilities; and this can be a source irritation and dissatisfaction which can affect the relationship between leaders and followers, followers and followers and leaders and leaders (Schein, 2010). The relationship between the activities of one group and the other are inter-related and this is needed in other to fit the strategic objective of the organisation. This chapter critically reviews literature on followership and leadership by examining the concepts, models and theories which are deemed relevant to the research, and this review of literature is also aimed at exploring research on the followership and leadership phenomenon and at the same providing a background to this study (Denscombe, 2017).

Followership and Leadership contexts

There are views in empirical studies and academic research that any discussion on followership is not complete without reference to leadership and the relationship between the two (Alvesson & Blom, 2015; Kellerman, 2007; Weman & Kantanen, 2018). The relationship between followers and leaders is the foundation and the cornerstone on which the cooperation to formulate and execute actions is built (Jaussi & Randel, 2014). Synthesizing literature on followership, Crossman and Crossman (2011) explained that context matters when trying to define followership, the authors cited the different circumstances of followership and the tendency they have in affecting what followership means to different people, especially leaders, in different situations (Crossman & Crossman, 2011).

A search of the literature on followership not only returns considerable discrepancies in the amount of research on followership when compared to leadership, but it also shows that the purpose of literature on followership is not aimed at a better understanding of the phenomenon, but rather explain the role they play in leadership discussions. Most of the leadership and followership literature reviewed employed leader-centric approaches to study followership (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010).

Carsten et al. (2010) contended that even the followership aspect of leadership is yet to be explored and that lessons should be drawn from how followers and leaders view each other and their relationship. The quest to know more about followership and followers is not new, as early as 1933, pioneer management scholar, Mary Parker Follett addressed the neglect and lack of acceptance of followers in her paper in 1949 (Gilbert & Hyde, 1988).

This appearance of misplaced priority in follower-leader relations was summed up by Thom-Otuya (2012) who argued that the prevailing negative characterisation of followership and followers in leadership and research in general is further promoting "*adherence to the leader*" (Thom-Otuya, 2012, p. 117). This typifies the insurmountable task research on followership may face, but not all followers may be that concerned, especially those followers who combine being followers to leadership roles (Ekundayo, 2010).

The challenges scholars like Kelley (1992); Chaleff (2009); Zaleznik (1965); Kellerman (2008); Carsten et al. (2010); Bennis (2010) and others face is the concerted attempts to emphasise the importance of leadership in organisations at the expense of followership (Kelley, 1988; Daft, 2015), however, there have baeen gradual improvements in the recognition and perception of followers (Clarke & Mahadi, 2017); regardless, literature and publications still show a considerable gap in followership research and the respect it deserves as a phenomenon which is complementary to leadership (Ford & Harding, 2018).

That followers add value to organisations and the society is a fact that is difficult to dispute, the agitation of followers is not necessarily geared towards (financial) reward but rather for recognition and better treatment (Gerpott, Fasbender, & Burmeister, 2020).

Riggio et al. (2008) postulated that followers are increasingly becoming independent and empowered due to their development in the areas of skills acquisition, experience, and training to the extent that they can do their jobs without looking up to the leader for instruction and/or guidance (Riggio, Chaleff, & Lipman-Blumen, 2008). This trend, according to the authors has resulted in leaders having more time to concentrate on their core responsibilities by delegating responsibilities (Kelley, 2008). Kelley (2008) blamed the obsession with leadership at the expense of followership on management literature which neglects any in-depth view of the importance of followership (Kelley, 2008).

Viewing this development from another angle, Grint and Holt (2011) rhetorically questioned whether the improvement in the interest in followership maybe as a result of the socio-cultural and evolutional changes in organisations, which has narrowed the difference between the concepts of followership and leadership (Grint & Holt, 2011).

Followership is often studied as a component of leadership, and the reasons for the lack of independent study of followership could partly be attributed to the negative connotations associated with followership and being a follower (Hoption, 2014), or the organisational changes which are leading to more emphasis on the relevance to leaders in organisations (Grint & Holt, 2011). Despite the attempts by Kelley (1988) 30 years ago and later by Chaleff (2009) to promote followership as a phenomenon with dyadic relationships instead of it being viewed as part of leadership, unfortunately, the achievement in this area has been steady but still far behind leadership studies (Baker, 2007).

Since followers form the majority of employees in any organisation, this means that it can be concluded that leaders emerge from a selection of followers who either display leadership qualities within their group or any other criteria like seniority and experience (Litzinger & Schaefer, 1982). It is therefore the contention of this study that the reward of good followership can be leadership, and this does not in any way change the reality that both are different roles requiring different skills (Heller & van Til, 1982).

Much of academic literature still looks at followership from the leadership perspective; even prominent authors on followership like Kelley, 1988; Chaleff, 2012; Kellerman, 2008; Offermann, 2004; Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor 2010 still employ a top-down approach when discussing followership, also the often quoted book on followership, *The Courageous Follower* by Ira Chaleff looked at followership exclusively from the leadership perspective and this takes the focus away from followership and is therefore counter-productive to the attempts to better position and understand this phenomenon.

Discussions on followership seem to ignore or trivialise the pivotal role followers play in both human development and the realisation of organisational goals (Schindler, 2015), Schindler (2015) blamed the slow reaction of academic institutions in paying attention to the importance of followers as partly responsible for the gap in literature and research on followership (Schindler, 2015), in other words, it will be myopic to put all the blame on leaders, followers have the responsibility to promote themselves and build relationship with leaders.

Analysing the relationship between followers, leaders and the processes, Weber and Moore (2014) listed three weaknesses which usually manifest itself in the way leaders view followers, the first being the "*undifferentiation*" (Weber & Moore, 2014, p. 201) of followers, this is when followers are generalised and treated as such without any consideration for the

peculiarities and the uniqueness of followers which may offer leaders different suggestions and ideas on how to interact with them; in doing so, the authors suggest that good and valuable followers have been left undiscovered, they cited the leader-membership exchange theory (LMX) as an example of leadership tools used to view followers as a uniform mass with no diversity (Weber & Moore, 2014).

Secondly, leaders usually fail to acknowledge the contribution of followers to their emergence as leaders, because followers are generally classified as passive and inconsequential; and lastly, lack of regard for followers as an entity with group dynamics who are able to cultivate relationships with fellow followers and leaders, the possible reason for this is the obsessive way leaders seem to think that they are the only one that matters (Weber & Moore, 2014).

Reaching similar conclusions, Manning and Robertson (2016) propounded the possibility of a three-factor model of viewing followership which will examine the behaviour and mannerisms of followers with regards to the skills followers require to manage relations with others at work, execute tasks and contribute constructively to change processes (Manning & Robertson, 2016a), however, this proposed model is leader-centric that neither address how followership is perceived by followers themselves, nor the position of followers in organisations. Weber and Moore (2014) believe that leaders are a creation of followers because their origin is follower-centric, implying that leaders are just those followers who either express interest in being leaders or end up being one. If this is the case, then leaders should ideally not have any troubles understanding or dealing with followers since they are intrinsically followers, Riggio (2014) summed this up by asserting that leaders are created with the assistance of followers.

The relationship between followers and leaders can be an important factor which, to a considerable extent, defines the quality of cooperation between them, Drenth, Damen and Goedhart (2005) distinguished three types of follower-leader relationships in organisations, the authors presented a relationship which they referred to as "*relationship of exchange*", this is when the initial contact is made, at this stage negotiations of the basic tenets of the relationship, like remunerations and expectations are agreed. Both parties weigh each other with the purpose of exploring areas of common interest, but the leader is here at the helm of affairs, following this is the "*relationship of authority*" (Drenth et al. 2005) in which a demarcation line regarding who-can-do-what is determined, this is usually where the quality of the relationship is established, some leaders allow informal or open relationships with followers while some leaders are strictly formal and hierarchical.

In the latter, the authority of the leader is spelt out while the limitations of the followers' role and responsibilities are equally succinctly defined, the third type of relationship according to the authors is the "*relationship of cooperation*", at this stage of the relationship, both parties having been used to each other and are aware of the limitations and expectations of their roles.

The cooperation has to do with both working for the advancement of each other with organisational goals as the objective (Drenth, Damen, & Goedhart, 2005). Drenth et al. (2005) posited that followers are capable of leading-up in their preparation to assume leadership, this type of followers who are classified as "*heavy followers*" (Drenth et al. 2005), start their leading-up capabilities within the follower groups they belong to, these are followers who act as bridges between leaders and followers, leaders need contact points in followership groups to communicate and liaise with, and followers who end up fulfilling this position are those who have earned the trust and confidence of followers to act on their behalf

and leaders see them as the means of communicating their policy decisions and directions to followers (Drenth, Damen, & Goedhart, 2005). Looking at the qualities expected of authentic followers, there is no gainsaying the positive contribution they can make to the effectiveness and success of the leader and the organisation (de Zilwa, 2014).

The increasing interest in followership and its dynamics has generated the interest of researchers to find a way to have a deeper and constructive understanding of what followership entails. However, this is compounded by the general perception of the word "*follower*" and its presumptions, to mitigate this, some authors came up with euphemisms such as "*associate, member, subordinate or constituent*" to avoid the associated negativity (Kellerman, 2008); but in contrast Joseph Rost in his book "*Leadership For The Twenty-First Century*" chose a rather radical approach by dismissing all the passivity about followers as archaic. Kellerman (2008) also referred to this as "*old-fashioned way of thinking which reflects the past divide and rule mentality of past leaders*" (Kellerman, 2008, p. 7), Rost (1991) argued that there is no way leadership can be defined without followership and also that the situation in the twenty-first century has changed positively due to the repudiation of the absolute power of leaders, he concluded by advising both followers and leaders to engage in a relationship aimed at influencing each other to improve the organisation and the society at large (Rost, 1991).

Followers can be described as those who adhere to the opinions and ideas of a leader (Northouse, 2016), which implies that they do not have their preferences and opinions as in a religious sect or cult. Examples of this abound in religious (possibly cultish) or socio-cultural contexts. While explaining the difference between subordinates and followers, Kellerman (2008) concludes that the inferior position occupied by subordinates deprives them of any choice other than to obey orders from the *boss*; this is contrary to followers who, according to

the author, can decide whether to obey the leader or not. This distinction neglects the fact that even in the lowest follower cadre, for example, labourers or cleaners, there are hierarchies and groups; in addition, this view confirms the vulnerability of followers about the formal powers that leaders have to instigate punitive measures, which may affect the career of the follower.

Lapierre and Carsten (2014) defined followership as "*the behaviours one engages in while interacting with leaders in an effort to meet organisational objectives*" (Lapierre & Carsten, 2014, p. 14), followership is primarily the process of cooperating and working with leaders and among followers. Carsten et al. (2010) referred to followership schemas which sets the norms and standards followers at different levels adhere to, followership offers followers the tools to define their roles based on their situation and their view of the leader (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010). Lapierre and Carsten (2014) admonished followers who hope to get rid of the stereotypical classification of followers as passive not to forget that the label can disappear, the authors attributed this to the variance in the different types of followers and their attitude.

One of the instruments the leader possesses to control, manage, and manipulate followers is information and its dissemination, but the emergence of information technology and the internet has significantly improved the position of followers, in recent past, it was a one-sided relationship in which followers are over-reliant on the leader for information and data required to perform their duties. This development has now put followers in a position whereby they may even have access to information before the leader does (Kellerman, 2008), the author referred to the information revolution, the associated rapid processing power of computers and the Internet of Things (IoT) which allow information and data to be available almost simultaneously without distinction to position, location or class, this has narrowed the

edge leaders used to have over followers in terms of information monopoly. This information technology empowerment of followers has led to increased transparency, vulnerability and a better understanding and awareness between both followers and leaders (Kellerman, 2008).

Brown (2003) identified technological advancement as eliminating the information monopoly which has in the past made followers dependent on leaders. This empowerment is a warning to leaders that their instrument of control is gradually diminishing because new types of active followers are emerging (Brown A. , 2003). In this technology age, followers are becoming indispensable to leaders because they are the custodians of the data leaders need to make decisions (Brown A. , 2003), Barry (1991) argued that due to the technology and data-driven business analytics have come to know more than their leaders and that this shift is just beginning (Barry, 1991).

The roles and responsibilities of followers as it relates to tasks in organisations are not clearly defined, but develops and matures in time by experience, nurturing and training by peers and the environment (Carsten et al. 2010), followers need the guidance and mentoring of their group and the leader to gain the needed insight into their role(s) as defined by the organisation and the function they hold. The fact remains that there are many roles and expectations of followers, this differs according to their function in organisations and the opportunities it offers followers, factors like the freedom to experiment, to acquire skills and limitations of the follower affects their role orientation, also the structure and the leadership style practised (Howell & Méndez, 2008; Lapierre & Carsten, 2014).

Role orientation is defined as the beliefs and interpretation associated with an organisation's construction of the role and individual's explicit responsibilities, tasks and behaviour expected of them by the organisation and their functions (Howell & Méndez, 2008). Howell and Mendez (2008) in figure 1 below itemised the three expectations of followers, while they have their ideas

on how to give meaning to their work, the leadership also have expectations of them as defined in the contractual agreement agreed to during employment, both of these expectations have to be in line with organisational expectations (Howell & Méndez, 2008). Followers who are able to reconcile and manage these expectations with positive results are usually those seen as exemplary followers.
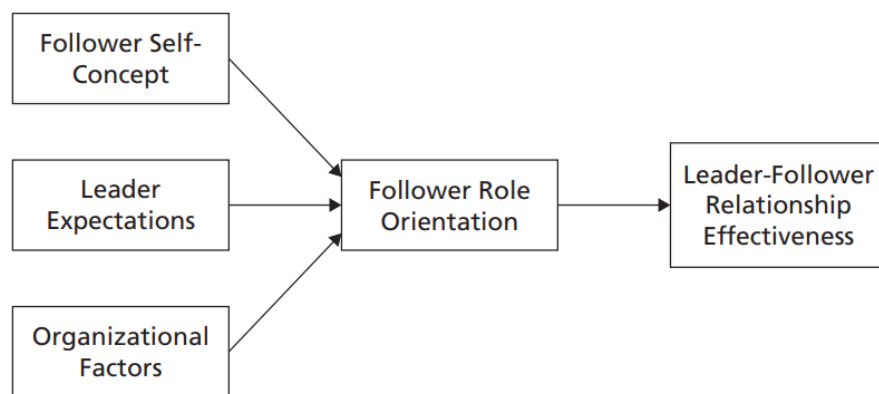
Figure 1: Antecedents and Outcome of Follower Role Orientation

(Source: Howell & Mendez, 2008, p. 27)

In analysing the role orientation of followership, Howell and Mendez (2008) argued that the presentation of charismatic leadership trivialises the vital contribution of followers by diverting all attention to the leader while the personalised relationship, in which followers identified with the leader for reasons other than ideology or acceptance of the policies of the leader, this exposes the vulnerability of the followers because they neither know why they support the leader nor what is in it for them. Against this premise is the second role orientation of the follower typified by a socialised relationship, where the follower consciously and purposefully support the leader (Howell & Shamir, 2005); the followers in this category, unlike previous orientation have expectations from the relationship and are not timid to communicate this to the leader (Howell & Shamir, 2005).

With all the recent developments in the LMX theory, followers have been positively positioned to acknowledge the relevance of followership in leadership processes, it has encouraged the cooperative organisational requirement of followership and leadership processes in achieving goals and improving productivity (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Followers to have ambitions, maybe to ascend to the leadership role in the future, the should not treat as if being a follower is the best they can do, Epitropaki, Kark, Mainemelis and Lord (2017) referred to "*self-knowledge*" which assumes that the individual is conscious of who he/she is and who they want to be (Epitropaki, Kark, Mainemelis, & Lord, 2017), this is a message to the leader that followers are not without ambitions, and even may consider themselves better than the leader. It is equally not unheard of that followers in their attempt to show their dedication and commitment to their work and the organisation, sacrifice financial rewards, promotion, and other career advancements to demonstrate their allegiance to the organisation and their leaders (Howell & Méndez, 2008). The problem can manifest itself in situations where the leader views followers as necessary evils and treated as such, Chaleff (2009) admonished followers not to suppress their feelings for the sole purpose of being favourable to the leader (Chaleff, 2009), building a relationship with followers should be one of the primary skills a leader should possess.

Traditionally, employees are engaged by organisations and earn remunerations to contribute to organisational goals and objectives, it could be argued that the employer should not be concerned with the emotional well-being of employees as long as they perform the duties they are hired to perform, but research has shown that for organisations to get the best out of employees, it is in their interest to ensure that they are both psychologically and mentally capable of doing their job and building relationships with leaders and fellow followers (Barry, 1991).

Goleman (2004) who introduced the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) proposed EI as the possible solution to the lack of synergy between followers, groups and leaders who are the major players, and even relationships in general. The author argued that the absence of emotional knowledge and interest in each other can lead to a misconception of the underlying reasons and motives for ineffectiveness, lack of motivation and non-performance, he propounded four fundamental capabilities of EI: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skill. The capabilities are expounded below in table 1.

EI Component	Definition	Attribute	Example
Self-Awareness	The ability to know oneself and reflect on one's actions, mannerisms, behaviours, and their impact on others	Emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, considerate and self-confidence	Keeping to an agreed timetable for execution of tasks because of the consequence for work of others
Self-Management	Ability to discern one's idiosyncrasies and able to manage them	Self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability	A colleague did not perform a task as agreed, exercise patience to give him/her the chance to explain
Social Awareness	Empathy towards others and environment consciousness	Empathy, organisation awareness, service orientation	Recognise the influence social and cultural orientation can have on attitude and behaviour
Social Skill	Ability to manage relationships and move people in desired directions	Visionary leadership, developing others, conflict management, team builder	Showing interest in a non-work-related aspect

Table 1: Emotional Intelligence Components

Adapted from Goleman (1998)

Goleman (2000) in another article, emphasised that EI skills are aimed at maximising the performance of employees at all levels; both followers and leaders, by stressing the importance of interpersonal skills which may be informal but goes a long way in assisting in cultivating an environment of trust on both sides, by making the distinction that EI skills are separate from technical skills, education level or IQ, the bar is lowered (Goleman, 2000), and

the author is assuring that the skills can be adopted by all and sundry irrespective of business affiliation and relationship.

The first of the skills, Self-Awareness stressed a conscious awareness of one's strengths, weaknesses, and limitations, this applies to both follower and leader relationships, although emotions are temporary, it does have the tendency to disrupt relationships and impact what people do (Smollan & Parry, 2011). The idea of EI was embraced by followers and leaders alike but there are debates on the mechanism to measure the effects of EI on job performance (Smollan & Parry, 2011; Pekaar, van der Linden, Bakker, & Born, 2017; Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2009).

The ability of the leader to project emotional intelligence to followers and follower groups is vital for the maintenance of cohesion and decisiveness with followers, equally, the followers will be at an advantage if they are able to understand the emotions of leaders and co-followers (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Conclusively, Goleman (1998) posited that one similarity which both followers and leaders share is emotional intelligence. He contended that without emotional intelligence, regardless of training, effective followership and leadership will be difficult (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002).

Corroborating this assertion, Smollan and Parry (2011) explained that emotional intelligence can become a crucial element in the relationship between followers and leaders because it can be used to promote moral and interpersonal skills (Smollan & Parry, 2011).

Since EI is credited with "*perceived qualities of being incisive, analytical and intelligence*" (Goleman, 1998, p. 3), EI is meant to show the ability of people to work together and carry out the responsibilities associated with their roles and functions effectively and efficiently (Goleman, 1998). If an employee is self-conscious, self-regulatory, empathic and possesses

social skills, the likelihood that such an employee will be a highly motivated employee is considerable (Pekaar, van der Linden, Bakker, & Born, 2017).

If both parties do not align together, they will end up working against each other with suspicion and hidden agendas. According to Pekaar et al. (2017), emotional intelligence which comprises of five components; incorporate cultures, norms and values people hold dear, but the challenge is to identify which of the norms and values individuals, or groups consider non-negotiable (Pekaar et al. 2017). This is epitomised by the definition of emotional Intelligence (EI) as the ability to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively (Goleman, 2000). According to Ashkanasy and Daus (2005), there have been fundamental criticisms of EI and its application, the authors citing the work of Landy, posited that EI has not been scientifically proved beyond being a form of social intelligence which was developed with a commercial implicit connotation (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005).

The advance of technology has also influenced and possibly altered the relationship between leaders and followers, potentially creating a more level playing field by making it possible for them to operate independently but cooperatively with each other (Brown A. , 2003). There are different views on how the workspace could be transformed to eliminate hierarchy which some argue is contribute to the inequality and inability of employees to reach their potentials, examples of these ideas or practices are holacracy® and self-determination theory (SDT).

Holacracy® promotes distributed authority through self-organising teams called "*circles*", the primary purpose of the circle is to decentralise authority. Holacracy essentially advocates for organisations without hierarchies (Robertson, 2016), Robertson (2016) argued that formal power and influence as it is being exercised in big corporations is comparable to dictatorship, marginalisation, and this is a disruptive factor in improving relationships between followers and leaders (Robertson, 2016).

On the other hand, SDT which is an approach to human motivation and personality, is an evidence-based framework which empowers leaders with the tools needed to explore followers from the perspective that human beings are generally curious and self-motivational (Forner, Jones, Berry, & Eidenfalk, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2019).

There are arguments against the effectiveness of using extrinsic compensation to motivate followers, rather research revealed that interpersonal and supportive approaches produce better results in cultivating or improving follower-leader relationship (Deci, Olafsen, & Ryan, 2017). This leaves the leader with other alternatives to build and maintain relationships with followers the reality is that the roles of leader and follower increasingly overlap, in some contexts. Some argue that followers should be bold enough to exhibit the leadership qualities they possess (Riggio, Chaleff, & Lipman-Blumen, 2008). The term leadership incorporates both leaders and followers in its meaning, that leadership is not made only of vision but the actualisation of the vision which is the most important factor is obvious, and this is unachievable without the input and contribution of followers (Rost, 1991; Greenleaf, 2002).

Certain followers combine the leadership roles within their groups with being followers to their superiors. An example is a captain/pilot in an aeroplane who leads the operation of the aeroplane, while he/she is the leader in the plane with other staff such as stewardesses, purser, etc. as followers, they are followers in the organisational hierarchy.

This exemplifies the complexity of followership and consequently brings another dimension to the discussion in the sense that followers may not be completely followers. Kelley (1988) also cited the double roles being played by followers and leaders, this contention was shared by Chaleff (2016) who conceded that in the execution of most functions both the roles of being a follower and leader are combined or executed. Creating value in organisations means

investing resources and attention in followership, even at the expense of leadership because of their indispensability.

The Construct of Followership

The social construct of followership depicts the reality created and interpreted by followers (Carsten et al. 2010), the roles and perspectives of followers are in this construct designed by followers themselves, and they offer the opportunity to present reality, relationships and challenges against the follower-centric approach which is aimed at helping leaders understand followers. Carsten et al. (2010) presented schemas and contexts as the tools which can be used in the classification and specification of the behaviours of followers. The authors argued that the differentiation between schema and context recognised the complementary relationship between followers and leaders, the authors also asserted that while schema can help in understanding the phenomenon, the context provides the situation-specific influences and behaviours (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010).

Leaders should have a vested interest in the construct of followership because it allows them to have a deeper understanding of the behaviour of followers, and it reveals the motivations which influence certain actions and perceptions of followers (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010).

Lapierre and Carsten (2014) viewed the position of followers as being positively influenced by the knowledge-based organisations resulting from the industrial revolution, the influences they argued relies on proactive and innovative employees to drive growth and create value (Lapierre & Carsten, 2014). Leaders are called upon to recognise that followership is a role "*critical to the effective performance of leaders*" (Lapierre & Carsten, 2014, p. 30).

Unlike with leadership, there are no specific traits on how to become a follower because it is assumed that being a follower is natural and automatic (Crossman & Crossman, 2011). The

complexities of the expectations of followership and being a follower complicate the role of followers because a follower can both be a leader while fulfilling the followership role at the same time.

Howell and Mendez (2008) praised the important role followers play in the construct of leadership, the relationship of followership with leadership is instrumental to the performance of the leader because they depend on followers for the execution of the tasks which contribute to the achievement and realisation of goals/objectives (Howell & Méndez, 2008). There are also arguments propounded to support a dichotomy between followers and leaders, according to van Vugt (2006) even though psychological literature assumes that the goals of followers and leaders are similar, any attempt to investigate the origin of followers is not considered appropriate without the leadership component (Van Vugt, 2006).

Smollan and Parry (2011) disputed the definition of leadership in which leaders are broadly described as those with formal management positions, the authors posited that leadership is far broader than that because leadership occurs at all levels; even within followership groups (Smollan & Parry, 2011).

Followership Typologies

The quest to gain a better understanding of followership, their roles and relationship with leaders has led several researchers to come up with typologies of followership, this is not an easy task because followers and their roles are dynamic, and in most cases, lack specificity (Northouse, 2016).

In the table below, a list of prominent typologies of followership by renowned authors on followership is presented.

Authors	Zaleznik (1965)	Kelley (1992)	Chaleff (2009)	Kellerman (2008)
Typologies	Withdrawn	Alienated	Resource	Isolate
	Masochistic	Passive	Individualist	Bystander
	Compulsive	Conformist	Implementer	Participant
	Impulsive	Pragmatist	Partner	Activist
		Exemplary	Diehard	

Table 2: Typologies of Followership

Adapted from Crossman & Crossman (2011: p. 488)

An obvious characteristic of alienated followers is the cynical manner they deal with issues, sometimes with devastating consequences. One of the dangers alienated followers pose is their ability to infect others who are vulnerable with their negative comments, these types of followers demand more from leaders due to their inability or unwillingness to act without supervision (Crossman & Crossman, 2011).

Against the active efforts of alienated followers to recruit others, passive followers follow intuitively others, not necessarily the leader. They are compliant to a fault by doing only exactly what they are told possibly without a vested interest in the outcome (Bligh, 2011). Another type of follower is the conformist who are basically "yes" people who blindly follow orders, this can be likened to the military-style of leadership with the slogan, *"obey before complain"*, this group believes strongly in hierarchy and process, and neither actively get involved in improvements to the status quo even when their opinion is sought. Contrary to conformists, effective followers seek to understand why they need to do things by engaging in the content and motivation and expected output of tasks, effective followers provide

actionable information and insights which can help the leader to improve the quality of decisions (Bass & Bass, 2008).

The typology of followership presented by Kelley (1992) analysed and emphasised the motivations of followers and the associated behaviour based on two dimensions, independent critical thinker and dependent uncritical thinker, while Zaleznik's (1965) typology is based on personal aspects of followership, Chaleff (2009) encouraged followers to cooperate with leaders because of the organisational common purpose which they serve. Alternatively, Chaleff (2009) typology is concerned with how followers can be instrumental in getting leaders to use their power responsibly and appropriately, but in the followership styles assessment, followers are admonished to be wary of positional leaders who may attempt to discourage them from adopting the followership styles they consider appropriate by reminding them that it is about their career and not of the leader (Chaleff, 2017).

Leaning on her practical experience, the typology developed by Kellerman (2008) which centres on the *"level of engagement"* between followership and leadership, the author suggested a continuum that explores the detachment and stressed the undue advantage leaders have due to the power, authority and influence which is concentrated in them (Kellerman, 2008).

Evaluating the typologies from different authors, it can be concluded that the most important purpose of the typologies is to show the different perspectives of followership, Northouse (2016) expressed hope that the typologies would ignite further research in followership and its relationship with leaders. The typologies have shown that there are several behaviours and mannerisms of followers which can impact their effectiveness and relationship with the leader (Northouse, 2016).

What is common to all of the different typologies is the "*passive and implementer*" typologies which presented the image of followers as either needing some encouragement to do what is expected of them or waiting for the leader to tell them what to do. Lapierre (2014) admonished followers to evaluate their actions with specific reference to those which can lead to their being labelled passive or active in their actions, leaders may for their own convenience use this to control them (Chaleff, 2017). Hollander and Offermann (1990) concluded that the "*traditional view of followers as mainly passive is misconstrued*" (Hollander & Offermann, 1990, p. 179), and argued that both leadership and followership roles can be active depending on the organisation and the role they play in the organisation (Hollander & Offermann, 1990).

Followers come in different forms, de Vries (2006) analysed followers as falling into two broad categories, followers who are hardworking but unambitious however are content with operating in the background; and the other type who are enterprising and maintains a close relationship with the leader, do so with the purpose of learning how to grow in their responsibilities (de Vries, 2006). The ideal follower leaders and the organisation desire are effective followers, effective followers intrinsically possess similar qualities as the leader. Effective followers are creative, independent, show initiative and demonstrate vested interest in the success of the organisation (Daft & Lane, 2008).

The author suggested that effective followers are not afraid of being confrontational to the leader due to their courage and integrity which causes them not to always accept or agree with whatever the leader proposes, effective followers are critical and do not hesitate to make their opinions or reservations known (Moldoveanu & Narayandas, 2019), this implies that they are independent and prepared to tell the leader their opinion which can help the leader access honest and unbiased opinions needed to make objective and fair decisions (Brewer,

2014; Zaleznik, 2004; Lapierre & Carsten, 2014). All this is because a typical (effective) follower view him- or herself as a stakeholder who takes pride in the work they do (Daft & Lane, 2008).

Kelley (1992) designated five followership styles to analyse different follower behaviours and mannerisms, these followership styles provide an instrument that can help leaders better understand and engage followers. Followers who can think critically and constructively fall into the category of exemplary followership, this type of followers take initiative and are solution oriented. They make the work of leaders easier by going the extra mile when it comes to their dedication and commitment to their work and their ambition. The above shows how useful the follower can be to the leader and the organisation, but many of the writers appear to ignore what exemplary followers desire or how it is perceived by followers who fall into this category by treating all followers the same way. There is also the conformist type of followers who are also referred to as "*yes people*" by Kelley (1992), these types of followers are task-oriented but follow the leader without asking questions or inquiring about what is expected of them. The word follower is very often associated with this type of followers who do whatever they are requested to do, they are neither interested in the outcome nor the means to accomplish the task (Bjugstad, Thach, Thompson, & Morris, 2006).

The difference between the passive followership from "*yes people*" is that they require sustained direction about what is expected of them, they are passive and lack initiative (Kelley, 1992; Bjugstad, Thach, Thompson, & Morris, 2006). The last two types of followers are the ones leaders prefer after exemplary followership, both alienated and pragmatic followership types possess the ability to think critically. The alienated follower exhibit some level of independence which makes them not willing team players but rather sceptical and negative in their thinking, but pragmatic followers, while possessing lower critical thinking

ability are non-committal and normally maintains a wait and see attitude by waiting for situations to develop before stepping in (Kelley, 2008; Bjugstad, Thach, Thompson, & Morris, 2006). Conclusively, organisational beliefs, customs and traditions are factors that strongly influence the style followers will adopt (Brown & Thornborrow, 1996).

Sampling Method

Data gathering is crucial to any research activity and determining the appropriate sampling technique which lays out how and what data to be collected. In research it is impossible to get the opinions of the whole population, and this is the reason why the sampling method or technique should be aimed at ensuring as much as possible that most divergent opinions and experiences on the research subject is included. Sampling in this study refers to the total quantity of choices of samples which includes cases, people and materials which constitute part of this research (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). To clarify and justify the non-probability type this research has chosen, a brief description of convenience and purposive sampling techniques will be done.

Convenience sampling uses non-random sampling in which a target population which meets a pre-determined criteria or conditions such as accessibility, ethnicity, cultural background judged to be relevant to the research are approached. The argument against this type of sampling is that the data collected will be biased, in purposive sampling on the other hand the researcher determines the kind of data which is relevant to the study and seek to find through careful selection, participants who based on their experience of the research subject and are willing to participate, this is why purposive sampling is also referred to as judgement sampling because the decision to participate is a conscious choice based on the qualities of the participant (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

In-depth interview procedure which will be used for this study will concentrate on interviewing participants which fall into these three categories; those with leadership roles, these are those in position to manage people, resources, situations and formulate strategies; the second type of participants are those with followership roles, followership roles include providing support to the leader and contributing to the organisational goals and collaborating with fellow followers and the leader to actualise the goals set; the third type are those who combine both followership and leadership roles. The purpose of approaching these three types of participants is to obtain a picture which represents a balanced representation of both roles and how they perceive followers. The pre-requisite for classifying a participant as possessing leadership roles will be determined by the job content which must have as basis the responsibility to organise, forecast and determine the organisational strategy. Alternatively, subordinates (followers) are those who implement the ideas and strategies conceived by the leader, subordinates possess practical skills relevant and required to achieve the goals and objectives of the organisation. The estimated average duration of the interview will be 30 minutes per participant, this average estimation is based on the conscious decision to use individual depth interview (IDI) in which participants are chosen because of their demonstrated representative opinion and experience which is expected to offer detailed insight to the subject of this study (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The sample size is 16 participants, 8 participants per country which are further divided into 4 with leadership roles and 4 with followership roles per case country.

Due to the impracticability of including all potential people who can offer insights into the phenomenon of leader-follower relationship in chosen case study countries, and more unfeasible is the ability to interview or contact all those the researcher considers valuable,

and/or are able to make useful contributions, a conscious selection of participants based on access, feasibility and availability at projected time will be made.

The choice of the participants is contingent on the expectation that the productive relationship the researcher has had with most of the participants will enable him to answer the research questions, this type of sampling is referred to as convenience sampling (Maxwell, 2013). Purposive sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling in which the researcher consciously decides which participants will be approached, the selection of participants determined by the researcher will be based on the perceived knowledge of the participants on the subject matter through their experience and/or roles in their organisation (Leary, 2001; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019; Dawson, 2002; Mason, 2002).

Using the proposed sampling will allow anticipated challenges, such as time, distance, cost, and access to resources, which are the main challenges to be mitigated. This study will employ non-probability sampling (otherwise known as representative sampling), the reason for choosing this type of sampling is that it will allow a generalisation of the findings made from the cases selected (Dawson, 2002, p. 58; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019, p. 208)

Adequate precautionary measures deemed necessary to accommodate flexibility in the sampling strategy will be taken, because the participants and their availability can change shortly before or during the course of collecting data or for other reasons associated with quality data gathering and accessibility (Creswell, 2009). The consequences of COVID-19 pandemic have impacted the plans and the ability to conduct person-to-person interviews/discussions, alternative arrangements will be made in consultation with participants to substitute person-to-person interviews/discussions for video conferencing, the downside of this alternative is the case of participants in Nigeria where electricity power

interruptions is rampant. Contact will be sought with participants presumed to be susceptible to this problem for any suggestions.

The researcher recognises that it is vital to be flexible by accommodating the eccentricities of prospective participants when it comes to scheduling of appointments and interview locations, this is of particular relevance in the case of Nigeria where there is a loose attitude to keeping appointments (Creswell & Miller, 2010)

The Construct of Leadership

There are many theories and approaches of leadership, but unfortunately the search for better or comprehensive understanding of leadership is still on-going (Rowold, Borgmann, & Bormann, 2014), and this may not be unconnected with new discoveries about leadership approaches being made, this is linked to the contention that any new theory is actually addressing a segment of what leadership is and how it is perceived by different people in different circumstances (Yukl, 2013; Sucher & Gupta, 2018).

Bormann and Rowold (2018) criticised the proliferation of constructs between the styles of leadership, they summarised all approaches and styles as comprising three core components; relation-oriented in which leaders focus on supporting and coaching of followers to achieve results, and more importantly showing interest in the well-being of followers; the second is task-oriented leadership where the focus is on what tasks should comprise of and how it can be executed, and lastly that leaders have to listen actively, show empathy and be interested in the development of their subordinates (Bormann & Rowold, 2018).

The common leadership constructs are transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire and leader-member exchange. Leader-member exchange (LMX) is discussed in preceding sub-chapter, analysis of follower-leader relationship. These constructs are all aimed at the behaviour of leaders and how these behaviours can be applied to ensure effective and

productive relationship with others. There are some levels of versatility with leadership, versatility in the sense that human beings are not static, and this implies that any leadership approach or theory developed within human interactions and the circumstances require a variety of skills. There are many factors which contribute or determine the perception of leaders and the process of leading, factors such as the environment, culture and the social system contribute to how leadership is viewed.

Karp and Helgo (2009) contended that most leadership concepts reflect the assumption in which influence is exerted by elected or appointed individuals to coordinate and manage the activities and tasks in groups (Karp & Helgo, 2009). Empirical research has shown that leadership is contextual, emanating from human interactions, thoughts, shared experiences, and the society. One argument some theorists use to defend constructionism is the belief that it helps in explaining a phenomenon adequately (Mallon, 2007). The construction of leaders as social actors, who are an integral part of a dynamic and interwoven social reality are based on our opinions and interactions with them (Iwowo, 2015), the author inferred that the adoption of western-styled leadership model has not been successful in areas where there are differences culturally and socially (Iwowo, 2015).

The complexity of leadership is generally identifiable in places where followership is integrated in the culture, this is because leadership processes are viewed as a means to an end, and most of the perceptions, actions, and interactions with leaders and the processes are based on the perceptions. Leadership is socially constructed, in other words, relationship with leaders cannot be explained unequivocally due to its dependence on various factors and circumstances such as organisational culture, social and environmental factors, Grint (2005) explained that from social constructionism point of view leadership is based on perceptions and not on some pre-determined behavioural or situational patterns (Grint, 2005). Billsberry

(2009) reviewed the arguments made by Grint (2005) supporting the spontaneity of leadership in which the context and situation is allowed to determine how and the measure of response to issues (Billsberry, 2009).

By comparing the difference between leadership and management, he postulated that social construction of leadership comes down to the complexity between problem and response (Grint, 2005). Leaders are expected to make decisions sometimes instantaneously, and yet avoid being seen as coercive or autocratic (Billsberry, 2009; Grint, 2005). The theory of social constructionism helps to understand and explain leadership, and its relationship with other phenomena like follower which are closely related. Young and Collin (2004) argued that a clear evidence that leadership is constructed can be related to the continuous quest to understand leadership despite the numerous research and empirical studies on the phenomenon, the authors described social constructionism as covering a wide range of views, and that these views contribute to our interpretation and how our social world is constructed (Young & Collin, 2004). Social constructionism is primarily aimed at gathering knowledge, and this knowledge exists in the social groups, institutions, and interaction with others (Young & Collin, 2004).

Rost (1991) levelled critique on leadership, according to the author the problem with leadership is connected to the inappropriate way leadership is being studied, this he said is synonymous with the situation with followership, to strengthen his argument he referred to notable writers on leadership like Bass, Stogdill and Burns to make the case about the absence of the study of leadership literature which can enhance a better understanding of the phenomenon instead of the managerial aspect of leadership which has wrongly become the focus. The author also blamed scholars for the inability to agree on a generally acceptable definition of leadership, he regretted that there is no definition of leadership which satisfies

the basic scientific requirements of what leadership should be (Rost, 1991). Rost (1991) concluded his critique by wondering whether most scholars are even bothered by the lack consensus on what leadership is. Contributing to the discussion, Stogdill (1974) contended that there are as many definitions of leadership as many who have attempted to define it, Bennis and Nanus (1997) compared the numerous definitions to abominable snowman whose footprints are everywhere, but who is nowhere to be seen.

The consequence of this failure is the lack of understanding of leadership which leaves to individual interpretations and adaptations, he called for schools of leadership which can live up to the challenges of the twenty first century. The reason for the digression into highlighting the arguments of Joseph Rost on leadership is because of the relevance of the arguments and their applicability to followership, or maybe even worse especially in the area of literature and empirical studies. The significance of this study hopefully is that it will show that followership has grown out of the shadows of leadership, and turned the table by demanding recognition, acceptance, and commitment which they usually look for in followers, and the value of relationships between followers and leaders (Strebel, 1996).

Co-production of leadership

The task of getting any organisation in focusing on its core goals and objectives require both followers and leaders to work together, the concept of co-production which primarily connotes the collaboration and cooperation can be the linking pin, but the fact that most power is in the hands of leaders means that factors such as leadership style and autonomous work environments can be a challenge (Bussu & Galanti, 2018). The concept and the involvement of followers in leadership and its emergence in organisations are gradually becoming widely recognised due to the factors such as the complexity of organisations, evolution in the nature of work itself and the recognition of followers as vital stakeholders

(Brewer, 2014). There are already gaps in the relationship which effectively causes both followers and leaders to operate distinctly in organisations, Bussu and Galanti (2018) warned that co-production can worsen inequalities and compromise existing relationships if it is not implemented after proper investment in the capability building of both followers and leaders (Bussu & Galanti, 2018). The authors are referring to the imbalance in power and influence quotients which can lead to different perceptions of co-production.
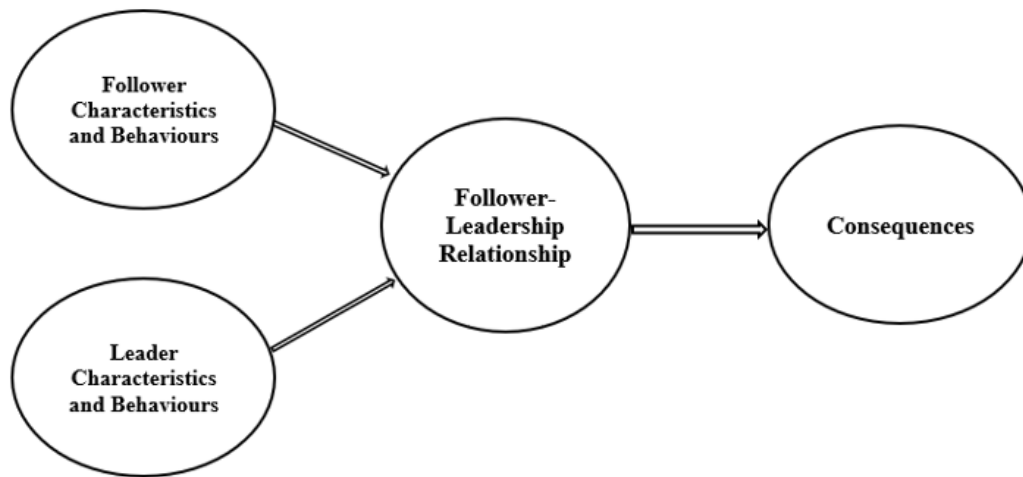
Figure 2: A Follower-Leader Co-Production Model
(Adapted from (Shamir, 2014, p. xx)

This concept can be applied to followers being given the opportunity to contribute and cooperate with leaders in making policy decisions and improving product/service delivery, followers being in the peripheral of organisational activities can assist the leader by helping to create a complete picture of the advantages and disadvantages of certain decisions and their perception. Followers as co-producers of leaders should be bold enough to express their views by communicating assertively with the leader, but they are dependent on the disposition of the leader, leaders who are not receptive to upward communication from followers, will not afford followers the opportunity to offer pieces of advice, and if they do, they may be unwilling to accept them (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012). This seems to be a

hegemony question dictated by the leader due to their position, which is higher than followers. That followers should not submit to the sometimes arbitrary "orders" of the leader is one of the ways they can dispute the passive attitude which is generally attributed to them, constructive resistance which is a form of objection or constructive challenge of the leader's actions or decisions on policy or procedures can be the way out (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012), Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2012) highlighted that while constructive resistance has positive sides, it may show the willingness of followers to demonstrate a vested interest in organisations and their support for leaders, this alternatively may negatively affect them if the leader does not appreciate it, or view it as confrontational (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012).

Follower co-production depends on three variables; the style of leadership practised by the leader, a charismatic or democratic leader will encourage followers to give their opinions, depending on the quality of the follower-leader relationship, the follower can be either emboldened to offer their opinions, an example is a leader who maintains an open-door policy or organisations which create platforms such as town halls meetings where employees irrespective of their positions can be made aware and offer the chance to contribute or express their opinions/reservations about organisational strategies. The research conducted by Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2012) concluded that followers who have co-production beliefs are more likely to be assertive in their communication with the leader (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012). Manning and Robertson (2016b) concluded in their three-factor model of followership that effective organisations require both effective followers and effective leaders to operate effectively, they also concluded that the development of any organisation depends on effective employees (Manning & Robertson, 2016). The challenge is how to produce effective followers, since effective followers usually progress to become leaders, however, being an effective follower does not automatically translate to effective leaders.

One common distinguishing factor between leaders and followers is that the likelihood of a leader combining leadership and followership skills is more likely in a leader than in a follower, Peters and Haslam (2004) found that those who considered themselves natural leaders are not successful in convincing others of their leadership qualities, while leaders who see and/or identify with followers are (Peters & Haslam, 2004). In recognition of the contribution of followers to leadership development, Riggio (2014) referred to followers as "*leadership co-producers*" (Riggio, 2014). While this study is not claiming that the development of most leadership qualities is attributable to followers, however followers and followership forms the foundational base on which vital leadership skills are based.

Authentic Followers (AF)

There are many conceptualisations of Authentic Followers (AF), while there are emancipated followers who do not automatically do what the leader says; simply because he/she is the leader, but rather because they believe it is the right thing to do (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004), de Zilwa (2016) even presented AF as the conscience of any organisation which, in an unbiased manner showcases commitment and dedication to organisational goals regardless of any associated rewards (de Zilwa, 2016).

de Zilwa (2016) posited that for authentic followership to be effective, two factors are of importance, first, the nature of the followers' relationship with the leader which determines the accessibility and openness of the leader to accommodate the views, suggestions and opinions of followers, and how they are being led and suggest alternative strategies; secondly, the nature of the organisation, there are situations where bureaucratic rules discourage initiatives from followers (de Zilwa, 2016).

By facilitating AF, leaders are consciously and unconsciously grooming and developing future leaders (Gardner et al. 2005), but it takes an equally authentic leader who embodies the

four components enumerated by Kernis (2003) to be able to mentor followers. The author stated that being aware of, and accepting one's responsibility is a step towards authenticity, the way the individual deals with what he/she knows should be unbiased, that is, based on facts and the reality of the situation, taking actions regardless of who will be affected and their reaction, and lastly to be genuinely authentic, the individual should be able to reflect on both the outcome and the possible consequences (Kernis, 2003). All the four components of authenticity, the author suggested relates to the level of self-esteem the individual has (Kernis, 2003).

AF typifies those followers who are conscious of both their capabilities and inadequacies, Avolio and Reichard (2008) stated that authentic followers are those followers who are prepared to take the risk of exposing their vulnerability by admitting their limitations (Avolio & Reichard, 2008, p. 327), this vulnerability the writers advised, and the boldness to confront the leader and fellow group members whenever they have a different opinion, this can only enhance followers' development (Avolio & Reichard, 2008).

Gardner et al. (2005) argued that the tumult resulting from the global financial crisis and other financial malfeasance may have created an opportunity for followers since leadership has not succeeded in offering solutions to the common challenges faced by organisations, but rather in some instances only contributed to the confusion in organisations, and have become the single point of failure in the management of organisations, alternatives need to be sought to leadership (Gardner et al. 2005), Gardner et al. (2005) also posited that globalisation of the operations of organisations has provided a reason why more attention should be paid to understanding followership, its peculiarities and relationship with leaders (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Yukl, 2013).

According to de Zilwa (2016) the organisation and its leaders have ample reasons to encourage authentic followership because it can turn a passive follower into an effective follower with a vested interest in the development of the organisation, the author accused organisations of rendering followers passive thereby turning them to liability to the organisation, de Zilwa (2016) advised leaders that it is in their best interest to create an environment where followers can express their fears, reservations, doubts and be involved as a stakeholder in discussions about how their work is done and the direction the organisation is heading (de Zilwa, 2016). In doing so organisations can benefit from the collaborative and self-supporting skills of followers. de Zilwa (2016) warned that authenticity may not be enough for followers to be able to confront and critique the actions and decisions of the leader, there may be instances when what is at stake may weigh more for followers before challenging or offering candid advice to the leader (de Zilwa, 2016).

The expected non-aligned and proactive attitude of authentic followers emboldens them to confront the leader or their own group (Avolio & Reichard, 2008), it is almost conventional for followers to grumble behind a leader who is executing a policy they know will not work or even will be a disaster to the organisation, AF is expected to rise up in an altruistic way to whatever they perceive as inimical to the organisational interests, de Zilwa (2016) chastised leaders for under-utilising (passive) followers by not allowing them to contribute according to their potentials to the organisation, and leaders can be held responsible for the failure to harness or create the instrument to positively influence followers (de Zilwa, 2014; de Zilwa, 2016; Avolio & Reichard, 2008).

de Zilwa (2016) condensed the previous authentic followership constructs propounded by Gardner et al. (2005), Goffee and Jones (2000) and Avolio and Reichard (2008) by relating them to three feedback-oriented constructs, these condensed constructs are centred on the

"*psychological and mental capacity*" of the individual follower to comport himself/herself in a truly authentic manner. The relationship with the leader can affect the manifestation and development of authenticity in followers, and lastly, the organisational setting which is the platform (de Zilwa, 2016). To enunciate the construct, de Zilwa (2016) emphasized continuous interaction between followers and leaders as a way to encourage feedback.
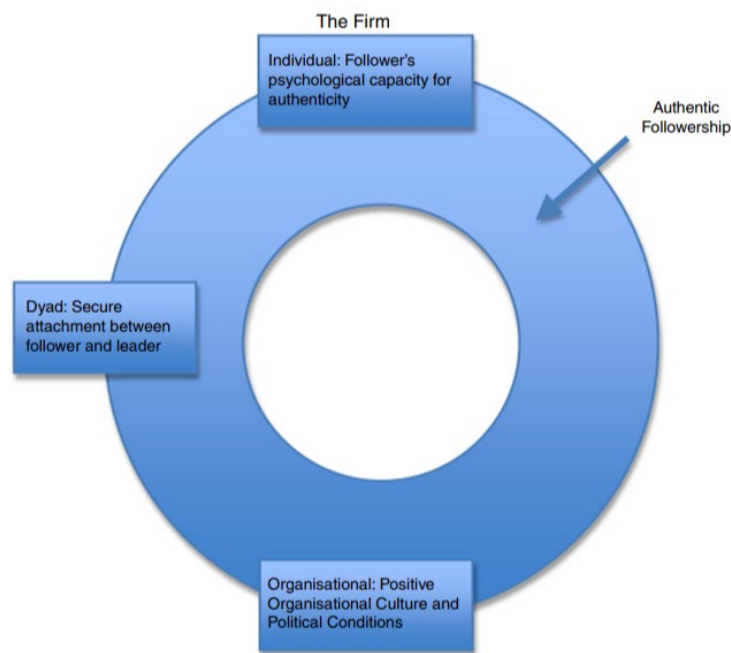
Figure 3: Interactive Authentic Followership

(*Source: de Zilwa, 2016, p 313*)

The ultimate goal of AF is to facilitate an egalitarian environment where both followers and leaders are not restricted by their job titles or position (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012). According to Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012), every human being has the propensity to be "*truthful, dedicated and being authentic*", this signifies that the organisation only needs to create a conducive environment where authentic followers who possess the qualities can be used for its advancement and development (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012).

de Zilwa (2016) expressed some caution about the expectations of IFT, while authentic followers may be bold, truthful, dedicated, and reliable, this does not mean that they possess the creativity to make suggestions and confront others (de Zilwa, 2016). The fact that AF can lead to sacrificing individual interests to promote organisational objectives, even at the expense of the leader, does not make authentic followership principles become embraced automatically (de Zilwa, 2016). de Zilwa (2014) summed up the quintessential qualities of authentic followers as selflessness and dedication, and this selflessness may be what organisations need to avoid the many disruptions caused by toxic or ineffective leaders (de Zilwa, 2014; Leroy, Anseel, Gardner, & Sels, 2015).

Ryan and Deci (2000) introduced the Self Determination Theory (SDT) to explain the different motivations which can influence the behaviour of followers, the authors cited growth and responsibility, and the willingness of the leader and the organisation to allow followers to have access to both as tools which can increase their self-esteem and strengthen the connection (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Like other followership constructs, AF unfortunately also leans heavily on the willingness or benevolence of the leader for it to succeed, most challenges faced by followers have to do with the openness of follower-leader relationship, this paper then concludes that AF is not bringing anything substantially new to the discussion of the follower-leader relationship. Any follower who is able to secure the confidence and trust of the leader is almost guaranteed to succeed.

In her critique of previous authentic followership constructs, de Zilwa (2014) cited Gardner et al. (2005) whom she judged as being pro-leadership by advocating the development of followers for the sole purpose of serving the leader better, on the same line is Avolio and Reichard (2008) conceptualised that AF is used by leaders to bestow a sense of belonging and ownership on followers as a way of motivating them (de Zilwa, 2014).

Any genuine attempt to understand the position of followers in organisations requires direct interaction to obtain their perceptions and understand their approach to issues relating to organisational objectives (Epitropaki, Sy, Martin, Tram-Quon, & Topakas, 2013). Junker and Van Dick (2014) described ideal followers as effective followers who show a vested interest in their work, and possess the basic skills required to perform their responsibilities and also who are able to think independently, this description fits virtually all followers, but it is again from the leadership perspective because it neither pays attention to the condition of work nor the aspirations of the follower (Junker & Van Dick, 2014).

Implicit followership theories addressed this imbalance by focusing on what followers are made up of. Implicit Followership Theories (IFT) describes "*the cognitive structure and schemas which characterizes and abilities of followers*" (Guo, 2018), just like the implicit leadership theories (ILT) is to leaders.

Implicit theories are, according to Engle and Lord (1997) used by both leaders and followers to "*process social information and make social judgements*" (Engle & Lord, 1997, p. 5), implicit theories, in general, are useful in understanding and developing relationships because it can be built on, revised and modified to reflect the reality of the evolving relationships, but it also presents some level of rigidity when it comes to changing the basis on which the assumptions, impressions and perceptions are based (Engle & Lord, 1997), the authors are implying that once a view or opinion is formed it is difficult to change even when there are reservations about their validity.

The earlier leadership studies inspired attempts to understand followers using theory X and Y leadership theories which presented contrasting perceptions of followers, Sy (2010) referred to McGregor (1957) who cited the difference in leaders' interpretation of followers' attitude to work, in other words, the theories X and Y are theories designed to group followers into

manageable groups (McGregor, 1957). They advised followers to use implicit leadership theories (ILT) to evaluate leaders, while leaders should use IFT to understand followers research has shown that leaders who adopt democratic or transactional leadership styles are likely to achieve increased productivity because the views and contributions of followers are valued while autocratic leaders end up alienating followers and their voluntary contributions to organisational growth (Sy, 2010).

The need for insight and understanding of followers culminated in the Implicit Leadership Theories(ILT) which is defined as the "*assumptions about the traits and behaviours that characterise followers*" (Sy, 2010), as a counterbalance, IFTs which comprises of dyadic relations, perceptions and characteristics followers have of themselves and leadership expectations, is designed to satisfy the need of both followers and leaders to understand the perceptions of followers (Sy, 2010), the author postulated that cognitions held by individuals contribute to what they think and how they view others, the idea of IFT is to understand the attributes of followers and use them to manage them effectively and productively (Junker & Van Dick, 2014). These dyadic relationships are not the same for all followers and leaders; the behaviour of leaders vary with different subordinates (Yukl, 2013). Factors such as position or distance may determine the nature of the relationship.

Ethical Leadership Relationship

The focus is mostly on leaders when it comes to either upholding ethical behaviours or addressing unethical behaviours, most literature on leadership focus on the positive sides of leadership, thereby neglecting the harm toxic or unethical leaders do (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). Hollander (1995) drew attention to the responsibility followers have in upholding ethical behaviours in organisations. The author argued that ethical concerns can erode the essential elements needed in developing loyalty and trust (Hollander, 1995), the leader should

be conscious of his/her position as it relates to followers because this, in turn, forms the mirror which followers use to view the leader (Hollander, 1995).

The expectation followers and leaders have in each other for the actualisation of their goals and ambitions mostly ends in disillusionment if the basis on which the relationship is built is not solid and mutual; just as followers have a list of expectations of the leader, likewise is the case with leaders (Brewer, 2014). This exemplifies why the relationship between both parties have been mainly contentious due to the unfulfilled socio-cultural unspoken contract, etiquette and expectations. Some leaders do exploit the internal divisions and competitions among follower groups and followers to advance unpopular agendas (Brewer, 2014).

Manning and Robertson (2016b) equally asserted that the roles of leaders and followers are complementary, transactional, and inter-dependent to each other, they are partners who work together in ensuring the progress of the organisation, and without this cooperation, neither followers nor leaders can succeed (Manning & Robertson, 2016). Leaders work with followers to add value to the fortunes of the organisation, neither the leader nor the follower can do this alone; leaders formulate policies in consultation with followers (Bufalino, 2018). Leaders as a developmental phenomenon rely on past experiences and skills to forecast and create a vision that will move the organisation forward (Judd, 2000), there is no better way to access organisational antecedents than followers who usually spent longer years contributing to the development of the organisation. Uhl-Bien and Carsten (2007) chose not to be overly reflective of the reality because according to the authors, followership implies to a certain extent following the leader, and the leader, being in possession of instruments which can be used to demand compliance from followers in matters where ethical and unethical behaviour is in contention have the upper hand (Uhl-Bien & Carsten, 2007).

Quoting Kelman and Hamilton (1989), Carsten and Uhl-Bien (2013) asserted that followers who engage in unethical acts while performing their duties are guilty of a "*crime of obedience*" (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2013, p. 32), this suggests that followers are either not aware that they are being unethical or that they are prepared/compelled to be unethical in obedience to the authority of the leader (Hollander, 1995). Hollander (1995) remarked that the power and dominance of the leader could be exploited to manipulate the follower into committing unethical acts. The authors Carsten et al. (2013) concluded that the choice of how followers respond to unethical behaviours/requests from the leader is the prerogative of the follower, the study failed to take into cognisance the punitive measures at the disposal of the leader to ensure compliance on what followers may consider unethical.

However, Rost (1995) viewed ethical behaviour differently by stressing the difficulty in identifying ethical issues as it relates to leaders, according to the author, the challenges in determining what leadership is, and the absence of an accepted definition of leadership leaves what constitutes ethical and unethical behaviour to many interpretations (Rost, 1995). He agitated for the formation of a robust ethical framework that can give guidance on "*complex ethical problems and dilemmas*" (Rost, 1995, pp. 4, 5) affecting both followers, leaders and the society, he complained about the paucity of literature on ethics as problems that further clouds what is ethical and what is not. Concurring with Rost (1995), Uhl-Bien and Carsten (2007) proposed an ethical framework that will include followers because of the fact that followers too are stakeholders in ethical discussions (Uhl-Bien & Carsten, 2007).

Several studies (Kelley, 1988; Kellerman, 2007; Edwards & Honeycutt, 2021) have shown the indispensability of followership to organisations, but the significance which most studies highlight, unlike leadership and the methodologies used by many social scientists to study it,

viewed followership from the lens of the leader with little regard for the divergent components of followership (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2013).

Gobble (2017) explained that while our education, culture and career developments might be designed to manoeuvre us through from followership to leadership, the author admonished that the "*power of conscious, engaged followership*"(Gobble, 2017: p. 61) should not be underestimated or adjudged to be a weakness because of their contributions in changing the world (Gobble, 2017).

It is important to note that not all followers nurse the ambition or aspire to become leaders, but they want to remain productive to the organisation in their followership role. In addition, it is relevant to recognise that contingency theories are developed to accommodate the different characteristics of followership and follower perspectives, preferences and attitudes with the purpose of helping leaders to understand them (Oc & Bashshur, 2013).

It can be argued that the present limited research and literature on followership has impeded any holistic view of followership (Sy, 2010), it can then be concluded that the obsession with leaders and leadership has significantly put followers at a disadvantage, and researchers have not prioritised followership even though all of us have one time or the other been a follower before we get the chance to become a leader (Alvesson & Blom, 2015; Barry, 1991; Benson, Hardy, & Eys, 2016; Gobble, 2017; Kelley, 2008).

Epitropaki et al. (2013) while analysing follower-centred approaches to leadership argued that followership has an important contribution to the effectiveness of leaders, it is only when followers are convinced that the leader is indeed effective that they will be prepared to go the extra mile in supporting the leader (Epitropaki, Sy, Martin, Tram-Quon, & Topakas, 2013).

Kellerman (2008) and Chaleff (2009) articulated different followership styles, in which they suggested that the study of followership can be as complex as leadership depending on the

approach chosen. Kelley (2008) described the two dimensions of followership namely, (a) whether the follower has the opportunity and the ability to think for themselves, or (b) whether they rely on the leader to do the thinking for them, these dimensions can be expected of followers who see the leader as all-encompassing and possibly authoritarian, the second part has to do with whether followers are able and/or willing to contribute to the organisation willingly. Dissecting both dimensions, one can only conclude that they both trivialise the contribution of followership.

In an earlier article, Kelley (1988) identified the differences between effective and ineffective followers as enthusiasm, intelligence and self-reliance towards organisational goals (Kelley, 1988), but these factors does not address the feelings of the followers themselves, they all seem to subscribe to the stigmatisation that followers only exist to please the leader. Concluding the author conceded that some followers simply take pleasure in advancing organisational goals and objectives above anything else including their own career, consequently Kellerman (2007) admonished leaders to be conscious of the shift in relationships and the emergence of talent-management tools which are influencing followers (Kellerman, 2007). Bennis (2010) argued that the power of leaders is comparable to that of followers, since it is followers who execute the plans and visions of leaders, and this makes leaders dependent on them, further dissecting the power of followers, the author argued that followers are the checks and balances who mostly act to ensure the status quo (Bennis, 2010).

Citing a research conducted by Williams and Miller (2002), Bjugstad, Thach, Thompson and Morris (2006) adduced the reasons why there is the insufficient study of followership to the refusal of certain cadres of followership to be identified as followers, this is probably due to the inferiority complex the term "follower" connotes, and equally the misconception that only leaders matter in organisations, this does not in the least help in generating interest; the rhetorical

question is why would attention be paid to people who only take orders and are embarrassed by their status (Bjugstad, Thach, Thompson, & Morris, 2006; Williams & Miller, 2002).

According to Greenleaf (1977) and Kouzes and Posner (2007) followers who are sometimes referred to as "*soldiers*" are the ones who execute the tasks which contribute to the actualisation of the organisational strategy propagated by the leader. Followership despite its relevance and importance to organisations and the society has always been viewed positively from the leadership perspective, and the subservient stereotype which has come to symbolise any reference to followership in literature and scholarly publications (Lapierre, 2014); this view is further confirmed in the study conducted by Conger, Kanungo and Menon (2000) in which the Conger-Kanungo model of charismatic leadership scale was used, this model showed that among all other leadership styles, charismatic leadership was considered as having most effects on followership, but this again from the leaders' perspective; and the conclusion is that interest in the opinion of the followers needs to be promoted (Conger, Kanungo, & Menon, 2000). In the analysis of the writings on leadership charisma, Hollander (1995) warned of the dangers charisma poses to followers, leaders can become consumed in their invincibility and this can lead to narcissistic behaviour towards followers (Hollander, 1995)

The argument presented by Maccoby (2004) that followers exist to serve the leader, while this is partly the case, research on followership has to promote collective efforts aimed at better understanding followership, its predicament, and its contribution to organisational developments. Maccoby (2004) advised leaders to develop the skills aimed at attracting followers, the author also classified followership motivation into two rather simplistic categories, the author inferred that followers are either rational in their motivation for following the leader with the expected rewards as the underlying reasons; and irrational which are father-like motivations which are beyond the control of the followers.

Both motivations appear to suggest that followers exist for the sole purpose of pleasing or finding favour with leaders (Maccoby, 2004; DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Maccoby (2004) regretted that the subordinate image of followers which portrays them as existing only to please the leader is making it difficult to find willing followers, who follow out of conviction rather than necessity. The author failed to recognise that followership is not a choice but a (career) process. According to Bateman (2011) followers demand from their leaders the qualities such as charisma, character and competence, these qualities are not just needed for the leader to function but rather to ensure a workable relationship with followers (Bateman, 2011).

But contrary to the impression of followers who are presented as waiting for instructions, Alcorn (1992) presented some critical skills that prospective followers need to possess, the skills are cooperation, flexibility, integrity, initiative and problem-solving as skills that will enhance followership maturity (Alcorn, 1992). The balance between business continuity and profitability is usually maintained by followers in organisations through their daily contribution to the reduction of leadership toxicity in organisations, Riggio et al. (2008) argued that the invaluable contribution of followers has to a certain extent saved organisations from "*toxic leaders*" when organisations are losing valuable followers or they are engaging in protests, they are sending vital signals about their disapproval of the leader.

Leaders who either underestimate or become complacent with followers may be doing so at their own peril because of the informal power followers have to sabotage the efforts of the leader (Adams, 2015), but followers too have to realise the consequences of not getting along with leaders, the multiple effects of a bad relationship with leaders does not only affect the organisation, but it can have negative effects on the "social health" of the follower and the group it belongs (Hollander, 1992a).

Offermann (2004) described instances when "*toxic followers*" have given destructive advice to leaders. The leadership-followership relationship is two-way, in which both sides use their influence levels to achieve their goals. One of the factors which makes a discernible difference and impact in the attitude of followers towards leaders is the presence of systems which protects not only their jobs but their interests, in situations where there are no social systems which can serve as fallback to employees, they will ponder on any attempt to confront the leader. In the Netherlands where the social system is robust, subordinates can afford to confront the leader who in their opinion acts against their interests, principles and convictions, but in Nigeria where there is no alternative to the income generated from their employment, they will think twice before confronting the leader because the consequences can be significant. In comparing the perceptions of followers, in these two radically different environments, it can be concluded that the system in countries empowers or disenfranchises followers depending on the situation or environment.

Chaleff (2009) is of the opinion that the agitations for the recognition of followers may be perceived by leaders as undermining their epic position which has remained mostly unchallenged until now, Alvesson and Blom (2015) equally argued that any discussion about leadership unintentionally involves followership due to the fact that while leaders are expected to formulate visions and strategy for the organisation, the realisation of whatever goals and objectives forecast requires the contribution of followers (Alvesson & Blom, 2015). The author contended that it may be sufficient for the relationship between followers and leaders to be professional and transactional to achieve a healthy working situation.

The power and influence of leaders are grossly underestimated by both followers themselves and leaders, the importance of followers to organisations can neither be ignored or wished away because of the pivotal task they perform in transforming the vision and innovative ideas

of the leader into products and services on which the fortune of the organisation rests. Leaders need to engage productively with followers, this means that effective leaders are those leaders who value followers (Fiedler, 1981).

The author argued that most people perform leadership functions, but this does not make them a leader; it is not uncommon for senior employees to be elected or appointed to lead a commission, organisation or a group, neither this makes them a leader (Fiedler, 1981). The most important quality of a leaders according to House (1976) is charisma, the writer contended that a leader with charisma possesses the ability to attract followers through their personal qualities which makes people have trust in them and believe in their approach, these qualities are further concretised by the ability of the leader to communicate these convictions with confidence. Even when things look sombre, the tenacity of the leader for a better outcome can cause followers to put their trust in him/her (House, 1977).

Securing the cooperation of followers, leader need to o be able to get followers aboard, followers must be convinced that the data and information the leader relies upon is genuine, and that the leader does not have ulterior motives, since the followers are the ones who are more familiar the day-to-day operations of the organisation, they are in better position to judge the motivations of the leader (Billsberry, 2009). Studies have shown that leaders who succeed and are effective, are those who relate well with followers and make them part of the source of information which they use to make decisions. Leaders require followers who are bold enough to tell them the truth and confront them when they notice any shortcomings on the part of the leader (Alvesson & Blom, 2015; Bormann & Rowold, 2018).

Alvesson and Blom (2015) listed race, gender, education and social as factors which may affect the relationship between the leader and followers, charisma is usually associated with followers admiring a leader and enthusiastically supporting his/her leadership (House, 1977),

this is another instance of the follower looking up to the leader, it is never presented that followers too can be charismatic in the way they do their work and relate to fellow followers, this can not only result in better group dynamics but it can get them be noticed by the leader. The leadership style practiced by the leader can make a defining factor in their relationship, while some leaders have inherent dislike for followers by classifying them as inherently lazy and lack initiatives, there are leaders who trust followers and believe in their capacity to do good even if they require guidance and support from the leader.

The complexity of follower predicament can be manifested in its propensity to be manifested through race, gender, education, and social class leader (Alvesson & Blom, 2015), an example which readily comes to mind is cast practice in India where people from certain (low) casts are automatically expected to be subservient to people from higher casts. This example shows that the followership issue can be both hereditary and psychological. In these situations, followers are not given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. The different leadership theories did not offer any solace to followers, this is due to the way they are viewed as tools which the leader can modify to suit their purposes (Pfeffer, 2010).

Alvesson and Blom (2015) offered hope that leaders can help followers overcome the inferiority complex they may have by taking the time to ensure that followers have what they need to do their jobs. Both McGregor (1957) and Bennis (1999) concluded that the personality traits and theories aimed at understanding followers cannot substitute for communication and interaction with followers, the author equally argued that inter-personal behaviours and interest in followers is what can earn leaders the trust and confidence of fellow followers (Fiedler, 1981).

Hayes, Caldwell, Licona and Meyer (2015) asserted that when followers enters the so-called "*zone of trust*" by supporting the leader's decisions, they consequentially submit to the

authority of the leader (Hayes, Caldwell, Licona, & Meyer, 2015), but the reality is that the follower has little alternative since the formal power resides with the leader. Hollander (1995) argued that the actions and/or inactions of the leader have consequences for followers because of the key role the leader has, the author contended that the interdependence of followers and leaders is routed in teamwork (Hollander, 1995). Obeying the decisions of the leader willingly or unwillingly is part of the job expectations of the follower, and any failure to do this, can be construed as insubordination, however, Hollander (1995) advised mutual perception between followers and leaders as a means to maintain workable relationship and dealing with possible ethical issues (Hollander, 1995).

The position, power and influence of leaders creates the propensity that more is expected from leaders than followers, this is similar to saying that leaders are the grown up in the alliance which is a fact most people will agree with. Fiedler (1981) made reference to a research conducted by Carolle Shartle at the Ohio State University in which two major expectations of followers from leaders were discussed, first the research stated that followers expect leaders to be well-structured in exhibiting behaviours which tend to organise and strengthen group interaction and dynamics; and the second expect leaders to be considerate by expressing and showing concern for the welfare and well-being of followers through involving them in the decision-making processes, and asking for their opinions (Fiedler, 1981). The author concluded that there is no evidence to prove that leaders who are task-oriented ended up being effective leaders, partly because being effective includes recognising the social and non-work-related activities which contribute to the motivation and emotional well-being of followers.

Peter Drucker questioned why leaders are depicted as "*indispensable*" when in reality the virtues of trust and integrity rests with followers, in other words the respect accorded leaders,

according to the author is exaggerated and sometimes undeserved (Flaherty, 1999). It is agreed that both followers and leaders deserve whatever credit is accruable to actions which contributes to making the vision of the organisation a reality (Van Vugt, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2008). Writing in the book, *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*, Joseph Rost dismissed the use of the term "*follower*" because it is often associated with too many submissive and denigrating connotations which neither help in understanding, nor advance the cause of promoting the followership phenomenon, he made a distinction between followers and followership, he defined the latter as a process which should be viewed independently from leadership, but he explained that followership has been eclipsed by leadership because of the focus on followers who can be groups or individuals (Rost, 2008).

Bennis (2010) attempted to adduce reasons why followers may be passive in organisations, the author explained that the overbearing attitude of leaders is certainly not a motivating factor, and this has resulted in the inability or reluctance of followers to constructively criticise the leader because of the fear of the consequences for their career (Bennis, 2010). Meindl (1995) opined that the focus on the leadership persona is responsible for the imposition of the ideas and thoughts of the leader on followers, he stated further that this has resulted in followers being susceptible to the influence of the leader (Meindl, 1995). While promoting the book, *The Romance of Leadership*, Meindl (1995) recognised the contribution of followers in the definition and significance of leadership in organisations.

Leadership, Followership, and Management

The dichotomy between follower and leader by the literal meaning of the words is evident, leaders lead and have the duty to bring harmony to people who are sometimes connected only by the organisational goals and objectives, but the same cannot be said about leadership and

management, except that they are frequently, correctly, or incorrectly used interchangeably (Kotter, 2013; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003; Zaleznik, 2004).

Communication is an important instrument leaders use to disseminate policy information in organisations, Hackmann and Johnson (2013) alluded to this by suggesting that leaders shape reality in the form of stories and events which they pass on to followers, management, and other stakeholders (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) argued that the often-made distinction between leaders and managers is that managers are more aligned to creating stability while leaders create change (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003, p. 1436). On the other hand, leadership and management have many common grounds when it comes to their role orientations, a pertinent difference between them relates to the long-term orientation of leadership against the short-term orientation of management (Kotter, 2013; Maccoby, 2004).

Management is about planning, organisation and control through effective and efficient allocation of resources to achieve organisational goals (Daft & Lane, The Leadership Experience, 2008), management equally provides leadership to subordinates, otherwise referred to as followers, leadership on the other hand which is expected to provide vision and formulation of strategic goals is defined by Rost (1993) as "*an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes*" (Rost, 1993, p. 99). The author explained that this definition is not complete without the following four essential elements which are pre-requisite to classifying someone as a leader, (a) the relationship is based on influence which is two-way (top-down and bottom-up); (b) the actors in the relationship are the leaders and their collaborators, this allows both parties to act as leaders in their domain; (c) leaders and their collaborators intend real changes, there should be genuineness in the intention of the parties to achieve the meaningful changes; (d) the

changes the leaders and their collaborators intend reflect their mutual purposes (Rost, 1993). Leaders have the responsibility to ensure that they create a shared and meaningful vision and strategy in which people at all levels of the organisation can identify with (Hackman & Johnson, 2013).

Most writers on leadership contend that influence is an important element of leadership, Rost (1993) opined that influence must be multidirectional for it to be classified as an element, the author argued that the exercise of leadership involve a relationship of collaboration and this indicates shared leadership relationship; however the relationship may not be an equal one. The contention of the author is that all parties involved, including followers in certain situations, exercise leadership in one way or another (Rost, 1993). The author went on to assert the mutual sense of purpose by collaborators to achieve goals and promote organisational objectives is needed. The roles and responsibilities of leaders and managers are similar, Gardner (1990) posited that leaders and managers have to deal with crisis but in different scales, influence is an instrument both use to manage their constituents, and they both have to take decisions which may affect their subordinates positively or adversely (Gardner J. , 1990)

Followership is deeply integrated into all levels of leadership and management, in the sense that effective leaders and followers are expected to possess good management skills to effectively perform their duties. Although this integration is not voluntary, Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) posited that the neglect of the role followership play in leadership process and development resulted in follower-centric approaches to draw attention to followers and followership by adopting bottom-up approaches aimed at the perspectives of followers regarding what constitute effective and effective leaders (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014; Crossman & Crossman, 2011).

Unfortunately both approaches do not cover all aspects of the phenomena, according to Wortman, Jr. (1982) research on leadership and followership is concentrated on middle and lower management with few focusing on executive and top management levels (Wortman Jr., 1982). This assertion implies that little is known about how followers and followership are perceived by the executive and top management levels, and the author further claimed that there is no evidence that the effect on the roles of leadership and management will be the same at all levels (Wortman Jr., 1982). The author compared the style of management in Japanese corporations to western corporations and concluded that leaders and followers are more involved and integrated in the decision-making process in Japanese corporations than in western corporations. He identified the shortcomings such as short-time goals which are clouded by operational activities as one of the issues affecting leader-management relations.

In essence leaders and followers require leadership and management skills to function effectively (Daft & Lane, 2008; Northouse, 2016).

Leadership alternatively create vision for change, formulate strategies and positively influence others towards achieving organisational goals (Northouse, 2016; Kotter, 1990). The obvious difference is the fact that while managing of resources, both human and material, are aimed at increasing profitability and efficiency, leading an organisation requires vision and innovation, and the strategy to achieve them requires effective follower-leader relationship. Very often the roles of leader and manager are concentrated in the same person, the difference of the two roles is that while the core managerial task is efficiency, the task orientation of leaders is effectiveness, leadership in general is not restricted to those with formal leadership titles, leadership permeates all aspects of activities, including followership roles (Muna & Zennie, 2011).

Below is a juxtaposition of the roles of management and leadership which itemised the task of leaders as including giving direction, promotion of business alignment, building and maintaining relationships, personal qualities and the outcomes of their ability and qualities to move the organisation forward against the managerial responsibility of creating stable processes, predictability and order needed to achieve progress (Daft & Lane, 2008).

	Management	Leadership
Direction	Design and Budgeting Scheduling/on-going business strategy	Creating vision and strategy Stimulating innovation and business continuity
Alignment	Organisation and Staffing Develop policies, structures and systems, leadership and direction	Creating shared culture and values Mentoring, forecasting and bridging gaps
Relationships	Focusing on objects Operational management, maintaining internal networks and synergy between different departments	Focusing on people Inspiring and motivating followers and leaders, acting as coach, facilitator, rallying point
Personal Qualities	Emotional Inspirational, enthusiasm, integrity, courage and humility	Emotional connection Moral and ethical connection, open-minded, insightful, active listener
Outcomes	Maintains stability; creates culture of efficiency and relatedness	Creates change and a culture of integrity, inclusivity

Table 3: Adapted Comparison of Management and Leadership

(Source: Daft and Lane (2008:pp.15)

Leaders and managers are primarily responsible for providing direction towards the achievement of organisational goals and objectives, leaders do this through the creation of vision and formulating strategies aimed at improving the fortunes of the organisation, managers on the other hand, provide direction through detailed planning and other allocation of resources geared towards the achievement of the goals set by the leader.

This a typical example of where communication and good working relationship is desirable between the supervisor(leaders) and subordinates (managers). The comparison made by Daft and Lane (2008) identifies the establishment of organisational architecture in which there is alignment which followers can relate to, for the visions of the leader to be actualised, leaders form alliances and build relationship (Daft & Lane, The Leadership Experience, 2008).

Further analysing the relationship between management and leaders, Northouse (2016) posited that influence and power are some of the few similarities leadership and management share, but how this translates to the effectiveness of followers and their relationship with leaders is a task for all stakeholders. The author explained that to lead and manage people, influence is a tool which can be useful in causing others to pursue a particular goal, Northouse (2016) referred to coercion as one of the instruments a leader can use, but this can be counter-productive to the aim of achieving goals in the long run.

Kotter (1990) showed how leadership operates at macro level while management operates at micro level, Kotter (1990) summed up the role of leadership as establishing direction through anticipatory approach to constantly evolving business environments and proffer solutions which can guarantee business continuity, management alternatively plan and allocate resources to realise the visions of the leader.

It is imperative to realise that followers do possess a different but equally effective power, the power to sabotage the efforts of the leader is almost exclusive to followers. The use of influence by followers and leaders is bidirectional, the person or group being influenced have to respond or else influence has no impact, this means that the leader who possess most influence is dependent on the receiver of the influence. Hollander (2014) stressed that influence is two-way in which the leader and follower act together.

Northouse (2016) described leadership as a process in which the leader uses his/her influence in groups or individual contexts to achieve organisational goals and objectives (Northouse, 2016, p. 5), the author posited that management equally rely on influence to implement the goals or visions formulated by the leader. Another similarity is the use of power, legitimate and formal power possessed by leaders and managers, but according to Kotter (1990), while the leader uses their power to "*produce changes needed to cope with changing environments*" (Kotter, 1990, p. 132), management uses its power to ensure processes are employed to achieve projected results (Kotter, 1990).

Nayar (2013) while explaining the differences between leaders and managers contended that creating value is what leaders do against managers who have the responsibility of implementing and managing the values created by the leader to accomplish goals and objectives set, the leader is expected to possess the ability to influence and motivate others to contribute positively towards the development of the organisation (Nayar, 2013). One common attitude expected from leaders and managers is the delegation of authority, but both delegate authorities for different reasons and/or motivations, while the leader may delegate authority to empower and develop subordinates, managers delegate tasks and responsibilities for efficiency and in accordance with established processes and procedures (O'Leary, 2016).

Delegating power involves both parties being comfortable with what power is delegated, and how the delegated power is to be exercised, and this can be linked the relationship and expectations they have of each other (Neilsen & Gypen, 1979). The paradox of the follower-leader relationship may be rooted in self-protection in which both parties retrospectively wonder whether they should have relied more on the skills of subordinates, and subordinates think whether they should have put in more efforts and trusts in capability of the other party (Neilsen & Gypen, 1979).

Management comprises of established processes like planning, procedures, budgeting, evaluation and problem-solving which are aimed at helping the organisation run in a predictable manner (Kotter, 2013); the author argued that the ignorance about the differences in leadership and management can result in an organisation being over-managed and under-led at the same time, thereby lacking the ability to function properly and respond adequately to challenges (Kotter, 2013). The contention that the task of management is primarily the execution of the broad policy and strategic plans of the leader, was espoused by Henri Fayol in 1916 when he itemised the definition of management core responsibilities as comprising of five elements, all based on the vision of the leader, management according to him draws up plan of actions, organise, build structure and allocate resources to implement the strategy to move the organisation forward, Mintzberg (1975) in arguing that Fayol (1916) oversimplified the role of management listed a manager's job as including the roles such as interpersonal, informational and decisional roles. In comparison to leaders, managers spend considerably more time in mediating between subordinates and ensuring that work is done, these are leadership roles managers have to play with employees, due to their knowledge of the subordinates, they know who to assign to particular duties (Mintzberg, 1975).

The fact that management has more interaction with employees and external contacts, makes them the central source of information for followers and leaders, this informational role includes providing management information needed to make informed decisions and oversight on activities, this is the third crucial role management plays. Mintzberg (1975) thus in effect grouped the management tasks as propounded by Fayol (1916).

The roles enumerated above allow management to control and oversee the implementation of the strategy in accordance with the vision of the leader. Zaleznik (2004) contested the traditional views about management as outlined by writers like Fayol (1916) as incomplete

because they omitted the leadership component which managers require to do their job effectively, he contended that managers must demonstrate leadership skills, inspiration, vision and human passion (Zaleznik, 2004). Zaleznik (2004) argued that one striking difference in how leadership is practiced by management as opposed to leaders is that while management exercised leadership in ensuring competence organising work and control of different groups, they do not create vision or determine strategies (Zaleznik, 2004).

In any typical situation, both leaders and followers manage the organisation, management centralises the point where the influence and power are acted upon. Dissecting the explanation offered by Zaleznik (2004), it can be concluded that the foundation of leadership and management relationship is transactional, transactional in the sense that both operate at different levels with different goals and expectations. The juxtaposition of leadership and management roles by Kotter (1990) posited that both have processes designed to produce desired results.

Analysing leadership and management and their effects on followership, competence and effective followers and managers very often combine following with leading, this is a situation leaders may be exempted from (Agho, 2009). The summarized four associated factors which contributed to the lack of research interest in followership. Firstly, the central issue is the negativity which the term followership is associated with, the author argued that this has led to the phenomenon not being presented as important character organisations and anyone aspiring to be leader needs, the second is the bureaucratic and traditional hierarchical relationship between followers and leaders which is detrimental to any meaningful and productive relationship based on equality and mutual respect.

And thirdly, academic institutions seemingly have little interest in promoting any professional development activities to improve the profile of followership with the purpose of

shifting the negative perceptions, and consequently contribute to the emergence of better leaders (Agho, 2009), academic institutions have consciously or unconsciously not been keen in developing academic programmes aimed at promoting followership development (Agho, 2009).

Analysis of Follower-Leader relationship

Follower-leader relationship is not peculiar to only the human species, Price et al. (2014) detailed how other species need to cultivate relationships with leaders for security and other needs such as access to resources like food and protection which can only be achieved in collaborating with others (Price & van Vugt, 2014). Anywhere there is collaboration there is always the necessity to have leaders and followers cooperate for organisational and other purposes. This collaborative aspect of the relationship can be compared to similar behaviours demonstrated by animals like elephants and lions who depend on the knowledge and expertise of the matriarch to locate resources and provide security, one of the privileges of the protection provided by the leader could be the opportunity to feed first as is the case with some animal species.

Lawrence (2017) listed the characteristics of collaborative leadership as including having a shared vision in which goals and objectives are defined and shared by all members of the group, this forms the basis for a relationship; this shared vision must not be imposed but born out of mutual respect and recognition of the contributions of group members (Lawrence, 2017). Also recognising the limitations of group members and encouraging synergy are qualities which can drive a collaborative group to achieve results.

Similar collaborative analogy can be applied to the follower-leaders relationship in human beings, there are privileges leaders enjoy for leading and the same goes for followers for following. Building relationships usually involve reciprocity, mutual respect, and

accessibility. Leaders facilitate the development of followers for their own advantage, followers build relationships with leaders for a variety of reasons amongst which could be (job)protection, career development, and other reasons.

Collaboration is another element which facilitate follower-leader relationship, although collaboration faces certain obstacles, differences in culture, age, and education are examples of factors which may disrupt collaboration (Gratton & Erickson, 2007). In a research covering 55 large organisations, Erickson and Gratton (2007) concluded that organisational culture and its complexity do complicate efforts to collaborate, if the culture is not receptive to collaborative efforts, building and maintaining social relationship with other colleagues will be difficult. They argued that getting people who in their (many) years of working for a company without any relationship to suddenly start working together requires a lot of transformation (Gratton & Erickson, 2007)

 Price et al. (2014) introduced reciprocity as a factor in follower-leader relationship, the authors argued that the benefits all parties in a relationship expect or receive can be the motivation for strengthening the relationship (Price & van Vugt, 2014). Several authors who extended the theory of reciprocity as including direct exchanges with individuals or groups as way of influencing the relationship (Price & van Vugt, 2014). A follower or leader can undertake actions with certain expectations, the inability or refusal of the other party to respond as expected can have negative impact on the relationship. Price et al. (2014) proposed service-for-prestige theory to explain the leader-follower relations as an exchange relationship in which the parties compensate each other for services rendered.

However, it can be argued that the benefit of any relationship is more in favour of the leader due to the formal authority and power over group resources which are in the hands of leaders, this should not in any measure trivialise the advantages followers have in the relationship.

The inter-connectedness of follower-leader relationship is evident in two simple tasks, one is the cooperation in working together to achieve goals and accomplish missions, and the other is the coordination of activities at different levels as part of their roles (King, Johnson, & Van Vugt, 2009; Chaleff, 2009; Riggio, Chaleff, & Lipman-Blumen, 2008).

Followers being the junior partner in the follower-leader alliance has to constantly prove their loyalty to the leader, the synopsis of follower-leader relationship is that neither can exist without the other, bearing this in mind it can be assumed that any improvement in the relationship between followers and leaders can be beneficial to all stakeholders through interdependent relationship (Hollander, 2014). The ability of followers to make meaningful impact on the behaviour of leaders depends on their level of maturity and performance, leaders who are people oriented can influence the attitudes and motivation of followers (Shamir, Pillai, Bligh, & Uhl-Bien, 2009), the authors argued that leadership is a product of the "*projections and transference*" of followership processes, they explained projection as comprising of the ambitions and wishes of who followers aspire to become, and transference as the obedience to father/mother figure (Shamir, Pillai, Bligh, & Uhl-Bien, 2009).

The achievement of organisational development, skills acquisition and/or personal development of employees are tasks both have to promote. Studying leadership can be equated to studying followership, this is because leadership is not an individual activity but rather a relational phenomenon which involve collective operations (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2000). By virtue of the position and power invested in leaders, the support of followers through the provision of resources to do their jobs, follower and leaders have vested interest in collaborating, exchange of information and data to improve or sustain relationships. The fact that decisions have to be made may cause leaders to put organisational interest above the

relationship with followers by embarking on leader-centric approaches (Baker, Mathis, & Stites-Doe, 2011).

Organisations have vested interest in creating environments where both parties can work together productively and professionally, but this is hardly the case in most situations (McCallum, 2013). Hence, the complexity and desirability of the follower-leader relationship has been the subject of discussions by several authors and in empirical studies, using various theories such as trait, contingency, situational, and other theories, attempts have been made to explore the relationship and its effects on organisations and human development. Brewer (2014) reasoned that leaders need to build constructive relationships with followers and develop strong support and skills to achieve the vision they have for the organisation (Brewer, 2014), analysing the relationship further, Hollander (1992) postulated that the follower-leader relationship is characterised by perceptions about past performances and competences, the authors concluded that followers increasingly evaluate their relationship with the leader on the criteria of accountability and interpersonal skills (Hollander, 1992; Robbins & Mary, 2012), conversely Hollander (1992) argued that the work of leaders cannot be termed to be successful if the contributions of followers are not integrated into the management and decision processes (Hollander, 1992).

The quality of the relationship between followers and leaders is very instrumental to their ability to work together and produce results, the follower-leader relationship can be complicated by attitudinal differences between leaders who are appointed and those who are elected (Groves, 2005), there is the possibility that when followers are involved in electing leaders, this can improve the acceptability of such leaders since they are part of the process, and this can make them more susceptible to building relationship with them, appointed leaders (Hollander, 1992). Using this rather simplistic but logical explanation the author

suggested that followers and leaders need to improve their efforts in building relationships and networks (Hollander, 1992).

Leadership is viewed traditionally as not being dynamic and generally characterised by top-down approach (Hollander, 1992; Adams, 2015; Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2009), alternatively, followers due to their delicate position rely on perception about the past performance of the leader to determine their expectations of the leader, and leaders evaluate followers based on their competence and integrity (Bennis, 2010; Chaleff, 2009; Blair & Bligh, 2018). The factors which are valid perimeters in the relationship are predicated on two factors, the expected behaviour and context. It has often been asserted that leaders are ambitious, but in reality, followers should even be more ambitious than leaders, they are at the bottom of the ladder and the only way for them is to go up. Leaders on the other hand have reached or close to reaching the epic of their career and therefore have reasons to be less ambitious (Bateman, 2011; Clarke & Mahadi, 2017).

Pillai (1996) posited that being charismatic usually emanates from crisis situations, this in principle indicates that it is not necessarily good for the follower-leader relationship due to its opportunistic tendency (Pillai, 1996). Charismatic leaders usually emerge during crisis and discontent (Pillai, 1996; Grint, 2005), followers prefer a leader who is not forced to act by unpleasant situations but rather exhibits genuine interest and is able to listen and accommodate their views and ideas, this display of vested interest prevents crisis and discontentment (Drescher, 2017).

 As a result of the "*in-group*" described by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) as the classification for "*high-quality exchanges*", the authors found evidence that improved and high quality LMX resulted in less employee turnover, more positive performance (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). While the advantages of LMX cannot be disputed, it is leader-centric with no intrinsic

contribution to the ability of followers to operate independently, followers who embrace LMX do so because of what they expect to get out of it. There is no evidence that their going the extra mile is motivated by any core beliefs other than that it is easier to have a relationship with the leader than be in the out-group (Kuvaas & Buch, 2020; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). It can be contended that regardless of the positive improvement of LMX theory to follower-leader relationship, it has not been shown to identify or show any interest in how followers feel or perceive their relationship with the leader. LMX theory works basically for leaders while ignoring the possible sacrifices followers have to make to sustain any relationship with the leader (Kuvaas & Buch, 2020).

A responsive leader who offers followers the opportunity to be creative and take initiative, will not need a reciprocal behaviour from followers before building a relationship with them, a criticism of LMX theory is that because of its biased approach, followers may do things they do not believe in just to secure some relationship with the leader and such relationships usually do not last long (Cogliser, Schriesheim, Scandura, & Gardner, 2009). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) proposed three-component domains which emphasised a relationship-based approach where variables of followers and leader are represented and used as input to build a mutual relationship. The essence of the proposal is the replacement of both follower-based and leader-based with relationship-based approach in which followership and leadership approaches are equally recognised (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 224). The relationship does not just exist, it requires trust, confidence, and recognition.

Relationship is an important component of the ability of followers and leaders, not only to achieve goals but to set goals. There are factors which influence the quality of the relationship, Loignon et al. (2019) argues that most studies on follower-leadership relationship ignored the fact that antecedents play a role in the quality of the relationship, the

authors contended that the satisfaction of both parties is a crucial determinant for the duration of the relationship (Loignon, Gooty, Rogelberg, & Lucianetti, 2019). Loignon et al. (2019) also cited the difference between LMX and satisfaction, while LMX is reciprocity oriented, satisfaction is not. The ultimate goal of LMX should be the achievement of relationship both sides are satisfied and comfortable with, but LMX may not be enough to realise this goal. The success of follower-leader relationship is dependent on two-way communication and an open-door policy which encourages downward and upward communication, this will enhance the quality of the relationship, Cogliser et al. (2009) identified differences in perception as one of the possible challenges LMX may face, any differences in the perception of the relationship by one of the parties can lead to disagreements or different insights which can happen in any relationship. The authors cited the possibility of either the leader or follower may feel that the relationship is less favourable to them (Cogliser, Schriesheim, Scandura, & Gardner, 2009).

Tightness-Looseness Defined

This sub-chapter examines the cultural influences comprising of social norms, customs and values as defined by the people, their geographical location and economic activities, and the effects on the perception and behaviour of followers in the two countries which will be used as case studies. This chapter further describes and evaluates the empirical differences between the cultures, and how the differences influence the behaviour of followers and the expectation of leaders, these two factors are the basis on which relationships are built. Several literatures on cross-cultural studies have shown that it is not possible to apply a universal approach to culture, particularly in followership and leadership studies (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002), the cultural diversity or content in each culture may contain unique characteristics which determines the appropriate approach

Gelfand et al. (2006) defined cultural tightness as "*the strength of social norms and degree of sanctioning within societies*" (Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006, p. 1226). Tight cultures are cultures that have strong expectations concerning adherence to social norms and values with little tolerance for deviance from the norms and values (Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006).

In contrast, loose cultures have norms and values, but have low expectations for conformity and the environment may even encourage new forms of behaviour and social interactions which are against or opposite of the norms and values (Dunaetz, 2019).

Freedom to choose and social control are more pronounced in loose cultures, loose cultures are more related to individualism where ties between individuals are loose. Hofstede (2011) classified cultures where individuals act solely on behalf of themselves and propagate this in their membership of groups as individualist, and against this is the collectivist group which operates a cohesive group in which people identifies with traditions, extended families and put relationships with groups above individual relationships (Hofstede G. , 2011).

Culture can be defined as when "*people's values, norms, and behaviour are similar to each other*" (Uz, 2015, p. 319), or it can also be viewed as a hereditary way of life and behaviour which has evolved over several generations (Kashima & Gelfand, 2012), then if judging by the definitions above that culture is a collective identity developed over many generations, then it can be assumed that as earlier indicated that the attitude of followers and leaders is culturally constructed because they are both influenced, or rather they are products of culture (Kashima & Gelfand, 2012; Uz, 2015; Hofstede G. , 2011).

For example among the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria, it is culturally not acceptable for followers to question the decision or the authority of the leader without being viewed as disrespecting or questioning the culture and tradition which produce the leader (Elegbe & Nwachukwu, 2017), this is against the premise of individualism which is characterised by personal goals and

aspirations and is pre-eminent over collective goals (Triandis, 1996). Using a pre-determined set of elements or criteria to classify a region or people as practising "tightness" or "looseness" culture (Pelto, 1968), most western countries like the Netherlands satisfy the pre-requisite for tightness culture due to the stable, reliable social systems and strong institutions with the accompanying supporting services.

The effect of this is the delivery of predictable and reliable services, this can be seen in the way people conduct themselves based amongst others on the expectations they have of the system. The first major factor in determining the level of cultural tightness–looseness(CTL) is the strength of institutions which guarantees an inclusive or exclusive social system, the systems on which the institutions are based can either be classified as tight or loose depending on cultural complexity comprising of language, economic activities, political, social, educational systems and religion (Triandis, 1989, p. 509; Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006, p. 7).

Cultures with loose systems are characterised by weak, inefficient, and corrupt institutions, and consequently lead to followers who "*worship*" leaders because there are no alternatives to their relationship with leaders and the consequences (Gelfand, et al., 2011). Tightness cultures have strict but clear norms which only tolerates slight deviation from prescribed behaviour and customs (Pelto, 1968; Triandis, 1996; Gelfand, et al., 2011), while loose cultures accepts deviance from norms which are, by design not strictly laid down or contains unclear social norms or patterns (Triandis, 1989). Triandis (1996) explained that there is a marked difference in the collective cultures in non-western countries when compared to western countries where individualistic cultures are prevalent, the author argued that the dominant role of the membership of religious organisations, the family, tribe, the village and so forth plays a significant role in the life of individuals, and can affect their relationship with

authorities symbolised by the leader (Triandis, 1996). The level of cultural tightness differs according to the strength of group norms and the tolerance of deviations (Carpenter, 2000).

The phenomenon of followership has cultural connotations which defines the follower-leader relationship, and how followers and their perceptions are constructed, in certain societies the dependency of followers on leaders is more pronounced than in others due to several reasons which can be predicated by social and educational systems (Gelfand, et al., 2011; Pelto, 1968). The cultural influences and the factors viewed from the cultural tightness-looseness (CTL) theory can be segmented and classified to identify the elements which form the criteria on which the comparisons are based. In comparing followership in the Netherlands to Nigeria, references could be made to the research done in 33 countries by Gelfand et al. (2011) using the cultural tightness-looseness theory to explain the role culture plays in the comportment and behaviour of people.

While Nigeria according to the CTL theory can be classified as falling mostly under the category of countries with loose culture which has weak institutions and dilapidated, or in some instances absence of social system, while the Netherlands has strong and stable institutions with supporting institutions. Using the twelve elements below, the tightness – looseness theory was applied to both countries based on the maturity of the elements. What the table below shows is that the degree of a country or culture being exclusively tight or loose. Gelfand (2012) argued that a single CTL element, for example religion can cause a culture to be either tight or loose. In a country like Nigeria where religion plays a vital role in the perception about norms and values desired from people, these powerful elements can become the rallying point for other elements.

One of the elements which will be used is power distance, it is a fact that not all individuals are equal, Hofstede (2022) defined power distance as the extent to which the less powerful

members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede G. , 2022). This element assumes that power is distributed unequally in all societies, however, the level of distance to power varies per society and this is due to factors such as independence to act as one deems fit, hierarchy, access to superiors. Power is usually an instrument at the disposal of superiors (leaders). The authors discovered that apart from the generally accepted fact that leaders require vision, energy, formal authority and strategic direction to lead, inspirational leaders share four rather unexpected qualities, the selective show of weakness which exposes the human side of leaders and their vulnerability, the second quality is that leaders should be intuitive enough to be able to gauge the appropriate timing and course of their actions (Goffee & Jones, 2000), and lastly, the enormous data which they must be able to interpret in other to act correctly (Goffee & Jones, 2000). They concluded by advising leaders to empathise passionately and realistically with their followers by showing interest and concern for what they do. This is what they called tough empathy (Goffee & Jones, 2000).

Culture

The complexity and encapsulating nature of culture is vividly captured by Triandis (2006) who described culture as a collective phenomenon which offers members the collective resolve used in attending to communal issues such danger, development and various other things which have hereditary influence on human beings and their relationship with each other (Triandis, 2006). How culture is practised differ by communities, some cultures value individualism in which individual goals are highly valued while other cultures place emphasis on collectivism which encourages group goals, these two approaches define the nature of relationships within the cultures (Elegbe & Nwachukwu, 2017).

Triandis (2006) contended that cultural intelligence is the most important valuable in relationships; people from different cultural upbringing approach issues differently, and the intelligence primarily has to do with how information is integrated and processed (Triandis, 2006). Considering the description above, culture as a component of the society, possess the power and can be used to influence the society and the contribute to the advancement of society through new technology (Drenth, Damen, & Goedhart, 2005; Da'as & Zibenberg, 2021). Relationship between followers and leaders, in some context is dynamic. Relationships, not just follower-leader relationships are characterised by the (cultural) backgrounds of participants, this characterisation may be simply by the fact that people come from different families but are exposed to different norms and values that define their different approach to issues, or the environment (Smircich, 1983).

There has been substantial research on the role of culture in organisations and the society, the versatility of culture is often related to how an organisation conducts its business, responds to calamities, market, or personnel issues (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007). Organisations use the media and other tools to highlight their corporate culture as a way of appealing to people who share their values and improve the image of organisations (Meyer, 2014). Cameron and Quinn (2011) identified four types of culture which constitute the different dimensions of their competing values framework (CVF), they argued that the necessity for culture in organisations is due to the external changes organisations are exposed to, culture, they contended put organisation in a state of rapid response to developments, market, and customer changes (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The authors explained that each type of culture represents different ways of viewing and experiencing culture in organisations. In the following paragraphs the four cultures will be briefly described and at the end related to the follower-leader relationship. The first type of culture is the clan culture, this culture as the

name suggests is the encompassing culture in which leaders or those viewed as having positions of responsibility are. This is also the group which ensures that rules and regulations are adhered to. The relationship of leaders and followers in this type of culture is that of parent-child, the clan leader is the custodian of rules and regulations, and he/she has the formal power to enforce regulations and impose sanctions if necessary (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

In this type of culture, followers are raised to look up to the leader and there is a sense of communal ownership of the organisation. Closely following the clan culture is the hierarchy culture, this is a very formalised culture which attaches a lot of importance to rules, protocols, and procedures. Hierarchy culture is highly organised and is more concerned with how things are done than what is done (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). These are the bureaucrats who are knowledgeable about procedures and processes. People in this group do not normally embrace changes to status-quo and usually have difficulty with followers who advocate modern approach to work. This type of culture encourages bureaucratic relationships in which there are clear boundaries between followers and leaders.

The third type of culture is the market culture, the goals of organisations is to make profit, the resources of the organisation is prudently allocated to achieve this goal (Gallagher, Brown, & Brown, 2008). This sometimes comes at the expense of employees, both leaders and followers who are assigned targets in other to have competitive advantage. In this culture, winning matters more than relationships, the focus is on tangibles. There are businesses which trace their origin to many generations, leadership passing from father to son or daughter. This generational and successive leadership usually involves a group of dedicated and hardworking entrepreneurial individuals who through their dedication leaves a cultural imprint in the way the organisation is run. This brief description fits adhocracy culture,

adhocracy culture is dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative culture represents those who

focus on what is needed to achieve goals and productivity levels. Adhocratic culture

promotes personal sacrifice in building relationships and risk taking. Employees in this

culture projects a family-like relationship in which innovation and prudent management of

resources is central.
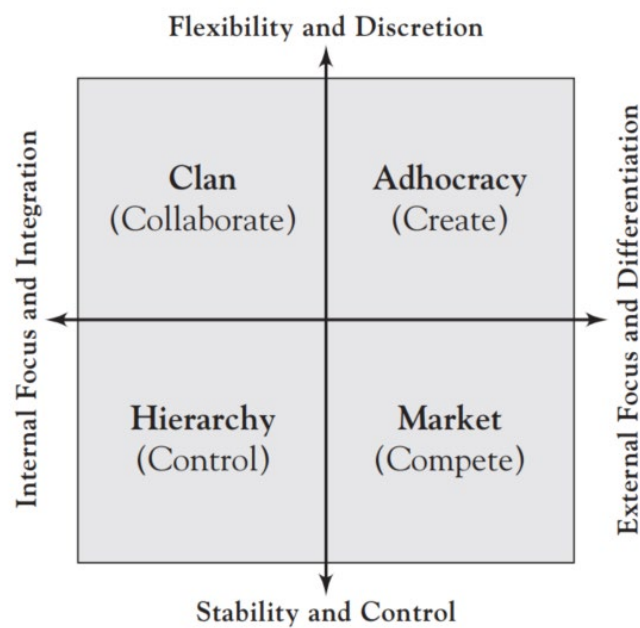
Figure 4: The Competing Values Framework

(Source: Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 39)

Using the competing values framework, each of the elements of CVF, Deshpandé and Farley

(1999) linked the quadrants to organisational culture and the influence on relationship in the

study they conducted different countries. The clan culture is probably the only culture which

puts personal and professional relationships above profit by investing in long-term

development of human capital, Deshpandé and Farley (1999) implemented the framework in

Japan and concluded that none of the elements of the framework is perfect for any situation,

they contended that every organisation contains a part of each element (Deshpandé & Farley,

1999). The finding of Deshpandé and Farley (1999) proves that no organisation is holistic culturally.

A further evidence of the versatility of culture was shown in the research conducted by Deshpandé and Farley (1999) in developed and developing countries using the same tools but reaching different conclusions based on the peculiarities of the characteristics of the countries (Deshpandé & Farley, 1999, p. 112). Cross-culture resulting from globalisation is changing demographics and increasing the possibility of leaders and followers encountering people from different cultural backgrounds with different beliefs, values, and expectations (Yukl, 2013). This requires both leaders and followers to take interest in understanding the changes and diversity in order to be able to lead effectively (Yukl, 2013).

Culture and Cultural influences: The Dutch and Nigerian perspective

To understand the role of culture in follower-leader relationship, this section will address the different perspectives of culture and relate them to the cases to be studied. Culture manifests itself in the actions, language, beliefs, values, and communal interactions a group of people share, culture comprises of how we interpret the information at our disposal and the value attached to it (Adeleye, Fawehinmi, Adisa, Utam, & Ikechukwu-Ifudu, 2019).

Several scholars posited that culture is derived from "one's social environment" and it is responsible for the ability of humans to function, and associate with others (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Schein, 1996; Handy, 1976). The elaborate description of culture by the authors detailed its ubiquitousness in relationships, figure 8 depicts culture as being in the centre of human nature and their personality; and since our interaction with social environments, constitute a significant part of our working relationships and interaction in social environment, culture automatically becomes a factor we all can relate to both in our private and public life. Hofstede et al. (2010) used the classifications in figure 8 below to

explain how culture is a collective phenomenon in which a combination of what is learned throughout an individual's lifetime is accumulated in the cultural environment they belong to. Part of what is learned is relationship with peers and leaders within the social environment (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). This knowledge becomes a foundation of the behavioural patterns people from the culture exhibit, for example culture in some societies have a specific background to follower-leader relation, the figure also shows that while culture may influence the behaviour of people, it does offer the possibility to deviate from cultural values and express contrary views, and the argument is that the social environment in which one grew up and collected one's life experiences does influence our perception and relationships, not only with leaders or followers (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).
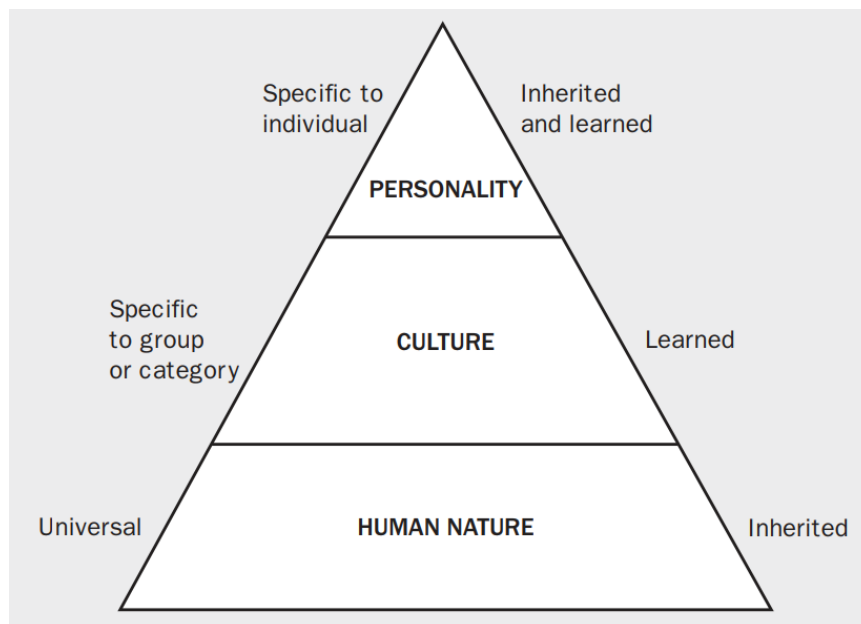
Figure 5: Three Level of Uniqueness in Mental Programming
Source: Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov (2010, p. 6)

Culture can be defined as when "*people's values, norms, and behaviour are similar to each other*" (Uz, 2015, p. 320), or it can also be viewed as a hereditary way of life and behaviour which has evolved over several generations (Kashima & Gelfand, 2012), then if judging by

the definitions above that culture is a collective identity developed over many generations, then it can be assumed that as earlier indicated that the attitude of followers and leaders is culturally constructed because they are both influenced by circumstances relating to the environment and idiosyncrasies the group holds, or rather they are products of culture (Kashima & Gelfand, 2012; Hofstede G. , 2011).

For example, among the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria, it is culturally not acceptable for followers to question the decision or the authority of the leader without being viewed as disrespecting or questioning the culture and tradition which produce the leader (Ekundayo, 2010), this is against the premise of individualism which is characterised by personal goals and aspirations and is pre-eminent over collective goals (Triandis, 1996). Culture comprises of shared characteristics such as language(dialect) which develops and defines a group of people.

The complexity of how this translates in the Nigerian society can only be imagined in the more than 200 ethnicities and their cultures and traditions. Culture and tradition play a significant role in the follower-leader relationship, for example, the approach of Yorubas is different from the Ibos and this affects or determines their approach to both phenomena (Ogbonna, Oguniwin, & Uzuegbu-Wilson, 2012). While the Yorubas hold the leader with high esteem and will not address the leader by name, Ibos do not share this tradition, they refer to their parents and leaders by their first name (Falola & Oyeniyi, 2015). This shows that even within Nigeria, ethnicity epitomises the diversity in relationships and how it is perceived. Using a pre-determined set of elements or criteria to classify a region or people as practising "*tightness*" or "*looseness*" culture (Pelto, 1968), most western countries like the Netherlands satisfy the pre-requisite for tightness culture due to the stable, reliable social systems and strong institutions with the accompanying services, the effect of this is the

delivery of predictable and reliable services, this can be seen in the way people conduct themselves based amongst others on the expectations they have of the system.

This chapter examines the cultural influences comprising of social norms, customs and values as defined by the people, their geographical location and economic activities, and their effects on the perception and behaviour of followers in the two countries which will be used as case study. This chapter further describes and evaluates the empirical differences between the cultures, and how the differences influence the behaviour of followers and the expectation of leaders. Several literatures on cross-culture studies have shown that it is not possible to apply a universal approach to culture, followership, and leaders (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002), the cultural diversity or content in each culture determines the appropriate approach. The first major factor in determining the level of cultural tightness–looseness(CTL) is the strength of institutions which guarantees an inclusive or exclusive social system, the systems on which the institutions are based can either be classified as tight or loose depending on cultural complexity comprising of language, economic activities, political, social and educational systems and religion (Triandis, 1989, p. 509; Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006, p. 7). Cultures with loose systems are characterised by weak, inefficient, and corrupt institutions, and consequently lead to followers who "*worship*" leaders because there are no alternatives to their relationship with leaders and the consequences (Gelfand, et al., 2011).

Tightness cultures have strict but clear norms which only tolerates slight deviation from prescribed behaviour and customs (Pelto, 1968; Triandis, 1996; Gelfand, et al., 2011), while loose cultures accepts deviance from norms which are, by design not strictly laid down or contains unclear social norms or patterns (Triandis, 1989). Triandis (1996) contended that there is a marked difference in the collective cultures in non-western countries when

compared to western countries where individualistic cultures are prevalent, the author argued that the dominant role of the membership of religious organisations, the family, tribe, the village and so forth plays a significant role in the life of individuals, and can affect their relationship with authorities symbolised by the leader (Triandis, 1996). The level of cultural tightness differs according to the strength of group norms and the tolerance of deviations (Carpenter, 2000).

The phenomenon of followership has cultural connotations which defines how followers and their perceptions are constructed, in certain societies the dependency of followers on leaders is more pronounced than in others due to several reasons which can be predicated by social and educational systems (Gelfand, et al., 2011; Pelto, 1968), the cultural influences and the factors viewed from the cultural tightness-looseness (CTL) theory can be segmented and classified to identify the elements which form the criteria on which the comparisons are based. In comparing followership in the Netherlands to Nigeria, references could be made to the research done in 33 countries by Gelfand et al. (2011) using the cultural tightness-looseness theory to explain the role culture plays in the comportment and behaviour of people. While Nigeria according to the CTL theory can be classified as falling mostly under the category of countries with looseness culture which has weak institutions and dilapidated, or in some instances absence of social system, the Netherlands has strong and stable institutions. Using the eleven elements in the CTL Elements of tightness-looseness, the tightness – looseness of the two countries based on the maturity of the elements. What this table will show is that the degree of a country or culture being exclusively tight or loose.

	CTL Element	Netherlands	Nigeria
1	Career Development	Tight	Loose
2	Diversity	Tight	Loose
3	Economic Independence	Tight	Loose
4	Empowerment	Tight	Loose
5	Health Services	Tight	Loose
6	Inclusion	Loose	Tight
7	Labour Laws	Tight	Loose
8	Leadership Expectation	Loose	Tight
9	Power Differential	Loose	Tight/Loose
10	Social integration	Loose	Tight
11	Social Security	Tight	Loose

Table 4: CTL Elements of tightness-looseness

Gelfand (2012) argued that a single CTL element, for example religion can cause a culture to be either tight or loose. In a country like Nigeria where religion plays a vital role in the perception about norms and values desired from people, these powerful elements can become the rallying point for other elements. One of the elements which will be used is power distance, it is a fact that not all individuals are equal, Hofstede (2022) defined power distance as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede G. , 2022).

This element assumes that power is distributed unequally in all societies, however, the level of distance to power varies per society and this is due to factors such as independence to act as one deems fit, hierarchy, access to superiors. Power is usually an instrument at the disposal of superiors (leaders). The tighter or looser a culture is, the more pronounced it becomes in manifestations and attitudes (Gelfand, 2012). The motivation for stressing the role of culture in relationships in this analysis is due to the reality in which hardly is it possible to have groups of people without (multi)cultural composition. The effects of multiculturalism on the perception and expectation of others cannot be trivialised. The (ethnic) cultural composition of societies is rapidly changing and one of the driving forces for the changes is economic

wellbeing of those leaving their countries for greener pastures, and the shortage of labour in rich western countries makes this a welcome development. The labour force is shrinking, and this is creating needs for labour from other countries with different cultures.

Within Europe there are (economic) migration from eastern Europe to western Europe and this is causing cultural differences. For instance, the admission of eastern European countries to the European Union together with the freedom of movement EU membership guarantees, is causing cultural differences to become issues in the Netherlands which is one of the cases of this study. Participants from the Netherlands objected to being classified as followers, neither do they consider being classified as leaders necessary; they just want to be seen as unaligned individuals. This is in line with the conclusion of Hofhuis et al. (2008) about the aversion of Dutch people to leadership, Dutch civil service system operates a flat management system in which there is not much difference between leaders and followers. This implies that the relationship between followers and leaders are more collegial in which every individual or group is assigned duties and responsibilities and provided with resources needed to accomplish the task. This image does not in any way indicate the absence of the roles of followers and leaders.

Contrary to the Netherlands, the relationship between leaders and followers in Nigeria is highly personalised, and there is clear distinction between leaders and followers when it comes to power and the exercise of it. Uzuegbu-Wilson (2020) contended that leadership which is a social contract between the led and leaders is grossly inexistent in Nigeria. The power concentration in leaders which can be traced to the divide and rule policy of the colonial masters has led to underdevelopment due to corruption, poverty, and social problems and the lack of understanding, or recognition of the role of cultures in the relationship with leaders (Uzuegbu-Wilson, 2020).

Followers in the Nigerian face a number of obstacles which make an equal relationship with leaders difficult; the consequences of high illiteracy level in Nigeria changed the role of leaders to mentors and facilitators who are viewed by followers as, Uzuegbu-Wilsoni (2020) argued that illiteracy denies followers of knowing their rights, the only thing they know is to wait for the leader to tell them what to do, while being oblivious of their rights or any shortcomings of the leader, leaders in such environments turn to manipulations and indoctrination to maintain the trust of followers. That followers in Nigeria are prepared to accept the excesses of the leader in exchange for relationship with them is not surprising; economic poverty among followers is probably the most effective instrument used in maintaining the hegemony of leaders.

Gelfand et al. (2006) posited that (cultural) tightness-looseness has two key components, these two components were applied to the cases of this study. The two components namely: (a) the ability to analyse the strengths and the weaknesses of the effects of social norms; and their effects on the follower-leader relationship, this was done by examining how clear and influential the elements, such as culture, religion and ethnicity are within the environments where participants come from, and how this impacts their perception and behaviour in their careers. On the one hand, the strength and effectiveness of sanctions relate to the level of tolerance and how vulnerable the norms and values within societies are against deviance and their effect on the relationships. In a loose culture like the Netherlands, it was found that the economic position of followers and leaders affect their relationship (Dunaetz, 2019). Analysing the cases used for this study, the researcher differentiated between top-down and bottom-up approaches and processes, and their influence on the relationship between followers and leaders. This was done by classifying the roles participants have, including cases where participants combine both roles of follower and leader in the execution of their

responsibilities. In top-down situations, decision-making process is centralised and characterised by hierarchical structure in which leaders play a pivotal role. The relationship between leaders and followers is autocratic with this approach, and it creates distance between leaders and followers. The higher hierarchy formulates policies and strategies and pass it down the organisation for implementation, this approach compromises the follower-leader relationship by putting strain on leaders and reducing the contribution of followers in the transactional decision-making process.

The use of top-down approach sometimes has to do with the culture existing in the organisation, Nigeria is an example of an environment where this approach is commonly used, and this partly due to the hierarchical structure of the civil service and the dominant role culture plays (Nwude, 2015). Top-down approach is suitable for the hierarchical, command and control leadership culture which Nigeria inherited from her colonial past.

This applicability of this approach is less in the Netherlands where egalitarian system is operated; transformational system which encourages decentralised decision-making process is encouraged (Meyer, 2017). Decision making process in the Netherlands is not entirely bottom-up either, rather groups are given the freedom to make decisions in areas pertinent to their functional groups and implement them. Regardless of the overwhelming negativity about top-down approach which is usually considered to be a coercive approach in which followers have to do whatever leaders decide, there are few advantages clarity of responsibility and accountability, however it does lead to less creativity, power concentration in leaders and bad for the development of relationships. The analysis of the cases is twofold; the initial analysis involves analysis of individual cases, this is aimed at presenting the views, experiences, and observations of participants, this will be followed by a cross-case analysis. Cross case analysis involves a comparison of the findings from each case with the purpose of

identifying commonalities, differences and patterns which can illuminate their peculiarities. One of the tools used in this analysis is (cultural) tightness-looseness theory.

Leadership and Followership in Nigeria and Netherlands

In exploring the relationship between leaders and followers in Nigeria and the Netherlands, this research intends to focus on how both followers and leaders perceive their roles and influences. In organisations, leadership is always at the forefront, while followers are perceived as the unseen power behind the leader (Stogdill, 1948). However, in other for both to contribute productively to the development of the organisations and/or the society, they need to build a sustainable relationship with each other. The primary approach of this study is to briefly look at the dynamics of follower-leader relationship in the Netherlands and Nigeria.

Nigeria

Leadership in Nigeria is unambiguous in the sense that all powers and authorities revolve around the leader, and the general perception is that bad leadership is responsible for the myriad of problems confronting the country (Adémólá-Olátéjú, 2015). The omnipresence of corruption and bribery which has become accepted in the society is further diminishing the chances of followers and at the same time widening the distance between followers and leaders (Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto, & Nkah, 2015). Leadership in Nigeria is associated with failure to deliver on promises and make meaningful contribution to the lives of their followers; the leadership problems Nigeria attributable to unethical and corrupt practices of leaders and the fear it has created in subordinates (Nnabuife, 2010; Osaghae, 2010). Leadership in Nigeria is a victim of the ethnic, religious, and geo-political power-bloc. Allegiance to ethnic and religious group compromised the quality of leaders and relationship with subordinates (Osaghae, 2010).

Followership in Nigeria

In the Nigerian context, the position of followers is culturally, socially and economically subservient to the leader, possible reason for this can be found in the way the society is constructed, Thom-Otuya (2012) presented the image of followers who look up to the leader as the *alfa and omega* partly because their career depend on their relationship with the leader, this eventually leads to allegiance which is not based on objectivity and this explains the imbalance in the follower/leader relationships. This study seeks to understand the perceptions and the possible causal factors (Thom-Otuya, 2012).

The author enumerated issues such as the internal competition within the follower group as one of the factors which mitigate against their ability to form a united force to challenge the excesses of the leader. He also identified the labour laws which do not favour followers as a factor (Thom-Otuya, 2012). Thom-Otuya (2012) explains that leadership operates at two levels, macro and micro levels, these levels also apply to followership, because anywhere leadership operates followership will ubiquitously be present.

Due to the dominance of leadership, which is culturally engrained and further influenced by the colonial experience which corrupted the existing cultural and ideological values (Mahammad, 2005), followers are left with no choice other than to hold leaders in high esteem because of the absolute powers they possess, this imbalance is more pronounced in Africa as a whole where the societal and cultural values, and the system recognises the leader and relegates followers to looking up to the leader (Mahammad, 2005; Nnabuife, 2010).

Contrasting the view that leaders are to blame for the situation of followers in Nigeria, Adémólá-Olátéjú (2015) accused followers of complicity in the emergence of people who are neither fit for office nor have their interest at heart to leadership positions. At least the author contended, these people come within their ranks, and they are acquainted with their

antecedents, but allowing the preference for monetary rewards or political positions, they are responsible for mortgaging their own future and that of their children (Adémólá-Olátéjú, 2015).

Nigeria is a role-based society where social class and position in the society bestow certain privileges which allows people from certain backgrounds to act as leaders, or at least view themselves that way. The difference between followers and leaders is so much in the Nigerian society that leaders cause followers to address them in specific ways which reflects their position and social status. The classification macro and micro levels as postulated by Thom-Otuya (2012) refers to the societal and organisational influences of followers, in the Nigerian situation where issues relating to high levels of illiteracy and no strong social welfare system makes it dangerous or even suicidal for followers to confront leaders and demand accountability of their stewardship or evaluate their performance. Regional and tribal leanings play a significant role in any attempt to demand accountability from leaders, particularly in a country like Nigeria which is tribally diverse, this prevents any objective criticism and/or evaluation of leaders. Still staying in Nigeria which is reputed for corruption and impunity, where political and career civil servants are regularly accused of mismanagement of resources, the ethnic component makes it difficult to act (Nwude, 2015). At the organisational level, otherwise referred to as the micro level, it is equally a challenge for followers to identify themselves through their opinions because of the domineering image of leaders.

According to Thom-Otuya (2012) it is exceptionally difficult for leaders to command respect through the culture of patronage which ensures that "*yes people*" as it is locally referred to end up in advisory positions, the author posited that it is only leaders with high integrity and transparency who can earn the respect of followers, (Thom-Otuya, 2012), he added that these

qualities are scarce in the present political dispensation due to among others the many obstacles preventing honest people who are protective of their reputation and integrity from aspiring to work with leaders. Viewing followership through the lens of how it is practiced in Nigeria, it can be concluded that poverty, ethnicity, and illiteracy are effective instruments exploited by leaders to suppress any agitations by followers, every follower is forced to calculate the possible costs of confronting leaders about their inefficiency, wastefulness, or unsuitability.

One of the reasons for leadership deficiency in Nigeria can be associated with the emergence of people Magbadelo (2016) referred to as "*ill-prepared persons*" in highly sensitive positions (Magbadelo, 2016). People contest for elective political positions based on the resources they have and the political connections, rather than any manifestos or understanding of the position they aspire to occupy. According to Magbadelo (2016), the demoralisation of followers has resulted in the erosions of "values, such as selflessness, integrity, loyalty, professionalism, transparency, accountability, discipline, neutrality, impartiality and patriotism have over the years been eroded" (Magbadelo, 2016).

In the recent past Nigeria was renowned for her cocoa production in the south and groundnut pyramids in the north as means of earning foreign exchange and the culture which Nigerians were proud of revolved around this agricultural heritage, but all these dissipated with the discovery of oil in 1956 and the resultant migration to the cities, particularly Lagos which saw its population skyrocket from 763,000 in 1960 to 13,9 million in 2017 (Campbell, 2019) for quick money at the expense of agricultural production. The movement of people mostly to Lagos for economic reasons gradually resulted in the jettison of the hitherto valued cultural values and customs which served as social and moral control, and its replacement with the adulterated western values and compromised living circumstances (Adeleye, Fawehinmi,

Adisa, Utam, & Ikechukwu-Ifudu, 2019). Another consequence of this shift is not only economic, but it also resonated in the corruption of the norms and values which has negative effects on the cultures, it became attractive to adopt and embrace foreign cultures as being superior to their own culture while the institutions as they existed deteriorated in rapid tempo (Oyetunji, 2013). The associated degradation of the societal and cultural practices follows.

The CTL theory modelled using the example similar to the elements propounded by Pelto (1968) as criteria for classification, can be used to evaluate the deviant and corrupt behaviour which is prevalent at all levels in Nigeria, there are instances where highly placed public servants and politicians trample upon the system and institutions by abusing their offices with impunity, because the system and institutions are no more able to adequately prevent such behaviours, and the society itself is no more alarmed at the news of someone diverting public resources to further their inordinate ambition.

In the Nigerian context, more emphasis is given to the network of influence people have built against their capabilities and skills, this is particularly a vital ingredient which has consequences to career development of followers, and this has altered the follower-leader relationship in Nigeria (Magbadelo, 2016). The consequence of this is that people who are only interested in protecting their own interests locally referred as "*cabal*" end up occupying sensitive positions which is locally referred to "*juicy positions*" (Ejimabo, 2013).

Regardless of the absolute power leaders in Nigeria possess over followers, followers are sometimes accused of not checking on the excesses of the leader when things go wrong, the explanation which can be proffered for the reluctance or inability of followers to act cannot be isolated from the consequences of confronting the leader, but this does not prevent the use of passivity on the part of followers for condoning the misbehaviours of leaders (Ogbonna, Oguniwin, & Uzuegbu-Wilson, 2012). In the course of writing this document, the youth in

Nigeria, which can be classified as followers spearheaded country-wide protests to challenge the lack of opportunities which they blame on the insensitivity of leaders in the form of corruption, lack of foresight amongst others. The manifestation in Nigeria shows that followers when given no other choice can challenge the leader.

Leadership in the Netherlands

Dutch people have a pronounced opinion when it comes to leaders and leadership, this originates from the attitude in which Dutch people do not appreciate being told what to do by anybody, unsurprisingly this anti-leadership attitude has significantly reduced the practice or influence of leaders and leadership in organisations, in fact Karsten and Hendriks (2017) were very detailed about the reasons the Dutch are against leadership. Reasons ranging from historical to societal culture, the experiences with Nazi German occupation of part of the country during the second world war to the consensus-oriented attitude of the political system (Karsten & Hendriks, 2017). The attempts to diminish any influence of leadership in the Dutch society is visible in the political establishment where the hierarchy is flat, and governments are based on consensus resulting in coalition of multiple political parties. The aversion to leadership is literarily visible in the avoidance of strong leaders by avoidance of direct leaders, but rather is rooted in the egalitarian leadership style influenced by the poldermodel in which power is distributed through all layers. Meyer (2017) identified four cultures of leadership in her article by analysing how attitudes to authorities and cultures determine the leadership style (Meyer, 2017).

The influence and relevance of leaders is reduced through the egalitarian approach to decision making, regular yearly town-hall meetings during which important organisational strategical issues are discussed; this low-level of involvement allows decisions to be inclusive. In the Dutch system it is not uncommon to hear subordinates criticise leaders

openly without any fear of consequences. Karsten and Hendriks (2017) argued that as part of the distaste for leadership is reflected in the Dutch government structure which is organised to prevent the concentration of power in any individual, to achieve this several checks and balances were put in place through the construction of the institutions (Karsten & Hendriks, 2017). An effective system which has reduced the possibility of power concentration in individuals is the coalition system of government in which collective responsibility is central ('t Hart & Ten Hooven, 2004; Karsten & Hendriks, 2017).

Followership in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has a system referred to as the "*poldermodel*", the aim of this system is the reduction of the gap between the following three parties; the government, employers, and employees, by offering a platform where initiatives, differences and relationship between the parties can be explored and discussed (Jonker, 2014). Unlike many other countries this poldermodel system offer the unique opportunity to followers to manifest themselves by being treated as equals, the lack of level playing grounds which is responsible for the elusiveness of followers by making them a partner in decisions relating to the determination of economic and social policies (Ashikali, Erradouani, & Groeneveld, 2013).

In the Netherlands, the position of followers is further enhanced by the stable political system, strong social institutions and the culture of extensive consultation and negotiation through labour and social partners which is engrained within the system, and this emboldens followers to speak their minds because the consequence of doing so is not as drastic as for followers in Nigeria for instance. Hendriks (2010) delved into the history of the Netherlands and presented reasons why there is aversion to leadership, he identified the effects of the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands during the Second World War as being partially responsible for the aversion to leadership.

The historic antecedent of the word "*leadership*" usually has emotional interpretations in the Dutch society (Hendriks, 2010). Korsten (2005) also attempted to explain the reasons for the aversion of Dutch people against leadership by concluding that authoritative style of leadership does not fit the "polder" mentality of the Dutch people which is consensus oriented (Korsten, 2005). The soberness for which Dutch people are known for is reflected in their approach to followership and leadership, and this can be attributed to their past experiences and the societal metamorphosis after the occupation (Karsten & Hendriks, 2017), the authors concluded that an explanation for the aversion can be sought in the experience Netherlands had with strong leaders which has neither brought prosperity nor development, but rather stagnation (Karsten & Hendriks, 2017).

The consequence of the aversion is that the power of the prime minister is limited, and a system of distributive responsibilities aimed at preventing the concentration of power in any individual or political party is rooted in Dutch laws and propagated to state institutions ('t Hart & Ten Hooven, 2004; Karsten & Hendriks, 2017), this expectedly leads since the war to coalition governments. All these arguments against leadership does not imply that there is a leadership vacuum, the affairs of the government are still conducted by a prime minister who is the leader of the largest coalition governing party and political appointees, but this type of system makes consensus the only way to get things done.

In the absence of a dominant leader or a system which encourages one, opportunities are created for followers. The political system in the Netherlands strengthens the position of followers by making them relevant in decision making process, this is reflected in the institutionalised checks and balances which permeates all government institutions (Karsten & Hendriks, 2017).

Power

Central to any analysis of the follower-leader relationship is power; power in relationships is the medium with which business is conducted, and power means access to resources and the ability to influence others (Peyton, Zigarmi, & Fowler, 2019). As most leadership theories have shown, the primary aim of leaders is to influence the behaviour of followers and others, and to do this one form of relationship or the other is needed, the tools to achieve this goal includes power and control of resources (Anderson & Brion, 2014; Peyton, Zigarmi, & Fowler, 2019). Anderson and Brion (2014) differentiated between power and influence, the writers argued that while power involves behaviours intended to obtain compliance, influence is the capacity to have an effect on the character, or behaviour of others, the difference lies in the formality which power has (Anderson & Brion, 2014).

Power grows when it is based on the ability to engage and interact with others, the ability to represent the interest and act on behalf of others may legitimise the power, all these are factors which affect follower-leader relationship. The legitimacy of the power usually presupposes that there is a difference in hierarchy, and this may lead to imbalance in the relationship (Harris, Russell, Maher, & Ferris, 2015). Tjosvold and Wisse (2009) referred to two perspectives of power by researchers on what power in organisation is, one view is that power is intransigent depending on the beliefs and perceptions of what is viewed as power, most of those who have power always try to let others know that they have power, the other view power is based on the needs people have to impact others (Tjosvold & Wisse, 2009). The cultural context of power and the implications of how it is exercised is mostly based on hierarchy and may make people uncomfortable, thereby negatively impacting their relationship

Hofstede (2011) in his study of cultural dimensions also identified power as one of the instruments vital to the relationship between leaders and the led, he viewed power and the distance of it as comprising an element of mutuality. Leaders by virtue of their formal role possess power to cause subordinates to undertake tasks and work, he defined power distance as "the level of inequality in a society and the degree to which the unequal distribution of power is accepted by members of that society" (Hofstede, 2011). There are different types and perceptions of power, the dictionary define power as the possession of controlling influence, Peyton et al. (2019) grouped power into two categories; soft and hard power, followers are often the ones with knowledges.

Anderson and Brion (2014) defined power as "the asymmetric control over valued resources" (Anderson & Brion, 2014). Power is usually associated with authority, Schindler (2015) summed up the possible frustration of followers who may have the responsibility to execute tasks but may lack the authority that goes with the responsibility (Schindler, 2015).

The impact and influence of social media

Social media is the combined name for online tools used to facilitate collaboration and engagement by facilitating electronic communication and sharing of data and content (Barberá & Zeitzoff, 2018). One of the strengths of social media lies in its ability to allow real-time interaction irrespective of geographical, ethnic, or cultural boundaries. This strength has made it both powerful for information gathering and dissemination; and dangerous in spreading falsehoods, complot theories and incitements (Okoro & Santas, 2017).

Barberá and Zeitzoff (2018) argued that leaders have always monopolised information, unfortunately for them social media has changed the dynamics by broadening access to data and information. The author enumerated the advantages of social media as including

accessibility and the low cost of communication, creation of data and (instantaneous) dissemination of information through the internet (Barberá & Zeitzoff, 2018).

Social media is predominantly exploited by young people, who can generally be classified as followers to enhance their social, cultural, and societal agitation, most of these aspiring youths, or followers are no more content with following the (political) strategy which has benefitted only a few at the expense of many (Zeitzoff, 2017). The hashtag #EndSARS in Nigeria is an example of the impact of social media which readily comes to mind, traditionally, there is a considerable distance between leaders and followers in Nigeria, the protests which were started originally to complain about police brutality metamorphosed into a manifestation detailing how leaders have neglected their followers, mainly youths, the spontaneity of the protests forced leaders to make concessions which according to the report by BBC is far reaching and may be consequential (Orjinmo, 2020).

The exponential growth of social media users, for example, in Nigeria with an estimated 33.9 million users and in the Netherlands at around 11 million users (Kemp, 2020), is making the technology a force to be reckoned with, and at the same time it is creating uneasiness in certain quarters because of the possible agitation for societal change which may have, as witnessed in some Arab countries recently, political and social consequences (Arab Social Media Report, 2012). What is notable in social media is that it is dominated by followers. The Arab Spring demonstrated the far-reaching political consequences social media can have on governments and establishments, hence the spontaneous arousal of public sympathy towards the course the Arab spring represents has caused countries to begin to take social media seriously (Arab Social Media Report, 2012; Owen, 2018). It is now unthinkable to imagine a movement or political organisation without social media presence (Joseph, 2012). The apprehension caused by social media in some countries, especially where the political

elites hold the spectre of power, view this development with suspicion, and is resulting to taking unprecedented actions.

Nigeria, in an attempt to exercise some level of control proposed an anti-social media bill in the parliament in 2019, the argument given for promulgating the law was that social media can be used to propagate falsehood which can endanger or compromise national security (Nigerian Senate, 2019). There are different views on the real reasons why the bill was proposed, chief among which is the growing power social media in influencing, mobilising, and engaging the populace, mainly youths to challenge the political order and influence public opinion. The bill is aimed at making it punishable by fine and/or imprisonment statements deemed likely to be prejudicial to national security and those which may diminish public confidence in Nigeria's government (Nigerian Senate, 2019).

Before the advent of social media, the distance between followers and leaders when it comes to access to the media in general is considerable large, by transforming the world into a virtual global village where ideas and opinions can be espoused regardless of who you are, where you are, or your affiliation can both be dangerous and educative (Ewang, 2019).

Gilani, et al. (2020) warned that social media should not be naively approached, power social media exhibits both positive and negative influences on the follower-leader relationship, the lack of control and verification of data from social media is a challenge to its authenticity and at the same time, social media provides an opportunity to re-assess the role of power in follower-leader relationship and its dynamics (Gilani, Bolat, Nordberg, & Wilkin, 2020).

Social media has empowered all who otherwise would not have access to mass media, the low threshold social media tools like WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook. Instagram and others are offering to users to organise and disseminate information outside the confines of constituted authorities is being widely embraced, even governments and their agencies are turning to

social media to reach their citizens (Owen, 2018). While this research will not focus specifically on the political influences of social media, it will rather focus on how it has revolutionised the relationship between followers and leaders. Social media can benefit both followers and leaders by affording them the opportunity to conduct pre-scanning to monitor the acceptability of their ideas, proposals and recommendations with wider audience including stakeholders (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Carr and Hayes (2015) referred to ethical predicament social media poses, the information distributed are mostly unverified and this can lead to falsehoods, misinformation and/or mischaracterisation without the receiver being conscious of the ulterior motives behind the actions (Carr & Hayes, 2015). The youth who view themselves as change agents are not always content with the actions of the leader or the government, they capitalise on the anonymity offered by social media to ventilate their grievances, opinions and sometimes organise.

The fact remains that regardless of the attention given to leaders, leaders have not being able to lead or function without followers, Riggio (2014) warned that scholars on followership should learn from the mistakes of focusing too much attention on the leadership phenomenon, he referred to the inability to come up with a generally accepted definition of leadership despite the many approaches as a case in point. Positively, the trend in followership research is growing and this offers optimism, but the optimism should be tempered with caution, because not until followers and followership are empowered, and the hitherto centralised decision making processes are decentralised, offering followers a piece of the action when it comes to their recognition, and ability to contribute to decision-making process, they will continue to be seen as an appendage of leadership, and the relationship will continue to be dominated by leaders at the expense of followers (Bufalino, 2018).

While writers on followership portray followers as partners of leaders, Howell and Mendez (2008) argued that followers should be prepared to work with the leader to achieve organisational goals and objectives, therefore attesting to the assumption that the nature of the role of followers have direct impact on the effectiveness or otherwise of leaders. Followers have roles and responsibilities which are difficult to describe (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, & Huang, 2018), but it is aimed at complementing and at the same time actualising the vision of the leader and this makes them an indispensable partner.

All these make followership a complex phenomenon than it is initially thought (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014), Goffee and Jones (2000) posited that leaders need to recognise the difficulty involved in any attempts to get anything done without followers, with this knowledge, the authors admonished leaders to capture the minds and hearts of their subordinates(followers) in the quest to secure their commitment (Goffee & Jones, 2000).

The closeness of followers to the culture of the organisation, can cause them to become inhibitors to the excesses of leaders; followers should be empowered to question the policies of the leader by strategically offering alternatives and constructive criticisms, or least express their reservations about the possible consequences of any approach the leader is pursuing to challenge whether it is in the long-time interest of the organisation. To achieve this the power of the leader to side-line critical followers who are constructive in their criticisms should be curtailed. The independence of followers depends on their ability to put their individual and career considerations secondary to organisational goals and objectives by daring to contribute positively to the ideas of the leader when necessary (Grint & Holt, 2011).

While leaders prefer followers who can assist them in achieving their goals, followers alternatively look for leaders who recognise their contributions and potentials (Weber & Moore, 2014). That leaders have more power, authority, and influence than followers are

incontestable, but the overestimation of leaders at the expense of followers is however detrimental to the development and evolvement of followers as an invaluable force seeking recognition (Kellerman, 2008). The success or failure of organisations depend on the contribution of both followers and leaders who collaborate to achieve goals and objectives (Adair, 2008). Gobble (2017) argued that "*being a good follower can require as much attention as being a good leader*" (Gobble, 2017, p. 59). Leaders are often reminded that they have a responsibility to actively support followers' development by building durable working relationships with them, because this will manifest itself in the quality of future leaders, this is from the expectation that followers are future leaders and need to be nurtured and supported in the process (Gobble, 2017).

While some argue that leaders are born and not made, it is generally agreed that to function as a leader some apprenticeship is required, this learning process may be by working with leaders or followers (Northouse, 2016). Kelley (1988) concluded that followers are as critical to organisations as leaders, suggesting that the development of followers should be a corporate endeavour and be viewed as investment in continuity and human development (Kelley, 1988). The self-management exhibited by leaders is learned while they were followers (Kelley, 1988), in effect good followers can be prospective leaders.

To conclude this literature review, it can be posited that followers have expectations from leaders, Goffee and Jones (2001) identified three emotional responses followers desire from leaders; first, is what they called "*feeling of significance*", followers want to be appreciated and valued. The authors concluded that followers would go the extra mile for a leader who recognise and appreciate their contributions; the second emotional response is the "*feeling of community*", this occurs when there is unity of purpose between followers and leaders (Goffee & Jones, 2001). Leaders have the reputation of living in another world apart from

followers, the authors believe that leaders who are charismatic and relate to followers as partners will enjoy the benevolence and willingness of followers to cooperate with them (Goffee & Jones, 2001).

Followers who have personal identification with the organisation, develop a sense of ownership or belonging which motivates them and increases their commitment to the realisation of organisational goals and objectives (Avolio & Reichard, 2008). Jack Welch described the role of leaders as "*chief meaning officer*" who does not only let followers know where the leader is taking them and how to get there, but have to explain to them what is in it for them (Welch, 2013). Maroosis (2008) presented a disputable image of followership-leadership equilibrium which may not be valid in all situations, the author seemed to equate followership-leadership relationship in a student-teacher setting as a model which can be implemented in organisational form (Maroosis, 2008). The literature reviewed for this study showed that the follower-leader relationship requires recognition of the contribution of both parties and the desire to be treated as professionals.

Expressed in percentages, Kelley (1992) argued that the contribution of followers to organisational development is 80%, while leaders contribute 20%, the author also recognised the fact that in organisations, there is a continuous movement of both follower and leader positions, this further establishes that both can and should not exist in isolation because of their cooperative role in organisational development (Kelley, 1992).

In response to the rhetorical question posted by Dawkins (1989) in which the author contended that any attempts to understand followership must recognise that since more people are followers when compared to leaders, it is reasonable to assume that followership automatically offers more to talk about, Van Vugt et al. (2008) suggested that the origin of followership may be traced to the "*response to specific ancestral problems*" (Van Vugt,

Hogan, & Kaiser, 2008, p. 189), this research discounts this contention on the basis that being a follower is not choice but rather a natural progression, even for those who aspire to be leaders, it is evident that those who end up being leaders were once followers.

This chapter concludes that there is a sense that followers are ready to assume leadership roles and build relationship with leaders, but there are situations whereby followers are viewed as threat to the established position of leaders, this is more pronounced in hierarchical organisations where the differences between followers and leaders are influenced by culture or bureaucracy. Social media has, in a way eroded the core functions of the leader by its ability to facilitate the generation and sharing of ideas through a wider platform.

In reviewing literature on followership and leadership, social construction was used to accommodate the changing environment we live in by making provisions for future changes, the relationship between followers and leaders has been witnessing a lot of changes since the digital revolution, through for example, the emergent of affordable mobile communication and internet. This review finds that any theory propounded must be flexible enough to accommodate dynamics of follower-leader relationship, or else it will be overtaken by rapid developments.

Conclusion

While interest in followership has been increasing there is still a dearth of empirical studies of followership, and at the same time, there is still a tendency to overlook the extent of the interdependencies that characterise leader-follower relations. This, in combination with the degree to which leadership is a co-production of leaders and followers. Shamir (2014) described follower-leader co-production as being influenced by a combination of leader-follower characteristics and behaviours, and it is evident throughout the literature review that overly attention to leadership is not favourable to followership research and it is inhibiting

researchers from developing holistic approach to the study of followers and the process of following (Shamir, 2014). This review of literature concludes that using top-down approach to study followership has resulted in the inability to identify and recognise the dynamics of followers by evaluating the complex system in organisations instead of merely taking the point of view of followers (Schein, 1996). The literature review merely showed increasing interest in followers, however, this is not matched by research and academic study of this phenomenon, and one aspect of research which has not enjoyed attention is the investment in the quality of future leaders.

There is lack of research on the impact and/or influence of culture and socio-economic factors on follower-leader relationship; several studies have been done on culture, but none has related the role of culture to how it affects the follower-leader relationship. Multiculturalism in workplaces and the society is increasing, and the consequences of this is that the conventional approach of looking at followers and their relationship with leaders is evolving, research is needed to recognise this development. While this review of literature considered leadership and followership approaches and relationship are vital, however, there are not enough references about collaborative relationships to support a constructive engagement. This review showed the complexity of the relationship between leaders and followers, and the necessity of alignment between the two, since neither can function without the other (Anderson & Brion, 2014). Leaders will cease to be leaders if followers refuse or fail to execute his/her visions or decisions (Litzinger & Schaefer, 1982; Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010). This makes the leader, contrary to most approaches, dependent on the ability and willingness of followers to accept the leader's authority, legitimacy and willingly execute the decisions taken by leaders. The cooperation means that leaders and followers must invest in the relationship which can stimulate understanding and

mutual respect for each other. Followership as a phenomenon is endowed with a rich and

complex but yet unexplored literature grounded in culture and traditions which requires

further research (Baker, 2007).

CHAPTER 3:   Methodology

This chapter introduces the methodology which will be used for this study, this comprises of phenomenological study in which the lived experiences of participants and their perceptions of follower-leader relationships in their organisations will be explored (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Leavy (2014) contend that conversations are as old as human language and has served as a tool used to gather data and enhance knowledge (Leavy, 2014). This chapter explains the aspects of the research design and strategy that discuss how the research is conducted and managed. In addition, it also includes a reflective account of the challenges and experiences encountered during data collection, and the attempts to justify the choice of grounded theory (Denscombe, 2017).

The methodology employed in this study entails dividing the research into two distinct parts, one, the methods of enquiry in which the tools to be used are discussed, and the process involved in conducting case study research comprising of story-telling and narrative theory-seeking case studies conducted in the Netherlands and Nigeria. The choice of using grounded theory to conduct this study is based on the interest of the researcher to highlight and learn more about the dynamics of follower-leader relationship, especially in multi-case environment. Discovering the factors which affect the relationship will be done by allowing any concerns, intrigues and/or patterns to emerge from the field through data collected; the purpose of this is to identify the concerns and use the data collected to explain the process and the relationship which may evolve from it (Walsh, et al., 2015; Starks & Brown, 2007).

To begin, it is important to provide a short background of the origin of grounded theory, and thereafter the why and how grounded theory (GT) will be employed in this study. Grounded theory method can be credited to the collaboration between sociologists Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss who articulated the strategies for developing theories from data rather than

hypotheses (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory, as explained by Glaser and Strauss (1967) involves generating and verifying theories, and this was corroborated as specifically relevant to studying relationships and interactions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Martin & Turner, 1986; Denscombe, 2017).

Several authors posited that grounded theory is best used under certain circumstances, one of which is when available theories do not sufficiently capture all the variables which are deemed relevant by the researcher (Mills, Van De Bunt, & De Bruijn, 2006). The researcher shares the opinion that the analysis of the relationship between followers and leaders have often been unilaterally viewed from the leadership perspective (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). The consequence of the possible peculiar circumstances relating to followership and how it is perceived in different circumstances ignited author's interest in seeking to identify the reasons, or motivations that are peculiar to the follower-leader relationship, especially from different cultural and geographical environments. The primary interest of the researcher is viewing and analysing the relationship primarily from the perspective of followers and leaders, as stakeholders in other to get a full picture of the relationship. The purpose of constructionist grounded theory (CGT) in this study is to stimulate the emergence of a theory; in this case, theories grounded in the data collected. This means that the studied phenomenon and the views derived from the data collected become a vital part of constructionist grounded theory. What plays a central role in the use of CGT in this study is the experiences of participants and how they are related to the researcher's (Charmaz, 2006).

Grounded theory and Constructivist Grounded Theory
The approach chosen to obtain data requires that participants use their own words and experiences to detail their perspectives on the follower-leader relationship. Judging by this

approach, the researcher decided to employ Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT), and this decision is centred on three pertinent reasons:

(a) the desire to understand which variables contribute to the improvement or deterioration of the follower-leader relationship,

(b) the role culture, social and geographical factors play by using identical elements to compare, contrast and analyse the patterns discovered with followers and leaders,

(c) as someone who has lived in both environments chosen for this case study, the researcher wanted to investigate whether the beliefs he holds, in combination with his experiences will impart the research to make discoveries, and/or the ability to align the varying perspectives (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

For this study, the research relies on the perspectives of participants, and since perspectives vary depending on many factors, the participants in any of the two cases may have experienced, the researcher have to be prepared for the diversity of perspectives about the same subject. To accommodate this, Constructivist Grounded theory (CGT) is expected to provide a route to see beyond the obvious and a path to reach imaginative interpretations is chosen (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 2007). This study will focus on allowing theories to emerge from data, this in the opinion of the researcher may construct a safeguard against forcing data into any preconceived (favourite) analytic categories (Goddard & Melville, 2004).

While efforts will be made to identify opportunities to develop a theory, both CGT and grounded theory as research methodologies do allow the researcher to complete this study without generating a theory. However, this does not absolve the researcher from the responsibility of scrutiny of the assumptions made, or else this would be comparable to asserting some kind of scientific superiority without basis (Gerring, 2016). Whereas, as

researchers, we make assumptions based on what we perceive to be real and the same applies to research participants (Charmaz, 2006).

With this kind of research, it is pertinent that the researcher realises the necessity of being reflexive about his position as regards participants, the research question, and the research process. Reflection will be done by allowing the research problem to determine the methods chosen. For example, the relationship between followers and leaders is multifaceted, it is not only work-related but it is characterised by many variables such as human experiences, emotions, work environment, the leadership style, or even the education, or social status of followers and leaders, all these may point to specific data collection method(s) (Charmaz, 2006). By using CGT, it is still unknown what the outcome of this unchartered territory may be; most work on this phenomenon has been conveniently or inconveniently focused on approaching the followership phenomenon from the leadership perspective, the decision to go the other way may end up promoting the "*theoretical sensitivities that the researcher brings to studied life which may assume special significance*" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 148). The reason for this division lies in the hope that the process involved will become simplified, bearing in mind that research is a creative activity as well as systematic enquiry aimed at addressing a research problem (Bassey, 1999).

This research embraces the use of a qualitative research approach in which fieldwork and the instruments, comprising a combination of primary and secondary sources used to collect data, will be discussed. This research started with the collection of data using case study research design to collect data in several cities in Nigeria and the Netherlands. The main reason for choosing case study methodology is due partly to the multiple cases this study is made up, and the ability of case study to capture the cases individually (Johansson, 2007). Case study research in this study represents an attempt to conduct empirical investigation of the

follower-leader relationship in the two cases, each within its natural environment using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2018). Since participants are the main sources of data collection, the quotes, anecdotes, expressions both verbal and non-verbal is expected to provide a rich descriptive recollection of past experiences which can contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). The mode of reasoning for this case studies is induction, with this mode data emanating from the cases will be used for theory generation or conceptualisation (Johansson, 2007).

Research Design

This study adopts an ontological assumption in which the central aim is to understand the reality and dynamics of the follower-leader relationship. And to understand the relationship, themes and quotes will be used to "*present the words and perspectives of the participants on different issues as well as similar issues*" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 265). Due to the limitation of the research, two cases have been selected to provide in-depth account of the follower-leader relationship and document the experiences and processes which are relevant to each of the cases (Denscombe, 2017).
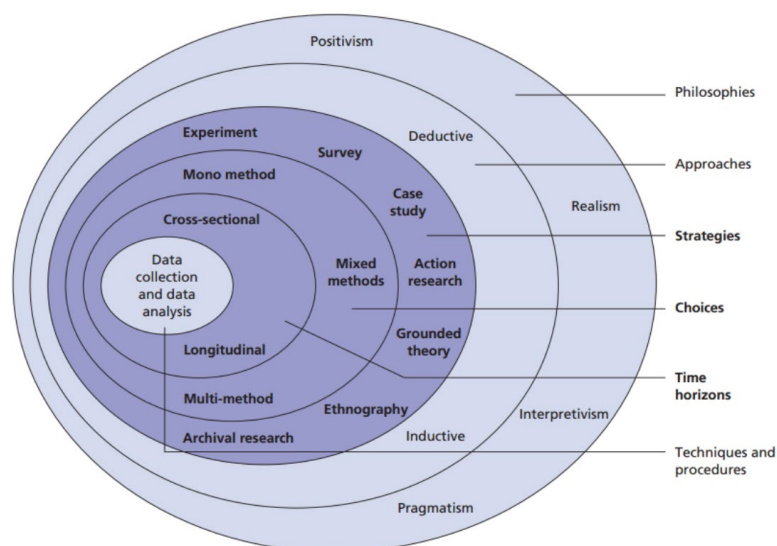
Figure 6: The Research Onion

The use of the comparative method in this study is deliberate and purposeful. Since evidence is being collected from two cases that have differences and similarities, it is imperative to expect that, at a stage, the evidence collected needs to be compared and contrasted to establish what is factual or even discover a theory (Bell & Waters, 2014; Hantrais, 2009).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) enumerated the use of comparative analysis in grounded theory (GT) as including grounded theory as a tool which the researcher can use to check the correctness of the evidence collected between two or more organisations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 23). Using GT is aimed at presenting the varying perspectives of participants and the contexts in which the stories are told (Glaser, 2007).

The assumptions of the follower-leaders relationship are based on the account provided by participants who are leaders and/or followers, and in some cases, combine the two roles in their positions. To examine this, grounded theory which, simply put provides the tools and guidelines needed for "*collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories grounded in the data themselves*" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2) will be used. This research uses a comparative case study which is a research approach suitable for research on the basis, such as organisations, locations, or events to investigate the cases independently; with the purpose of emphasising, exploring, and comparing the different perceptions of follower-leader relationship in case study countries (Knight, 2001; Pickvance, 2005).

According to Zartman (2005), the advantage comparative case study has over other approaches is the in-depth analysis which allows flexibility and simultaneous focus on multiple cases (Zartman, 2005). In essence, the findings from the two case studies, Nigeria and the Netherlands will be compared with one another using the tool, cultural tightness-looseness (CTL) theory to identify elements, compare and analyse them to identify variances

and similarities which can offer new ideas. The use of CTL will also allow, in the first instance, a comparison of successful occurrences to occurrences of failure in each case study country to identify concepts, patterns and/or contexts which can then be interpreted initially at country level and later related to the follower-leader relationship and the way the relationship is constructed in both cases of this study (Latané, 1996).

This research journey which contained twists and turns is characterised by several factors leaves me with questions about which direction to take, especially the continuously evolving disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which, in the least was confusing regarding how to collect data in a verifiable manner. However, starting the fieldwork reinvigorated my determination, and once in the field collecting data made me realised how interesting the subject of this work is.

Setting and Data Collection

A total of twenty-six (26) participants will be interviewed in four cities in the Netherlands with a breakdown of eighteen (18) face-to-face and eight (8) in an online setting. Each narrative in-depth semi-structured interview is scheduled to last an average of 45 minutes. The interviews commenced by presenting both the participant information statement and consent form to participants, this will be followed by a brief explanation of the goals, expectations, and objectives of the research.

Sampling and Selection of Participants

The participants selected for the interview include followers and leaders in typical organisations, mostly public corporations but with a few commercial organisations. The fact that the researcher grew up in Nigeria is viewed as a resource which can be used to identify and approach potential participants. The process of identifying and selecting participants included convenience sampling and theoretical sampling which will make use of the network

and contacts of the researcher to approach potential participants. In obtaining divergent perspectives which can generate data, both sampling techniques will be considered instrumental (Hox & Boeije, 2005; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). The use of this research method is expected to allow the researcher to explore multiple perspectives presented by participants; and assume thereby diverse positions to accommodate the realities presented by those being studied. The different complex environments sometimes required different approaches this was a challenge (Charmaz, 2006; Goulding, 2002; Denscombe, 2017).

Convenience sampling: the search for participants approached in this study will start within the researcher's network. Having worked for many years at different government ministries and parastatals in the Netherlands, it is convenient to use their existing network to locate potential participants. Using this knowledge and network, the researcher is expected to be able to select and approach colleagues and former colleagues who are judged to be relevant and willing to share their experiences and perspectives on the follower-leader relationship.

For the Nigerian part, which is the second case, similar actions regarding recruitment of participants will be taken, but this time relying heavily on acquaintances and old school colleagues to identify potential participants and gain access to them. For example, a former schoolmate who is a director at one of the government agencies offered to provide access to a whole department at his ministry. In both cases, the strategy is to get participants who are not only leaders or followers but those who have experience in combining both roles. The combination of both roles is chosen based on their present function and the years of service as verification of their rising through the ranks. The relevance of convenience sampling to this study is confirmed by Charmaz (2006) who defined the process as including finding potential participants who not only meets the criteria but who agree to volunteer their time.

Theoretical Sampling

The role of theoretical sampling in this study is to discover relevant data which may lead to the development of a theory or theories; this will be done by collecting data from places, people and circumstances which may increase the chances of developing concepts and relationships between the concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In other words, the process of theoretical sampling will be employed to "*seek pertinent data to develop emerging theory, this will involve the continuous and elaborate refinement of categories constructing the theory being developed*" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 96).

This sampling technique will allow the researcher to analyse data collected per case study without waiting till all data is collected (Babbie, 2010). Corbin and Strauss (2015) contended that theoretical sampling is a continuous activity during which the researcher follows wherever the data leads him/her. And as a result of the definitions above, this research will be developed consisting of specific variations. By defining categories, the goal is to "*follow the lead of the research and direct data collection to those areas that will best serve the development of a theory*" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 134). Within the process of theoretical sampling, the researcher will avail himself of the help of process to validate categories and verify the relationship between them. The purpose of this is to determine the properties of the categories and use the properties to create analytic definitions of the categories (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher expects that using theoretical sampling will help in focusing on the process of data collection and fine-tune categories in this research.

The theoretical sampling processes include making the initial contact with participants, it is also aimed at seeking relevant data to develop any emerging theories, this action is continued until no new emerging theories are detected, the so-called saturation point. The saturation point will be reached when the data being collected does not generate new theoretical

materials or new ideas consider relevant to the study (Blessing & Chakrabarti, 2009; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). There may also be some cases of snowball sampling in which some people approached may offer to refer the researcher to those they consider can provide valuable information.

Initiating selection: Preceding any work on sampling, the criteria stipulating which pre-requisites potential participants must have to be able to participate have to be determined (Attia & Edge, 2017). The primary criteria which are implemented in Nigeria is a conscious decision to maintain balance which reflects the ethnic composition, this selection criteria is to ensure that the role of culture in different ethnicities is vividly captured. Although ethnicity will not play a part in the research, however the cultural aspect of the different ethnicities represented by the three main languages is used a criterion. It is deemed important to inform participants in this study of the voluntary nature of their participation, without any preconditions. In the communication it will be communicated in which form the interview will be conducted, it is anticipated that letting participants know that their views about the phenomenon being studied will be presented in a conversational and interactive form may be useful. Interviews will be conducted with those judged to have relevant experience, the methodological approach is predicated on the ability of the researcher to interact with participants, ask questions and seek an explanation by asking follow-up questions to understand their perception of the followership-leadership phenomenon (Robson & McCartan, 2016; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

To initiate the participant selection process, an email invitation containing the purposes and objective of the study, how the interview will be conducted, and the estimated duration of the interview will be sent to potential participants, a few days after the email is sent, the participants will be approached through the telephone to confirm whether their willingness to

participate or not, also during this telephone conversation, appointments will be scheduled with those who accepted the invitation to participate (BERA, 2018).

The copy of the email sent to prospective participants can be viewed in Appendix i and Appendix ii. Each person was invited to participate (defined as a form of convenience sampling) or in some cases, the researcher will solicit for the names and contact information of potential participants (snowball sampling); these are people believed to fit the profile of potential participants who may be willing to participate in this study. Ensuring effective interviewing, certain formalities will be put in place to ensure that relevant questions are asked during the interview process, this includes interview guide attached as Appendix iii, and also before beginning the interviews, participants will be given a brief explanation of the objective of the study and requested to sign the consent form (Appendix iv). A characteristic of an effective interview is making it a guided conversation in which most of the talking is done by the participants/respondents (Charmaz, 2006; Kvale, 2006; Patton, 2002).

In line with the statement above, the interviews will be primarily narrative in which participants will be asked a number of questions which are probing, or follow-up questions aimed at stimulating the flow of information to obtain in-depth and rich data (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2007). During the interviews which will be narrative and conversational, the researcher will allow questions to be inspired by the willingness and ability of the participant to volunteer information.

At the commencement of the interview, respondents will be reminded of the confidentiality agreement, consent form, and brief information about how the recording of the interviews, which will be used for transcription and data analysis purposes and will be reassured that the information supplied will be handled in compliance with university data regulations. Every precaution will be taken to ensure that participants are made comfortable, for example,

participants will be asked to give suggestions regarding their preference for the location of the interview. Also, efforts including building rapport and cultivating trust with participants will be made. This will be done by actively listening, showing vested interest and encouraging the participants to continue talking (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). According to Goulding (2002), one of the elements needed to get participants to volunteer information is trust. Judging by the nature of this study, and the methodology chosen, building rapport with participants, demonstrating good listening skills and techniques will be important in being able to actively participate in the interview and encourage participants to share their work experiences. Additionally, the researcher will give the participants the freedom to choose where the interview will be conducted, this is aimed at ensuring that the interviews were conducted in places where the interviewees will feel comfortable (Elder, 1976).

For as much as it is possible, interviews will be conducted face-to-face, in-person interviews will be preferred because of the valuable information non-verbal expressions can play in the way the participant relates his/her human experiences and the associated emotions. In situations where it is not possible to conduct face-to-face interviews, Microsoft Teams or Zoom, depending on the preference of the participants will be used.

Saturation point is estimated to be reached after conducting 30 interviews. Charmaz (2006) suggests that secondary or follow-up interviews may be needed to achieve full theoretical saturation in a qualitative study. Since this study involves multiple case studies which imply that data will be collected from multiple sources, part of the design will include the use of triangulation as a validation tool. This is aimed at converging information gathered from multiple sources and presenting the multiple perspectives on how the follower-leader relationship is perceived in different environments which is being investigated. Triangulation

in this sense involves the combination of qualitative data collected from different sources at different times (Flick, 1992; Creswell & Miller, 2010; Esser & Vliegenthart, 2018).

This research embraces exploratory research in which studies on followership and leadership, including academic literature and empirical studies will be reviewed. In addition to interviews, which will be conducted with those judged to have relevant experience, the methodological approach is predicated on the ability to interact with participants, ask questions and seek explanation with the aim to understanding the perception of the follower-leader relationship phenomenon (Robson & McCartan, 2016; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Using a comparative study, the findings from both countries will be compared to identify similarities, differences and peculiarities which can help to understand the phenomenon and how the influences of variables such as culture, socio-economic factors affect or impact the phenomenon in their situations.

Data Collection

Preceding the actual data collection stage, a pilot study aimed at testing the viability and the ability of the research instruments employed to collect relevant data which will answer the research questions will be conducted. Data collection was mainly by (a) observation, (b) interviews and (c) document review (Bassey, 1999).

To accomplish this, the research interview questions, and face-to-face interviews will be tested with selected participants among the target audience (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The goal of the pilot study is to allow the researcher to identify areas where extra attention or emphasis needs to be placed, this with the purpose of fine tuning the research questions to achieve clarity and maximum results. Data detailing the complexity, challenges, understandings, and context of followership as they relate to the research subject will be collected and analysed (Hox & Boeije, 2005).

In a study where people are expected to relate stories about their personal and individual experiences, care must be taken to ensure that the approach chosen will lead to the collection of relevant data and at the same time safeguarding the trust reposed in the research team. Since the purpose of this research is to understand the phenomenon of followership and the relationship with leaders by describing participants' preferences and experiences in the selected cases, the specific groups to be targeted by this case study will include leaders and followers in both public and private organisations (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019; Woodside, 2010). The setting of the interviews will be informal, this is to encourage interactions with participants and develop rapport which may help in creating a relaxed environment which can lead to the participant volunteering in-depth information about their experiences. The setting and rapport with participants is expected to provide the opportunity for asking probing and follow-up questions (Piller, 2017).

By relying on the perceptions and narratives of respondents to collect data, this study will use critical incident technique (CIT), critical incident technique presupposes that there is no pre-determination or inducement of the respondents to choose which occurrence(s) they want to base their story upon, part of the use of CIT involves the procedures for collecting observations which the researcher consider relevant to the research (Flanagan, 1954). The use of CIT in this study will be limited to the degree at which it can help in understanding what helps or impedes the understanding of the factors affecting the follower-leader relationship, the bulk of the background and information relating to experience is expected to come from interaction with participants (Viergever, 2019). This implies that respondents will be encouraged to use their own words and choose which incidents or occurrences they consider most relevant to this research and are willing to share (Gremler, 2004). One obvious advantage of not inducing or influencing any occurrence(s) respondents may decide to base their story on is that it increases the likelihood that they will choose situations which they are not only comfortable with, but which they can recollect vividly and are able to provide rich data about.

Flanagan (1954) described CIT as the art of using direct observation of human behaviour to collect data relating to observed incidents. In this process, incident refers to human activities which are deemed relevant or can contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon of followership (Flanagan, 1954), central to this incident monitoring will be the synergy between the follower and the leader on one side, and the synergy between the follower and colleagues on the other side. Using CIT will require asking respondents to provide background information into the circumstances they choose to share, and the context and the possible stimulants which led to the critical incident the story is about (Chai, Jeong, Kim, Kim, & Hamlin, 2016; Viergever, 2019).

For each case, semi-structured in-depth interviews will be conducted with a total of 44 people cutting across different ethnic and cultural groups. The interviews are primarily narrative in design, this was to allow participants to relate their experiences and views on the research topic using their own words and expressions (Etherington, 2010; Clandinin, 2006). Potential respondents will be approached by e-mail and telephone to solicit their participation. In the e-mail and telephone conversations, a brief description of the research purpose and the depth of the cooperation sought will be given, this will be followed by a request for appointment to arrange when the interview/discussion can take place (Spencer, Pryce, & Walsh, 2014).

The data obtained through the review of documents and interviews with followers and leaders are expected to give insight into the relationship, challenges, and opportunities. A total of 44 responses were recorded from two case studies and analysed until a saturation point was reached. A breakdown of the responses is as follows; eighteen (18) participants were interviewed in a face-to-face setting in three cities in Nigeria, while six (6) preferred online interaction and two (2) participants failed to honour the interview appointment.

Conducting cross-national research faces certain challenges, some of these challenges are access to sources and the reliability of the data collected; factors relating to environments where culture, social and ethnic perceptions can play a role require understanding of the peculiarities of the research subjects. To mitigate the challenges, emic perspective which is the "*insider's or native's perspective of reality*" (Fetterman, 2015, p. 185) will be used to stress the understanding of the realities as perceived by the subjects being studied, part of this will require the researcher conducting the interviews at locations specified by respondents to create an atmosphere they are comfortable with (Fetterman, 2015). The study will be concentrated on individual interviews and discussions with designated participants (Foddy, 1993). The data collection method for this research will centre on the use of interpretive

research philosophy to present the sequence of events, in addition to relying on the recollection of the participants (Cortazzi, 1994; Noon, 2018; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

Making sense of the stories participants tell about their professional and personal development with pertinence to their career and work experiences will form the basis of the data to be generated for this study. Conducting this type of research may cause participants to cross the line they have never crossed before by recollecting both painful/unpleasant and pleasant/proud experiences they have had (Fraser, 2004). To collect data, stories relating to experiences at work will be solicited from participants who are consciously selected with the purpose of gathering data about follower-leader relationship in their organisation is perceived. Narrative research in which participants will be given the opportunity to "*restory*" their experiences will also be used. "*Restorying*" in this context is the process of reorganising and analysing the stories participants tell to suit the purpose of this research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research tools mentioned above will be employed to collect, examine, and collate data collected from the case studies for this study. One expected advantage of collecting the research data is the operationalisation of theoretical constructs, research design and data collection all aimed at answering the research questions (Hox & Boeije, 2005).

The focus of this study will be on using the data collected to develop a theory aimed at contributing to the promotion and repositioning of the follower-leader relationship phenomenon, any theory developed will be aimed at contributing to the understanding and preparation of followers for the intricacies of dealing with leaders, or more importantly to educate them about how they can cooperate with the leader in enhancing organisational development (Malakyan, 2014). The cooperation being advocated for in this study also

applies to leaders because they too have to understand and be familiar with the idiosyncrasies of followers with the objective that both can better understand one another and consequently improve the image and perception of each other

Primary data

To collect primary data, interview as a qualitative research technique will be employed, interview in this sense will be employed more as a process of generating data than collecting data because during the interview or with the questionnaire/survey the data is created by the participants (Mason, 2002). Projective techniques in which respondents can use third person accounts to provide information they feel either embarrassing or afraid of unforeseen consequences will be considered (Mesías & Escribano, 2018). The main primary data collection tool will be in-depth interview in which participants are prompted and stimulated through probing and follow-up questions to share comprehensive information about their experiences as they relate to the topic of this study (Given, 2012).

Data collection through Narrative Research

It is in human nature to tell stories about their life and experience, this has made it a viable tool to recount past experiences which researchers can use to collect empirical data through collaboration with the storyteller (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), central to the use of narrative inquiry in qualitative research is that narrative inquiry is a methodological response to positivist paradigms which can be linked to the recollection of experiences (Clandinin, 2006), the richness and strength of narratives lies in that it is a first-hand account of the lived experience of the story teller (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). One important way to understand the experience of participants is through narrative inquiry which is a research methodology which allows the researcher to study the experience of participants over a

period of time (Given, 2012), while contextualising the experiences and personal knowledge of the participants through narratives.

This study will chronicle the series of events, happenings and recollections which characterise the stories participants relate (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Interactive model of narrative analysis in which the emphasis is on interactive and dialogic process between the researcher and participants will be used, the aim is to create a teller and listener situation whereby both parties work together to construct a narrative collaboratively (Riessman, 2005).

Employing social constructionist approach, this study will attempt to interpret the stories told by respondents by examining them with the purpose of extracting data judged relevant to this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 20), this will require negotiating with participants on the topics to be covered, but the sequence in which the story is told will be left to respondents with a subtle probing questions from the researcher (Etherington, 2007).

Etherington (2010) described narrative inquiry as a tool which serves as a means which data is systematically gathered and analysed to reflect stories as told by participants (Etherington, 2010). While exploring the power of narratives and their ability to stimulate a recollection of experiences, which are essentially a sequence of events the story tellers are directly or indirectly involved in, this study aims to present a dimension of followership as experienced by the participants (Poulton, 2005). Using interactional narrative approach, the researcher will endeavour to actively participate in the conversational process by employing his knowledge and experience to blend in, this does not imply that attention will shift from the thematic content and narrative structure of the activity, because the content and context of what is said is of considerable importance and significance to the narrator (Riessman, 2005; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Actively participating in the conversation is expected to further motivate the participants by creating an atmosphere where they can tell their stories at ease (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2007). Cortazzi (1994) supported Connelly and Clandinin (1990) by pointing out that narrative structures are able to "*interpret an ever-widening range of human experience*" (Cortazzi, 1994, p. 157). On the significance of narrative research, Cortazzi (1994) explained that the strength of narratives lies in their usefulness in interpreting diverse human experiences. The art of telling stories about our experiences is part of being human, and it is being used consciously and unconsciously (Fraser, 2004). The expectation of this research is that through open-ended questions and interactions, the stories of participants will represent a socially constructed reality which is generally shared by other participants (Boyce, 1996).

Every society and organisation have their own history and experiences which are told from one generation to the other, this study hopes to tap into this through employees and/or former employees who volunteer to share their experiences. Despite the advantages of narrative research, telling stories about developments in organisations must be approached with caution, because there may be participants who will use the opportunity to embellish the stories they tell by including half-truths, exaggerations and falsehoods to settle personal scores or project unresolved grievances, Poulton (2005) suggested that these stories may give an impression of the organisational culture and ethics in the organisation, but because these stories are told by one generation of employees to the other, it may offer a reflection of reality in the organisation (Poulton, 2005).

The researcher needs to be prudent in the analysis of the stories told with the goal of identifying stories which are not relevant to the study, or stories being told with ulterior motives. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) advised researchers to devise processes which encourage transparency and ethical parameters for participants (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990;

Spector-Mersel, 2010). Boyce (1996) posited that storytelling, which is a form of narrative can be used to determine and express organisational culture (Boyce, 1996). Spector-Mersel (2010) and Mishler (2006) both referred to the diversities which characterise narrative research. They explained that while the stories told are from multiple origins, backgrounds, and experiences, all these enrich the stories and the data it generates (Spector-Mersel, 2010; Mishler, 2006).

Comprehending how an organisation is culturally and otherwise constructed can be determined by listening to the stories about how it has evolved over a period of time through the stories employees relive and relate (Poulton, 2005). These stories shape the perception people have about the organisation, its cultural leanings, and the encouragement of interaction between employees at different levels (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008; Latané, 1996; Schein, 2012). Given (2012) advised the use of questions such as, "*How did it happen that . . ." or "What did you do then?*" to stimulate the memory of respondents by attempting to connect the events and/or experiences (Given, 2012).

Data collection through interview

The epistemological position of incorporating features such as loose structure, the use of probes to stress areas of interest and reflexivity on the part of the researcher will inform the social constructionist approach this study will adopt (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Olson, 2016). Social constructionist approach in the sense that the construct of followership is an evolving phenomenon being shaped by the environment (Hoffman, 1990), this in addition to the relationship of followers and leaders.

The interview will combine both phenomenological and social constructionist interview styles; phenomenological style in the sense that it will focus on the "lived experiences" of participants by conjuring a comprehensive account of their experiences of the phenomenon

(Frechette, Bitzas, Aubry, Kilpatrick, & Lavoie-Tremblay, 2020), and consequently, social constructionist style by engaging in dialogical exchanges in which the participant actively contribute to the production of knowledge relevant to the study (Koro-Ljungberg, 2008; Moustakas, 1994). Interviews in this study will comprise of seeking the opinions of a cross-section of people with different cultural and social backgrounds to obtain a diversity of opinions on the followership phenomenon, a conscious selection of participants perceived who have informed or relevant view of the phenomenon under investigation has been made (Lee & Aslam, 2017). A combination of semi-structured and in-depth interview approaches which can help in getting participants to explain and expatiate their responses thereby enriching the information they provide will be used (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

This research, using the research questions is concerned with obtaining specific information relating to the career of participants and the account of their experiences by means of semi-structured interview, and participatory activities comprising of participant observation method (Dawson, 2002). The expectation is that semi-structured interview will afford the researcher the opportunity to use a set of probing questions aimed at encouraging participants to expatiate their response (Robson & McCartan, 2016) with the purpose of gaining insight into the relationship between followers and leaders.

To collect information which can later be transcribed to detect patterns, similarities, differences, and peculiarities, open-ended questions will be used to guide the interview process which is anticipated to be a conversational process (Olson, 2016; Bhasin, 2019).

This is in addition to participatory activities such as observations which will provide the research with the opportunity to observe selected participants during the execution of their duties will be undertaken when possible (Dawson, 2002; Anderson & Jack, 1998; Jørgensen, 2015). Interviews will be conducted between the researcher and each of the participants, this

one-to-one interaction is aimed at gathering data through narrative inquiry (Curtis & Curtis, 2011). The participants will be viewed as research objects, while the purpose of the interview is to obtain accurate information, care will be taken to avoid any existing relationship with participants to impact the accuracy of the information collected, to achieve this, conscious efforts will be made to conduct the interview by keeping any interaction during the interview purely formal and professional, this will be achieved by making a statement in this regard before the commencement of the interview (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Foddy, 1993).

During the interview process, attention will be paid to any significant occurrences such as chronemic communication in which there are pauses or silence in responding to questions, and paralinguistic communication in which variations in speech volume will be analysed; both chronemic and paralinguistic non-verbal communication methods can provide additional information which can be interpreted to understand the culture of the organisation (Bell & Waters, 2014; Piller, 2017). One of the reasons why preference is given to kinesics (non-verbal communication comprising of eye contact, gestures and other facial expressions, or body language) is the perceived propensity they have in adding context to what the participant is saying or implying (Salmons, 2012).

There are different types and ways of conducting interviews, interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured depending on the flexibility and approach; in structured interviews, also referred to as standardised interview a rigid set of pre-determined questions are presented to participants (Bryman, 2012). The advantage of semi-structured interview is the possibility it gives the researcher to receive divergent responses to identical questions, and it also reduces the occurrence of errors on the part of the researcher since the questions follow a chronological sequence (Bryman, 2012), whereas in unstructured interview which is

more an impromptu, or more or less an conversational interaction requires no prior preparation and the questions reflect the response of participants.

The nature, and for practical purposes, semi-structured which is a mixture of structured and unstructured interview types is deemed the best option judging by the nature of this study (Bhasin, 2019), and the interview questions aimed at probing issues the researcher consider crucial to data gathering, and more importantly, the ability of semi-structured interview to facilitate a conversation in a narrative setup. The primary data will be collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews (IDI) using a method Seidman (2006) referred to as "*in-depth phenomenologically based interviewing*", this method is aimed at obtaining the opinions and perceptions of participants by combining life-history interviewing focused on assumptions using open-ended questions to stimulate the participant to reconstruct experiences relevant to this study (Seidman, 2006).

In cases where it is impossible or inconvenient for the participant to take part in an interview in person, alternatively, questionnaire may be considered to generate data from identified participants. Due to the nature of the interview topic, the researcher is prepared to deviate from the prepared questions if the participants volunteered information without the need for the questions, in that case the interview will be restricted to the use of guiding questions to ensure that research questions are answered (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Creswell and Poth (2018) listed the advantages of using interviews to collect data in qualitative research as including the provision of historical information by the participants, and the fact that it places the researcher in control over how the questions are asked and consequently which information is collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018). During the interview notes may be taken, but in order to prevent this action from affecting the concentration of both the researcher and

the participant, permission of the participants will be verbally sought to make audio recording of the process for later transcription (Bryman, 2012).

Associated with the use of interviews are some disadvantages, due to the fact that interviews are based on the views and opinions of participants, this could result in factually indirect information which the participants can colour with their own perceptions and realities (Creswell, 2007). According to Creswell (2007), the quality of the interview can be compromised if any of the participants is not articulate and unable to relate to issues in perspectives. This will be mitigated by making inferences based on the secondary data and actively stimulating participants through the use of follow-up and/or probing questions.

Virtual interview

Due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic and other related challenges, some of the interviews may be conducted using ICT tools to interact with participants. The tools which may be considered are real-time chat sessions and email. Virtual interview capitalises on the use of the internet to live stream video, voice, and engage participants in real time, this human engagement is identical to in-person engagement in which emotions and observations are perceptible (Given, 2012). Despite the viability of virtual interview when compared to face-to-face interview, face-to-face is still preferred for obvious reasons related to the reliability of internet connection and the possibility that the participant may not be able exercise control on factors such as location and environment due to the dependence on internet. Originally the duration of face-to-face interviews are expected to be between 30 – 45 minutes, but online interview will be reduced to a maximum of 30 minutes, and this implies that the questions to be asked will have to be condensed to ensure that maximum use of the time is made. Another implication of virtual interview is that the researcher will need to adhere strictly to time spent on answering questions to ensure that relevant information is provided, and in any situation whereby the participant is digressing from the answers expected, the researcher will have to politely request interrupt to establish focus. In figure 5 below a schematic oversight of qualitative data collection is given.
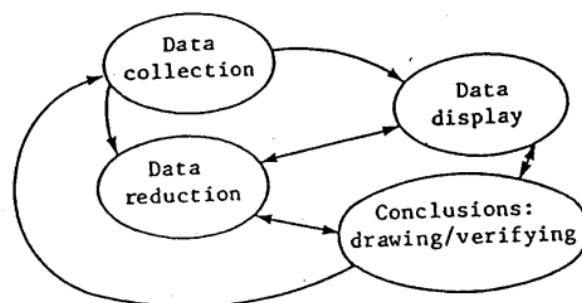
Figure 7: Data Analysis model

Source: (Huberman & Miles, 1994, p. 429)

Although, attempts will be made to avoid capturing personal information in the audio recording of interviews with participants, this study recognises that additional measures are necessary to guarantee anonymity. In this regard, the audio recordings of interviews will be transcribed to remove any sensitive data, specifically voice of participants which will be unavoidably captured during the interview.

Secondary data

Secondary data, which is data, collected by others, in this case primarily the government ministries and other sources deemed relevant will be used. As advised by Cooper and Schindler (2014), the research will start by the exploration of secondary data which will precede primary data research by searching the archives and websites of different government ministries, the reports and other documents (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Curtis & Curtis, 2011).

This is relevant because the researcher believes that initially reviewing the documents available in addition to data extracted from literature review will boost the interviews with facts which the researcher may not be aware of initially and allow him to ask pertinent questions which can further provide additional details (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Secondary data will come from two sources, internal data such as unclassified policy documents in different ministries, external data from published, computerised and/or online resources will be reviewed and as source of data (Polonsky & Waller, 2011).

Interpreting Data

The process of interpreting data collected concludes the interview design process, conducting narrative interview in which participants are able to say whatever they want is susceptible to overload of data (Turner, 2010). Silverman (2013) advised categorising the data by counting the numbers of instances particular item of text is detected, it is well important that the

categories are relevant to the research subject (Silverman, 2013). Interpreting the data involves separating data judged to be relevant to the research from data that is not; this process of sifting through data has to be conscientious and thorough to avoid any injustice to the efforts of interviewees. For better analysis, data will be categorised and grouped into themes (Creswell, 2009; Silverman, 2013). Detailed information about data is analysed and processed is discussed in succeeding sub-chapter on data analysis.

Implementation of Field Research

Identical implementation strategy and the research instruments were employed in both case study countries, the differences in case study countries necessitated the adjustment of the research approach to accommodate the peculiarities which may have to do with issues like culture, tradition and attitude in individual countries (He & van de Vijver, 2012).

For instance, making appointments in the case of Nigeria is almost the opposite of the Netherlands, while the researcher is conversant with both countries and their peculiarities, special arrangements had to be made specifically for Nigeria where attitudes to scheduling appointments are radically different. There were instances where appointments had to be rescheduled three times because the participant either forgot the confirmed appointment or was simply unreachable, the intermittent power supply also played a significant role.

In the conduct of this study, cultural homogeneity, and local interpretation of culture as perceived will be taken seriously and explored to identify similarities, differences, and peculiarities (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008).

An example of the cultural peculiarity which will be provided for is the attitude to scheduled appointments, while in the Netherlands promptness is highly valued, Nigeria is the exact opposite. This cultural difference manifests itself in the way appointments are made,

confirmed and respected. Standard protocol in detailing how and when the discussions and interviews will take place will be communicated to participants multiple times.

In planning field research, Wodarski and Feldman (1974) advised researchers to spend some time at the target agencies or locations where the research is going to take place to familiarise themselves with the procedures and operations prior to commencing research, this will also offer the researcher the opportunity to understand the house rules and in some cases the bureaucratic procedures to avoid unnecessary delays in paperwork (Wodarski & Feldman, 1974). This advice by Wodarski and Feldman (1974) was applicable to this study in that the researcher is familiar with both case countries.

Data Analysis Method

Data analysis will involve the processing of raw data collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentary sources. Due to the volume of data expected to be collected, data source triangulation will be used to relate the data collected to the two cases involved in this study (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, Dicenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014).

Inductive data analysis in which data is used to drive theory and/or understanding of the phenomenon of followership is deemed suitable for this study (Hays & Singh, 2012), it is pertinent to mention that the process may not be entirely inductive, Patton (2002) argued that the fact that qualitative research involve discovery and verification of information makes it both inductive and recursive (Patton, 2002).

The purpose of using inductive data analysis approach is threefold:

- to sift through data collected with the purpose of identifying and verifying patterns in the phrases, expressions and format the data in a presentable manner

- processing the data to establish link with research objectives and answer research questions; words derived from interviews with participants will be coded and analysed to identify information which is relevant to this study.

- To formulate theories or models emanating from the findings from the data collected

The following steps will be adopted in analysing data collected, it is anticipated that a significant amount of data will be collected through the chosen narrative data collection method, this means that data will need to be reduced to manageable size (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Dawson, 2002). The fact that narrative inquiry is part of the data collection method in which open-ended questions will be used to steer the dialogue with the participants to ensure that, as much as possible relevant data is collected. Mishler (2006) and Cortazzi (1994) listed different models of analysing narrative inquiry as including, thematic analysis, structural analysis, interactional and performative analysis.

For this study, interactional and thematic will be used; interactional analysis will be used in cases where the participation of the researcher in the conversation process is desirable (Thomas, 2006), this will be employed in cases involving government ministries in the Netherlands. This is because of the familiarity of the researcher with the culture and organisation of the ministries after working in that environment for the past 18 years.

In both cases, thematic analysis in which emphasis is placed on what is said, how it is said, and whether the story being told is first-hand experience of the participant will form the basis for the analysis (Riessman, 2005)

Data collected will be categorised and analysed with the purposed to initially maintain the case identity. Content analysis which is defined as the categorisation of data (behavioural or verbal) will be used to identify the frequency of words and phrases relevant to this study during the analysis of data collected from both in-depth interviews and documentary review.

To guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants in the interview, their responses will be coded. Coding will also be used to identify patterns in the collected data (Babbie, 2010; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020).

Coding, in this context is the process of gathering materials by topics or word frequency relevant to this study. Polonsky and Waller (2011) postulated that the words "*analysis and interpretation*" are frequently misused as being interchangeable. The authors described analysis as a process which covers the assembling, cleaning and examination of data, while interpretation is making sense of the data analysed (Polonsky & Waller, 2011).

Figure 8: Data Collection Activities
(*Source:* Creswell, 2013*, p. 134*)

In analysing data collected from various sources including audio, electronic, documents (pdf, word, etc.), or online sources the following functionalities will be used to identify relevant data from fieldwork, document reviews and other sources:

- Coding: used to gather data by topic, theme, pattern, or case

- Cases: these are containers for coding representing units of observation

- Case classification: this is a record of information about cases

The fact that data will be collected from different sources calls for the use of queries to search for words, phrases and/or expressions.

Reflexivity

With this study, all presuppositions and assumptions will be set aside to approach the subject matter of this research with an open mind (Finlay, 1998). Having worked at some of the organisations where this research will take place, objectivity, and the ability to insulate oneself from the experiences relating to the politics and bureaucracy in the organisations will be a challenge the researcher needs to be conscious of. This, in addition to the ability to listen unbiased to what the participants are saying, will be crucial and important. Setting aside presuppositions about the topic being researched requires that the researcher become conscious of the possible influence his/her opinions, preferences may have on the objectivity of the data collected (Cassell & Symon, 2004).

Another issue to reflect on is the challenge posed by the paucity of resources on followership when compared to leadership, a sizeable portion of the resources available approached followership from followers' perspective, while most view followership as a component of leadership (Benson, Hardy, & Eys, 2016). Although this should not be discouraging but rather viewed as an opportunity to contribute to the growing research and body of work on this phenomenon (Fisher, 2010). Finlay (1998) argued that while subjectivity of researchers conducting research in their work or previous work environments can be perceived as a problem, it could also be an advantage because the researcher, through experience, knowledge of the internal dynamics, politics and interaction is conversant with the

environment; and this knowledge can form the basis on which to identify areas pertinent to the research (Finlay, 1998).

Leaning on the practical experiences and network in different positions in any particular organisation, especially in the non-profit government sector can be viewed both as a limitation and a resource, a limitation in the sense that this can lead to assumptions based on the researcher's experience and knowledge of the environment rather than on research reality. On the other hand, a resource because of the familiarity with the mentality, culture and access to people and resources which makes soliciting for information and access to privileged information which can help in opening doors a possibility (Given, 2012; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

The above also presents a challenge of overlooking or taking for granted relevant data or avoid asking follow-up questions as an insider by assuming too much as cited by Saunders et al. (2009), but there is the possibility that the past experiences can be used to guide the research (Given, 2012). Generally, the researcher believes that previous experiences and being part of the culture and bureaucracy at the ministries can help address the concerns which may prevent people from volunteering information, this also means that the researcher should be reflexive about the susceptibility of the use of acquired experience and knowledge from influencing data collection, processing, and conclusions (Dowling, 2006).

With reference to Dowling (2006) who classifies reflexivity as a concept which the researcher can employ to guide not only his/her conduct, interaction with participants and the research in general, but it is also a process which incorporates and recognises the roles both parties have to play in making the research credible (Flick, 2009; Dowling, 2006). As a researcher, reflexivity which is new to me makes me realise how it is being practised, however relating it to how Etherington (2007) described it, as a tool which allows the display

of the "*values and beliefs*" of the researcher as shown by the style of writing, research process and its outcomes made it understandable (Etherington, 2007).

Getting acquainted with reflexivity will allow me to cultivate the capability of continuous developmental approach stressed by Attia and Edge (2017) which leads to becoming a reflexive researcher who can incorporate reflexivity in every research activity undertaken (Attia & Edge, 2017). While reflexivity attempts to create awareness about possible conflict of interest and/or bias as it may affect the role of the researcher in his/her research; however, this does not mean that the researcher will insulate himself from the adaptability of knowledge and experiences which may facilitate the research, Lynch (2000) even argued that there are times when being unreflective is desired (Lynch, 2000).

If there are specific situations or experiences which the researcher consider may positively affect the research process or outcome, it will be unforgivable for the researcher to neglect this in the name being reflective. Looking at reflexivity, it is a reminder to the researcher to conform to the procedural rules of integrity, fairness and ethics (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). According to Guillemin and Gillam (2004) the purpose of reflexivity is to remind and guide researchers to be proactive by anticipating possible areas of questionable conduct and other risks which may compromise the integrity of the research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

Ethical consideration

Conducting research presupposes that the researcher and his/her team are conscious of the role certain factors can play in compromising the integrity and validity of research activities.

According to BERA (2018), the researcher is ethically responsible to participants in ensuring that fundamental operational guidelines of conducting research which should include treating participants fairly, with dignity and freedom from prejudice by recognising the differences in

the areas of gender, age, cultural identity or any other characteristics are adhered to (BERA, 2018; Polonsky & Waller, 2011).

The conduct of this research is guided by the university of Birmingham code of ethical guidelines which outlines what is ethically acceptable and what is not. In accordance with the guidelines referred to above, ethical review detailing how data will be collected with provisions which ensure that participants participate out of free will, and provisions for withdrawal of their consent anytime was applied for, and approval received before commencing fieldwork for this study.

At the commencement of the interviews, participants were presented with two documents namely, the participant information statement (appendix i) which gives a brief information about the research and the goals it aims to accomplish, this is in addition to the research consent form (appendix ii) which details the procedures for handling data collected was also presented to participants. In respect of the last document, participants were requested to attest their signature affirming their voluntary participation and agreement with the data processing regulations. To guarantee anonymity, the data collected was anonymised to ensure that personal information of participants is omitted from transcriptions in accordance with the provisions of GDPR.

In the case of Nigeria, it was deemed crucial to assure participants that the information they provided will not be shared with their superiors and/or colleagues. This is to avoid any possible recriminations emanating from the views they expressed or what they think of their colleagues, or conditions of employment. Most of the interviews conducted were recorded using mobile telephone and laptop voice recorder, specific permission was sought to make the recordings. There were instances during the conduct of interviews in Nigeria when electricity power failure affected the ability to fully record some interviews, in those cases,

notes were made. With this in mind, this research took the time to request participants to read and confirm that they understood and agree to the consent form by affirming this with their signature, in appendix i and appendix ii a copy of these documents are included.

In the attached documents participants were informed about the purpose of the study and what is expected of them, this in addition to how the information they provided will be processed, contact information of the researcher and supervisors are provided in case they have any requests or modifications to the interview or the way it is conducted. Finally, the document explained what will happen to the information they provided.

Conceptual Framework

Pure personal interest and socio-political experiences influenced the decision to conduct this research on the topic of follower-leader relationship, and the seeming awkwardness of the decision to focus on followership was confirmed by the initial reactions of people who wondered why followership is the primary focus, but after explaining my motivations and goals, the researcher is encouraged by the reactions of most people who concur that to understand the follower-leader relationship, followership deserves attention and a better understanding just like leadership. The general assumption that followers play minority roles in organisations is an open discussion that is devoid of consensus. Proffering answers to the questions about what followers contribute to organisational development and their relationship with leaders in organisations galvanised this study to seek to allow data to determine which factors contribute and/or are indicators that should be taken into consideration when analysing follower-leader relationships (Bormann & Rowold, 2018).

This study will start by evaluating followership and leadership theories, and how they contribute to the perception of followers and the relationship with leaders. Among the different leadership theories explored, some leadership styles are found to recognise that

followers have a role to play in leadership discussions and therefore should be a partner in the determination of their role in organisations, and organisational strategy.

Although the focus of empirical research and academic studies has been disproportionately more on leaders than followers, the increase in followership literature in the last few years is heralding a shift towards a better understanding of followers and their roles (Shamir, 2014).

Therefore, the conceptual foundation of this study rests on the belief that the trajectory to becoming a leader begins with being a follower (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Schindler, 2015), many studies highlight the different aspects of leadership; some people exhibit leadership skills at early stages of their career, while others acquire or develop leadership skills after lengthy career and/or experience. However, one constant denominator is that followers are co-producers of leaders, and they crave to be seen as partners working towards the achievement of optimum productivity in organisations (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2012).

Foremost, this study will look at the extent to which cultural norms and values influence the relationship of followers with leaders (Blair & Bligh, 2018). For instance, in some cultures disagreeing with a leader's decision is viewed as insubordination which may reflect negatively on the follower's career prospects, and discourage the ability to offer innovative ideas and/or make constructive contributions (Hofstede G. , 2011). There are situations where there may be marginalization between followers and leaders through the setting up of social boundaries, this could be, for example in the form of separate facilities which serve to make clear that there are psychological differences in status.

These contextual factors and the possibility that they may be drivers that either enable or adversely affect the participation of followers in organisational activities will be examined to determine their role in the suppression of the development of followers. Secondly, building

on existing knowledge on followership, exploratory research will be employed to derive concepts from data that can help understand the phenomenon better (Jabareen, 2009).

The subject of followers and followership is still mainly underdeveloped when compared to leadership in research and empirical studies, hence a lot still needs to be discovered and learned about this phenomenon. Since most of the literature reviewed for this study provide little or no focus on the role socio-cultural and economic factors can play in the perception of followers and their ability to influence the follower-leader relationship, therefore this research will attempt to explore the role these factors and their perceptions play in the development of followers, the followership process and more pertinently the perception of their relationship and collaboration with leaders.

The focus of this study is the generation of meanings from data collected to identify patterns and peculiarities which can lead to a better understanding of the dynamics of the relationship and emergence of theories using a bottom-up approach. In the figure below, a diagrammatic view of the possible factors will be explored in the analysis of data collected to identify how any of the factors influence and the degree to which they contribute to the development of the follower-leader relationship or otherwise are shown.
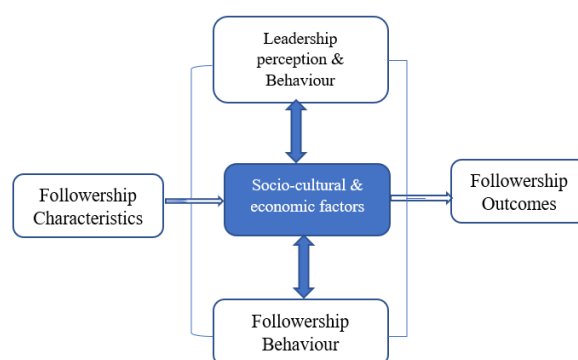
Figure 9: Factors affecting followership development
(Adapted from *Reversing the lens* (Uhl-Bien et al. 2014)

The lack of knowledge about the multifaceted roles and expectations of followers in organisations complicates the attempts to understand their influences and power, especially about leadership (Alvesson & Blom, 2015). The addition of the socio-cultural and economic factors to the framework is aimed at exploring the possible contributory role socio-cultural and economic influences may play in the relationships and experiences of both parties, the framework as originally designed by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) identified the variables which can contribute to the way the role of followers is enacted, the framework is an attempt to present possible outcomes associated with follower role behaviour (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). However, any investigation of the extent of the value or the role followers and leaders play may be instrumental in cultivating a new understanding of followership depending on the context (Blair & Bligh, 2018).

The leadership perception and behaviour concentrate on the different role orientations attributable to followers, role orientations such as passive, proactive, rebel, etc. are examples of the classifications which characterise the perception of followers and their roles, the roles were also examined from the perspective of how followers view themselves and concluded that perceptions do contribute to the type of interaction followers have with leaders, if for example, followers(subordinates) are perceived to be passive, this may reflect in the level of engagement, responsibility and expectation leaders entrust or delegate to them; on the other hand, the perception of leaders by followers can affect the level of cooperation and support they provide to the leader.

While these two factors are essential, however, the possible socio-cultural and economic influences which may influence both frameworks were not taken into consideration. It is not unthinkable to imagine the effects of the control of economic resources may have on followers and their ability to confront the leader when unethical behaviour is noticed. This

study will explore the influence and consequence of socio-economic and cultural factors on the follower-leader relationship. The addition of this element is to reflect the increasing role social interactions play in relationships, it is common to use social media (tools) to influence decisions and promote narratives, at the same time the ability of followers to be economically non-dependent on the leader can be instrumental to their being able to manifest themselves. There are situations where the leader's control of economic resources has negatively impacted the progress or suppress creativity, collaboration, and initiative on the part of followers.

With the added element, this study intends to explore the role socio-cultural and economic factors, as credible influence tools play in the development and manifestation of followers. In the African purview, the socio-cultural and economic attitudes of people are prone to the influence of communal or ethnic interpretations. In certain situations, influence through loyalty and commitment to one's ethnicity can be a pivotal factor that influences how followers view and respond to leaders (Büscher, 1989).

The new variable added to the framework, socio-cultural and economic factors is expected to be an important element in the data collection and analysis due to the potential effect it may have in economically and socially dependent cultures. A combination of the behaviours of followers and leaders together with the socio-cultural and economic factors can influence the type, and even the quality of their relationship. In a role-based approach, Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) presented a framework that portrays an interactive context in which the characteristics and behaviours which contribute, affect and shape the outcomes of followers, their orientation and the behaviour they exhibit.

In the followership process, the influence and perception of leaders is indispensable in followership outcomes, by adding the socio-cultural and socio-economic influences, this

study has provided the missing link which may be instrumental in understanding the maturity and perceptions of followers. The last element of this conceptual framework is the expected output, which includes the juxtaposition of the perceptions in the context of culture, social and economic factors and how it may lead to new insights on how to approach this phenomenon by drawing lessons from what works in one case to what does not work in another.

CHAPTER 4:   Presentation of Findings

In this chapter the findings emanating from the analysis of data collected during fieldwork in Nigeria and the Netherlands will be presented. The findings are divided into two phases to reflect the two case studies which are the sources of data collected. For both case studies semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted, the interviews were primarily narrative in design, this was to allow participants to relate their experiences and views on the research topic using their own words and expressions (Etherington, 2010; Clandinin, 2006).

The goals and objectives of the manner in which the findings which were presented and collated individually, were to identify similarities, peculiarities and differences which will then be related to research questions. Following this brief preview of the activities preceding the data collection. In the next section the instruments used to collect data will be presented.

Thematic Analysis

Themes which is a technique to interpret observations, or any distinctive behaviours which were discovered during the interviews/conversations and analysis of data collected was used in this presentation (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). Themes used in this finding are a combination of word repetition and key-words-in-context (KWIC) techniques, emphasis was placed on the combination of words, repetitions and their significance in the indigenous cultures and ethnic composition of the participants (Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

For a researcher, word-based techniques were found to be useful in identifying patterns in the story being told. The rationale for using word frequency/repetition is based on the perception that words repeatedly used have some significance to what and how the participants understand, or experience what they are narrating (Clandinin, 2006). These words and phrases in addition to other non-verbal communication became the nucleus on which the

observation is based. This is because of the belief that they are important to the participant and the story the participant is trying to convey. Another means by which themes were generated is the key-words-in-context (KWIC), the KWIC is similar to word repetition in that they both focus on repetition of words, but with the difference that KWIC related to the context in which the words are used (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2007). The themes which emerge from this grounded theory study are presented in this section - the themes emerge from the data collected from the cases used for this study, they are all derived from the interviews, observations, and review of documents. This was done by collecting words and phrases which participants use repeatedly and linking them to the research subject.

One of the techniques used in identifying the themes is word frequency, since narrative analysis is chosen by allowing participants to relate their stories, care was taken during data analysis to pay attention to the use of words, and words such as power and career were repeatedly used by participants when discussing their relationship with either leaders, followers, or colleagues. Measuring relationships is complex and depends on a variety of factors, but in other to introduce some level of measurement to quantify the opinions and observations made, themes were used to operationalise follower-leader relationship concepts, an example of this is fear which was used to measure the factors affecting the relationship. Despite the appearance of strong differences between the cases of this study, similarities were found in the data collected. The similarities centred on how they relate and shape each other by separating individual differences in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the organisation.

The initial opinions and experiences of participants interviewed were identical, leaders and followers form an important part of any organisational structure, and as such have to work together to realise the goals and objectives they set before themselves or imposed by the

organisation. However, their roles and place in the organisation can be influenced by different factors, and these factors can, in turn influence the outcome. The amount of power which is concentrated in followers and leaders, and the way the power is used is a recurring issue when looking at the relationship between followers and leaders. The themes listed below were derived from the data collected from the two case studies. The elements used in data collection were identical, but the emerging themes revealed that while follower-leader relationship is considered important for the achievement of organisational goals and objectives in both cases, there were factors which determine the quality of the relationship. By using themes, an attempt was made to enumerate what data says about how the factors affect the relationship in each case. The themes/patterns below were detected in the data collected from the cases:

Details of fieldwork Data

This chapter presents the findings from the data collected during the interview conducted with eighteen (18) participants in Nigeria. The data being presented was collected from organisations based in three (3) cities, namely Abuja, Ibadan, and Lagos in Nigeria (for details of the interview codes for the Nigeria case, see Appendix iv). Most of the interviews in Nigeria were face-to-face encounters with the exception of six (6) which were conducted online. This sub-chapter also presents the findings from the data collected during the interview conducted with twenty-three (26) participants in the Netherlands. The organisations, predominantly government ministries and two commercial organisations are based in four (4) cities, namely: The Hague, Rotterdam, Breda, and Apeldoorn (for details of the interview codes for the Netherlands case, see Appendix v).

Participants in both cases were offered the opportunity to choose whether to conduct the interviews in their native languages, 10 of the participants of the Yoruba speaking candidates

in Nigeria chose to conduct the interview in their native language, while the remaining with Hausa and Ibo languages preferred English. Similarly, all of the participants in the Netherlands preferred Dutch language to English. This proposal was borne out of the conviction that participants will feel more comfortable in telling their stories in their native language and more so, this will strengthen the ability of the researcher to read and interpret non-verbal communication. Due to the prevalent COVID-19 restrictions, the semi-structured narrative interviews with participants were conducted online, participants were allowed to choose between Microsoft Teams or Zoom. The interview technique used was to allow participants to relate their human experiences and perception of follower-leader relationship, in order to get the interview going as set of guiding questions were used when deemed necessary to steer the interview on-track. Generally, the questions were inspired as a follow-up to the information provided by the participants (Lee & Aslam, 2017; Bhasin, 2019; Kvale, 2006; Salmons, 2012). Inductive coding equally called open coding is used to create codes based on the data collected (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019).

The codes are derived from the responses of participants are generic and are applied to multiple comments which are attributable to multiple respondents. To analyse the views, opinions, and experiences of participants in this study, and the flexibility required in interpreting the data collected through interviews, thematic analysis is used to sort the data into themes. Data will be allowed to determine the themes which emerge from the analysis. In the interviews teambuilding and support were used to explore the quality of the relationship between leaders and followers (Burgess, 2013). The fact that this study is conducted with cases which are different in several ways geographically, economically, and culturally means that identification of themes will involve finding local expressions and terms used in unfamiliar ways (Alase, 2017).

The thematic analysis process involves initially coding the data by highlighting texts, phrases and sentences which are not only common to the different interviews but judged relevant to the research subject (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The codes will be turned to themes by combining and grouping them together. Thematic analysis which is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data is used (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79).

Data collected from Nigeria

In this sub-chapter the data collected from fieldwork will be presented, a table providing a breakdown of participants and their location is included in <u>Appendix iv</u> in the appendix section of this document.

Team building and Support

The organisations involved in this study adopted a functional hierarchy in which top management, for example, directors are responsible for lower cadre employees. Generally, hierarchy in Nigeria is based on age, position, social and political status, these classifications were repeatedly used during the interviews to describe the nature of their (work) relationships. This section will explore in what measure elements such as open communication and its effects on productivity and group dynamics were influenced by teambuilding and support facilities.

Followers and leaders interviewed presented hierarchy and protocols as instruments designed to exhibit hegemonic setting of the organisations. According to some of the participants, it is also aimed at ensuring that followers know their places and boundaries; this is not particularly surprising due to the cultural and social attitude in which class and status is evident, even in communal settings. The interview started by encouraging participants during the conversation to discuss their relationship with leaders and followers regardless of their role classification, to ensure that participants are comfortable and not intimidated by either

the work environment or otherwise, they were offered to choose a location of their preference for the interview.

The strong hierarchical structure of the ministries was repeatedly compared to their experiences in past roles/positions. Both leaders and followers indicated that they blame hierarchy as the reason for the distance between leaders and followers, and the inability to build productive teams where views can be expressed freely. These, they argued, influence the relationship with leaders and subordinates. ABJ1F01 explained that protocols as etiquette was religiously observed, below are statements from ABJ1F01:

> *We have an attendance list, this list is filled according to seniority, if a junior worker holds the list, he/she must wait for senior employees to complete the list before junior employees. Honestly, I still don't understand why this is the case. In my opinion, this is more psychological than having anything to do with the sequence in which the document is filled. You are constantly being reminded what your level in the organisation is (ABJ1F01).*

In another interview from another organisation, participant labelled ABJ2F02 detailed how protocol affects operations at her department by adding that:

> *Bureaucracy is another factor which is sustaining the existing gap between leaders and followers. Bureaucracy is essentially not a bad thing, because it ensures that laid down procedures are followed when executing tasks. However, in the present world where speed and flexibility are needed to act decisively together with the impatient attitude of the youth, it is putting pressure on the system and causing frictions (ABJ1F02).*

Most of the participants took time to explain their relationship with the leader and how it impacts their work and attitude. Followers expressed their views about the distance between them and leaders, this distance according to them, is preventing the modernisation of the organisations through the generation of new ideas. To understand hierarchy in Nigerian civil

service, ABJ2L02 explained that leadership structure is to reflect the hierarchical organisation of the office/position they occupy.

This means that a typical employee can only act within the confines of his/her office, and he concluded by summarizing that this functionally creates a clear separation of powers, especially between subordinates and their superiors. ABJ2L02 cited cases of people who studied and worked in western countries who have, without success attempted to introduce changes. During the interview, it was noticed that the participants had to stand up whenever the leader enters his office through the common area, and when it was inquired why this is necessary, ABJ1F03 replied:

> *This is part of the protocol which includes affording the director due respect and courtesy, he is a father-figure to me, and I try to accord him fatherly respect which I am culturally inclined to extend to all people who are above me anyway. This has to do with my upbringing where respect for elders is engrained in our culture (ABJ1F03).*

On whether subordinates need to be supervised, some conflicting opinions were presented however, majority preferred independence in executing their tasks and responsibilities. The conflicting opinions, they explained had to do with the maturity of followers, this was also related to the competence and trust which they expect the leader to have in their abilities. ABJ2F01 added a dissenting voice, she argued that subordinates need supervision, especially in the Nigeria situation.

When asked to elaborate what is specific in the Nigerian situation, she promptly made reference to the economic situation and the education system which is producing half-baked graduates due to incessant strikes. She lamented the deterioration in the quality of graduates and the problems this is causing them in training new recruits. Participants repeatedly referred to the status of superiors (leaders) and the difficulty it creates in forging relationship

with leaders. Subordinates basically do what leaders want them to and this is what defines the relationship ABJ2L02 explained with disappointment. He said that he would like to see a situation whereby decisions are jointly taken, however he said as someone in a leadership position, he recognised the impracticability of this idea, especially because this is one of the core responsibilities of leaders.

He continued that he cannot imagine a scenario in which leaders will share this core task will followers. ABJ2L02 concluded that he tries to involve subordinates in preliminary stages of decision making, but he assumes responsibility for the final decision and the consequences.

IBADF01 alternatively complained about the arbitrary use of status and the associated power by leaders to oppress subordinates, he cited an occasion when a colleague who expressed a contrary and critical opinion was accused of insubordination and sanctioned. IBADF01 observed that:

> *Some leaders use their status to exploit subordinates and create inferiority complex in subordinates, subordinates deserve respect and should not be treated as if they are there to serve the leader. Leaders need to realise that subordinates have opinions (IBADF01)*

The participants were very resolute about how teambuilding is instrumental to building trust and cohesion of purpose, but some argued that there is little of it to be proud of.

Recognition

Recognition as a form of reward was mentioned by followers and leaders interviewed, and they refer to it as the most popular instrument which can be used to motivate employees. There are different approaches to implementing a reward system which is viewed as an important tool used to help team members gain confidence in their work.

The three leaders from ABJ2 explained that they have experiences with reward system which became a source of unethical competition between employees and ended up having negative

effects on their productivity and the cooperation within the groups. While rewards may be a good motivating factor, all respondents from ABJ1 and ABJ3 were concerned that a badly conceived and implemented reward system will achieve the opposite of the intended effects of improving relationships.

For ABJ2L03, leaders should use a good reward system to bridge the gap between them and followers; he opined that he has individuals in his team who are very bright, and articulate, but have only learned of leadership only from books. For this kind of people, he cautioned, a leader needs to know how to approach them; there is no one-size fits all for relationship building he concluded. His experience was that personal relationship where interest is shown in the wellbeing and ambition of subordinates is the best starting point he concluded.

ABJ2F04 added that showing appreciation to employees can invigorate and stimulate them to want to do more to improve their performance. On the question about whether they feel that their contribution is recognised by the leader, ABJ2F01 who is a middle level manager explained that cooperating with his supervisor depends on the attitude of the leader. Using the following words, he expressed that:

> *When the leader wants to challenge you to be part of the solution, he will just say this is the problem, and these are the possible approaches. How do we solve the problem? You have done something in this area before, can you find out what we need to do here. By doing this, he makes you own the problem. For this, I do not mind sacrificing my free time to get the results necessary to accomplish the task, because I feel he gets my back (ABJ2F01).*

Adding leadership to this question, ABJ1L02 enumerated how he approaches the issue of recognition with subordinates:

> *I am conscious of the power of acknowledgement in motivating subordinates, my experience is that subordinates can be insecure when they are in front of me. And there exists the*

higher possibility that this will result in imbalanced relationship, lessening or removing the

threshold, or tension should be the goal. I try to offer compliments, even when I am not

completely satisfied but noticed how hard the employee had tried (ABJ1L02).

Opportunity and Trust

Participants from the two main organisations primarily agreed that when authority is

delegated to them, it increases their devotion to their work and sense of responsibility. They

also talked about the influence this has on the growth and improved relationship with either

the leader or groups. Leaders on the other hand, said that empowering followers create

involvement and vested interest of followers in achieving goals and objectives.

They valued the opportunity to prove to the leader that they can function independently.

Important thing is not only to be involved in building trust, but equally in maintaining good

and constructive relationship between followers and leaders. Some participants spoke about

what opportunities and trust mean to them in nurturing the relationships, first followers and

then leaders, ABJ1F03 says:

> *The director will just tell you what he wants you to do and would say, for any questions you*
> *know where to find me. In my previous department in this ministry, I was not even allowed to*
> *enter the office of the director without his express permission, but now when I finish a memo*
> *or proposal I can just walk into the director's office and put it on his table, this may sound*
> *trivial, but it becomes a big deal when this is compared to the department where I was*
> *working before (ABJ1F03)*

All participants affirmed the importance access to each other may have in the motivation of

leaders and followers, while leaders argue that giving followers opportunities will increase

their motivation and possibly dedication to work, leaders contended that this can reduce the

gap between followers and leaders by increasing access and building confidence as part of the

maturity process and independence followers need. However, both parties expressed caution

at the consequences of misplaced trust and the damage it may cause. LAG1L01expressed his views the following way:

> *Everybody wants to feel appreciated and needed, my decision to empower my subordinates is not borne out of doing them favours, but rather creating avenues for me to know what they can. This allows me to concentrate on other important things, and not get bogged down in babysitting them. My experience is that, giving them opportunities can strengthen my relationship with them, I also believe it creates trust which is needed for them and myself to do my job well (LAG1L01).*

ABJ1F04 provided a new perspective of her relationship with the leader and her immediate superior:

> *I feel that I see the director more than I see my son, maybe you noticed that I have been to his office several times today. To be an effective subordinate, they need to be given time and freedom to determine the content. The leader shows interest not only in my work but understands that my personal wellbeing is important to be productive, I can vividly recall an instance when the director asked me to make a presentation to a visiting group of professionals, initially I was scared but eventually I consider the challenge which has contributed immensely to my career (ABJ1F04).*

Culture, Core Values and Beliefs

Almost all participants referred to the role that culture and their beliefs play in their professional relationships. Their approach to work and private situations are aligned when it comes to matters concerning how they behave and comport themselves, emphasis was placed on how the value orientation in the area of moral principles and ethnicity influence their approach and their work attitude.

IBADF01 argued that he believes that people confuse culture with moral values, respecting elders, or someone in higher positions, he contended that this may be more connected to the possible consequences of not doing it than culture or moral principles. For example, many participants stressed the importance of core values which they were thought at home, and the

way it influences their behaviour in dealing with others, ABJ3F01 summed up in these words:

> *In an organisation like this, I have learnt that if you don't show respect and adhere to cultural values, you will not go far. This is the case everywhere in Nigeria, while there are differences in culture and how it is applied, there are certain common traits which apply to all ethnic and religious groups. Respect for authority and elders cut across all geographical and cultural backgrounds; be you a Hausa, Ibo, or Yoruba, you are expected to respect, not only your boss but all elders regardless of their position or education. This is basically part of our upbringing (ABJ3F01)*

While most of the opinions expressed represent followers, leaders were also approached. ABJ2L01 who occupies a leadership position at the national oil corporation pointed out that he had encountered with managers and supervisors who genuinely want to improve their functional areas but failed to achieve the desired results.

They work hard to improve productivity, morale, engagement, and overall key performance indicators. However, he said they suddenly came to the realisation that these people have other ideas than they as leaders or are not even aware of the efforts you are making on their behalf. He said he believes that to make a difference; it is always a good idea to ensure leaders know the realities on the ground before embarking on idealized projects which your subordinates may not appreciate. The few leaders interviewed expressed their views on the behaviour of followers. ABJ2L01 concluded that:

> *Followers are increasingly becoming impatient, before getting to this position, I had to make sacrifices, but nowadays, young people leave the university, and they want to become leaders right away. They think that the knowledge acquired at the university is enough for them to ascend to leadership positions without the necessary experience and apprenticeship needed to prepare them. The result of this is clear to see in the quality of followers and eventually leaders (ABJ2L01)*

Fear

Participants classified as followers spoke about the relationship with leaders as being submissive, dictatorial while leaders were more concerned about how their message is being perceived by followers. These two standpoints were prominent in the interviews.

While fear is inherent to both leaders and followers, followers believed that they have more to fear than leaders. Leaders, in their opinion have the power to disengage with the services of subordinates without such a decision having any consequences.

The reality is a little milder than followers think because leaders too expressed fear. The fear expressed by leaders has to do with any actions which can lead to erosion of their authority and legitimacy. LAG1L01 explained that the fear of failure can cause leaders to dominate their subordinates, the participant said that he had experiences with leaders who think that being soft is equal to being weak; and this of course will not help in improving relationships. Relationships, according to LAG1L01 is based on trust and mutual respect for each other's viewpoints.

In two instances, and at different stages of the interviews, two participants expressed concern about the possible consequences of their participation in this study. At the conclusion of the interview, ABJ1F02 commented:

> *I hope this will not bring me into trouble, the power of the leader is enormous and, sometimes saying what you think may cause you to receive queries. I try to tread very carefully because I know how difficult it was to get this job which my family and relatives depend on (ABJ1F02)*

The participant was reassured that her participation was confidential and would be processed anonymously. Another participant, ABJ2F04 who combines middle management position to being a follower stressed that the approach and style of the leader matters:

There are some things I would like to say which I do not want to be recorded. You cannot be careful enough when it comes to expressing your opinions which may be perceived as criticism. I know colleagues who have good ideas but are afraid to express them because the reality is that certain ideas must come from certain people for it to fly (ABJ2F04)

These two are symptomatic of the reaction received from several participants who indicated that they did not want the interview with them to be recorded. ABJ2F03 concluded that:

Leaders by virtue of their positions, are expected to take the initiative in reaching out to subordinates because there are more reasons why subordinates would not do it, especially in our bureaucratic inspired and dominated work environment. One other thing I discovered is showing interest in your employees help in unfreezing whatever pre-conceived ideas or feelings they may have about your leadership. These ideas I have found out may not be unrelated to their previous experiences (ABJ2F03)

The fear of failure was referred to many times in the conversations and, some of the leaders expressed similar concerns to those which were found in conversations with followers, but for different reasons. For instance, leaders fear that they may not have enough experience and knowledge to solve problems, and thereby lose the respect of their subordinates. A leader working for a government agency coded, ABJ1 which is working on the introduction and implementation of data protection policies expressed the fear that the implementation of this novice policy in an environment such as in Nigeria may require exceptional instruments which will require another organisation than they have now. The fear expressed by leaders is related to tangible and intangible effects of losing power and influence which a new policy like this may bring. ABJ1L01:

I have seen leaders who were lonely because they have created a distance between themselves and their subordinates, and the cause, to me is that some leaders prefer to observe protocols to a fault to the detriment of their relationship with their subordinates. The fear factor is real (ABJ1L01)

Leaders were found to be concerned about the possibility of losing the power they have, LAG1L01 referred to what she called "*the machinations*" of subordinates who aspire to

occupy her position. She expressed the fear that it may get to a point where subordinates may start resisting her authority. This is all due to the competitive environment in which leaders remain in position until retirement. Followers confirmed the problems of competitive environment and relate this to the self-serving attitude of leaders which is diminishing the opportunities for followers to ascend the leadership ladder.

Intra-Organisational Communication

Participants were asked to explain the nature of communication between followers and leaders, and how it affects the relationship between the parties.

They discussed how rules and regulations hamper free communication. For example, employees of government parastatals are required to seek permission of their superiors before they can communicate or share information with others. This, according to the respondents is part of the protocols. One of the elements of the discussion with leaders was the issue of the influence of social media on work ethics, adherence to protocols, regulations, and relationships.

Two leadership participants, ABJ2L02 and IBADL01 from different organisations share below their views on the impact of communication and social media, first ABJ2L02:

> *Mutual understanding is the key to getting people to open up to you. If they do not know how you will react to certain situations, they will not. You know, we try to socialise beyond work, we try 40-50% of the time to develop solid relationship. We are friends, amongst each other, we do eat, and do things like that. So, when personal issues arise, it's easy for us to relate with one another (ABJ2L02)*

IBADL01 added her perspective on the impact of social media and its effect on communication:

> *Social media is both a blessing and a curse to our established way of doing things, the ministries, especially the leadership are populated mainly by old people who are only comfortable doing things the old-fashioned way. Let me explain this; one is the effect on*

processes, and the second is communication. Social media is responsible for tensions with
young people who are predominantly followers, and who are frustrated at the rules and
secondly, communication between leaders and followers is a problem, it seems they
communicate at different golf lengths (IBADL01)

While followers accused the leadership of inability or unwillingness to embrace social media and use it to improve the relationship between leaders and follower, leaders on the other hand, view the omnipresence of social media and the addiction to it as indiscipline.

Majority of subordinate participants stressed that more needs to be done to improve intra-departmental, and even organisational communication flow, there is too much privileged information, by this they explained privilege information as referring to information flowing first to certain people with access to the leaders before it is officially disseminated to the rest. They concluded that this is responsible for rumours and hearsays.

Power, Politics, and Influence

Politics and the exercise of power and influence in both non-profit public and commercial organisations are as a result of different interests and approaches to actualising organisational goals. A participant from a church cathedral explained that one of the driving forces for political manifestation was hidden agendas' which are aimed at promoting career ambitions. Political manifestation was described as people using their position to achieve personal ambition. LAG1L01 revealed that while many people may not expect politics to play a part in a church organisation, the truth is that it is unavoidable in any setting where there are employees with different levels of seniority and responsibilities.

Looking at the role power, politics, and influence play in organisations, IBADL01 narrated how these three words have driven a wedge between leaders and followers. He explained that in Nigeria where class and access is determined by how connected you are, these became instruments for showing who you are and displaying how different you are to "common

people". Below is an excerpt of how far these things play out in the organisation where IBADL01 works:

> *In our department we are unawares divided into loyalty camps, these are primarily aimed at influencing colleagues to support certain standpoints. But this is always at the mercy of the leader's right-hand man, his PA. But with this, we usually run against the obstacle that subordinates have to go through the so-called PA (personal assistant) of the leader. The confidant of the leader, as we call them, determines who gets to see him and when (IBADL01)*

ABJ1L01 adding his own perspective argued that every leader comes with their own agenda and vision about what the next level should be, and understandably they need the support of followers and leaders to realise their many plans, influence and politics become tools which can be used to promote their agenda. He said he has witnessed situations where the perennial scarce resources were used to gain advantage and solicit cooperation, meaning driving hard bargains. LAG2F01 added that politics allowed people to go beyond their area of influence, but this leads to corruption and bribery which Nigerian public service is well known for:

> *Politics in Nigeria is a word generally associated with corruption, bribery, and manipulation, and despite it being used, nobody wants to admit its existence. Just like politics is interest-driven, I have experienced it being used to drive their agenda, especially the unpopular ones. Here, a leader who is not political will not survive (ABJ2L03)*

According to ABJ1L02, although public organisations are supposed be apolitical, notwithstanding the reality is clear to be seen in the appointments to vital offices which are politically motivated, he went further to assert that it cannot be expected that those appointed through political connections would not play politics in the exercise of powers associated with the office:

> *Politics is a dirty word which people avoid talking about here, but we know it exists, because we can feel it in the way certain decisions are taken. Not only in the ministries but in public services in general, followers face the reality of unfair distribution of power in organisations for as long one can remember, I sometimes wonder whether there is anything*

within our power to make ourselves more relevant to leaders, we have been used as tools for too long (ABJ2F01)

"As a junior employee, I am more at the receiving end of the use of power and influence by senior executives, although I think that power-play is more pronounced at the top due to the competition at the top. A leader is usually held responsible for the performance of others. This, in a way, justifies the concentration of political power in the leader", he concluded.

ABJ2F02 emphasised her position by arguing that she is neither concerned about power nor influence but rather cooperation and collaboration between followers and leaders. The quality of the relationship determines how power and influence is practised. She expressed the focus should be on its effects on the organisation and its development.

IBADF01 believes that organisations should be organised so that they can respond to excessive behaviours, in my opinion he explained, the people have common goals, the ways or ideas on how to realise the goals may be different, and to get people to identify with your standpoint, a little bit of influence and exercise of power as leverage may be needed:

> *Maybe it is an idea for followers to collaborate more, I believe there is power in numbers. If we can form united and collaborative front, I am sure we can become a force to reckon with. We look up to the leader for very good reasons, frankly our survival depends on it. This is why this is not a topic subordinates enjoy talking about (IBADF01)*

Politics, power, and influence in organisations was cited by participants as affecting the relationship within and outside different functional levels. The political structures determine career progression and opportunities to accomplish goals. IBADF01 remarked that politics is noticeable whenever the leader changes, usually they bring in their "yes men" to actualise their agenda.

> *I had experience with a leader who came with his own staff, this is probably one of the disadvantages of commercial companies, the idea of the new leader bringing his staff was*

viewed as lack of trust in us. This automatically creates an issue because we viewed him as
coming to impose his views, this led to looking for ways to work against him (IBADF01)

They presented how political connections and influences affect the relationship. Participants complained about the way being politically correct affects the career of employees, this accusation was exclusively made by subordinates who view themselves as being at the receiving end.

> *We all know that appointment to positions is greatly influenced by the political camp you*
> *belong to, and what is unfortunate about this is that, as a subordinate you cannot choose*
> *which camp to identify with. The truth is that you have limited options, you automatically*
> *belong to the allowed to have worker's unions, and I believe that this cannot be unconnected*
> *with the leader's fear of the power of subordinates (ABJ2L03)*

There were several dissenting opinions about how power is exercised in some of the organisations. ABJ1F04 singled out the attitude of leaders in the area of vacation planning. He complained that the absence of compassion in the treatment of subordinates plague leaders and supervisors:

> *In our department you cannot schedule your holiday without the approval of the supervisor.*
> *Just as if you are seeking permission from your parents, you need to have the personal*
> *approval of the leader to plan your holiday. I view this as part of the abuse of power. I have a*
> *better insight into what needs to be done in my department by him but still because of his*
> *position, I am forced to seek his approval which I consider patronising (ABJ1F04)*

ABJ2F03 shared the frustration by remarking that he thought that leaders are supposed to forecast and plan, but the opposite is the case in his experience. He cited the situation before the present leader in which the former leader will circulate a form where every employee under his supervision was asked to give an indication of their vacation plans, this makes us feel respected, and more importantly, this allows us to confer with each other and negotiate the suitable time to schedule our annual leave.

Planning annual leaves with colleagues in his view, is more important than the involvement of leaders. He contended that this allows the subordinates themselves to ensure that the required manpower is available to ensure continuity of operations, this is also a sign of respect for the subordinates by recognising they too have plans which are different the leaders' and will not put the continuity of their work in danger.

Leadership perspective

The changes and how leadership has evolved in the last few years was mentioned by several leaders, LAG1L01 quoted Sir Richard Branson who advised leaders to be good listeners and be not afraid to show their vulnerability as a way to identify with subordinates.

It was noticeable that when participants were asked to reflect on their (work) relationships, the starting point was with followers and how they are organised, and the role of leaders. Simple things such as the office space allocated to leaders when compared to subordinates seems to be aimed at maintaining a clear psychological difference. Only a few participants volunteered impulsively to speak about their experiences with leaders, with two recalling that it was at the ministry that they first had a productive relationship with the leader, below is the response of a follower about his relationship with the leader:

> *It may sound extreme but the reality on the ground in Nigeria is that the follower-leader relationship is comparable to slave-master relationship, this is not necessarily the fault of the leader, or the follower by the way, many variables like the system we operate, culture and religion play vital roles in defining the relationship, and these variables are overwhelmingly in favour of the leader (LAG1L01)*

The view of other participants seems milder when compared to the previous views, a participant, ABJ2L01 related in detail and explained that the fact that it is common to move from one department, or ministry to another may affect follower-leader relations. To him if

an employee has experienced bad leadership, it may affect their ability to trust subsequent leaders he/she encounters, ABJ2L01 concluded:

Leaders by virtue of their positions, are expected to take the initiative when it comes to reaching out to subordinates. I belief there are hundreds of reasons why subordinates would not do it, especially in our bureaucratic inspired and dominated work environment. One other thing I discovered is showing interest in your employees help in unfreezing whatever preconceived ideas or feelings subordinates may have about your leadership. These ideas I have found out are aimed at helping subordinates overcome whatever previous experiences which prevent them from embracing my leadership style (ABJ2L01)

The expectations from leaders are enormous, participants relate this expectation to the amount of power leaders have, a follower preferred a coaching relationship with the leader, LAG2F01 who complained about the lack of access to the leader, explained that she anticipated a coaching relationship in which the leader will guide her, and offer pieces of advice on the execution of her tasks.

On the question of how respondents perceive leadership, its influences and effects on their work, a participant at the second organisation, ABJ1L02 expressed alternative views of leadership at their organisation. He said that ego is one of the problems leaders have, there are leaders who are fine with maintaining the distance with followers. The rewards of being a leader here has created an endangered group of elites with access to benefits and resources which the rest of us can only dream of. ABJ1L02 went as far claiming that he sometimes feels that subordinates are viewed by leaders as threat to their ability to continue to operate without properly leading:

We suffer deficient leadership here; the consequences of leadership deficiency are not allowing followers to reach their potentials and build productive relationship with leaders.

What I hear often is the distance between those on top and those who are below, "we hardly see them, and when we see them, I usually assume something is not going well" one subordinate once said. This is not how it should be; I sometimes feel we are not working towards the same goals (ABJ1L02)

LAG1L01 argued that he believed that leaders genuinely want to build relationship with their subordinates, because it is in their interest. He said:

To me, the primary responsibility of a leader, is to create vision, and carry people along to position your organisation. You need to build networks, and it is impossible to build networks without first building relationships. It is sure that you cannot like everybody but as a leader you need to learn how to build and maintain working relationships, or else, you cannot be a leader (LAG1L01)

LAG1L01 went on, people follow the behaviour of others, especially those in positions of authority. Leaders can also shape the environment by creating value and conducive environment. IBADL01 believed that leaders should cultivate the habit of giving credit to their subordinates and should be able to notice opportunities to bond with them. He concluded explaining his approach:

I view myself as a servant leader because going through the bureaucratic systems, I appreciate the efforts and demands subordinates go through. At the same, I look for reciprocity in dealings with my staff. Employees need to be involved and made to feel that they are contributing and that their opinion matters. This is why I organise weekly meetings to afford me to get to know whatever challenges they are going through (IBADL01)

 The leader concluded by explaining that our society and culture look at follower-leader relationship purely from the leader's perspective and added that he does not anticipate any changes in the status-quo soon. The economic situation in Nigeria, according to him, in which you have more than 1000 applicants applying for 10 jobs, does not help in emboldening subordinates if they eventually get the job. He explained that he reluctantly has to accept extreme behaviours from subordinates who probably think, if the leader does not

like me, I can be replaced without problems. A participant who worked for many years with this leader summed up the relationship as follows:

> *I have been working with my supervisor for more than 15 years, and I can remember that there was never any opportunity to argue or negotiate, you just do what you are told. Unfortunately, this is the image I associate all superiors with. Meaning as a subordinate you submit to the leader, and wait for them to open up to you (ABJ2F02)*

On the question regarding leadership-followership relationship and how it relates to their organisation, most of the participants presented an image of collaboration with the leader while still making references to the ubiquitous role politics play in the selection of leaders. Participants explained what they viewed as the helplessness in the face of political interference, ABJ2L03 summarized the reasons for the disconnect:

> *There has been, if you will, too many who have experienced a considerable number of changes at the leadership level. This has led to a disconnect between leaders and followers. The impression we, as leaders seem to communicate is that we are more concerned with securing our positions in the face of outside interference. And has led to less attention being paid to connecting with followers (ABJ2L03)*

The leaders were clear in praising the professionalism and dedication of followers in the face of mounting challenges which they attributed to political interference. Another participant, ABJ2F04 working in the same organisation offered the following views on the development:

> *The role political affiliations and influence peddling, otherwise known as "Godfatherism" play is significant in the appointment of key executives, some of whom barely know what the mission and objectives of the organisation is. This people appear to be neither familiar nor interested in the organisational goals and objectives of the corporation, yet they are installed as leaders (ABJ2F04)*

To buttress their accusation, references were made to newspaper publications which reported the issues they were referring to. But it was decided, due to ethical concerns, not to include the articles cited. When it was inquired why they cited the cases, they answered that this is out of frustration at the damage external interference has caused or is causing the image of

the organisation they grew to love. The followers posited that the corporation is unlike a typical traditional government parastatal in the sense that its leadership comprises of people who are neither career civil servants, nor professionals because they are appointed by the political leadership, meaning that the leadership is made up of politicians.

Certain observations were made during and after the interviews. One of the observations was put before a number of participants for verification. Few participants indicated that looking at the leader/supervisor directly is viewed as insubordination and disrespectful, it was also observed that in all organisations where interviews took place that leaders have to be addressed in with either "*sir or madam*" as appropriate. Another observation is about how meetings were conducted, a protocol which was religiously observed in the meetings observed is that leaders come to the meeting room only after everyone has already seated. It was confirmed by participants that this is what most of the leaders do. ABJ expressed his disappointment at the level of mentoring offered by leaders, he said he expects that one of the benefits of having is a leader is that they can share their experiences, but nothing close that have been happening here. He summed up his observation:

> *Our leader is always gone, and this makes it difficult to build a relationship with him, or even know what he thinks about certain issues. He takes attending functions, some unrelated to his more seriously than leading and guiding his team (ABJ2F02)*

Conclusively, all participants attached importance to the leader giving them the room to grow.

Data collected from the Netherlands

In this sub-chapter the data collected from fieldwork will be presented, a table providing a breakdown of participants and their location is included in in the appendix section of this document.

Team building and Support

Participants described the relationship between followers and leaders as very good and positive but reiterated that there are rooms for improvement. According to MINEF01 status or position does not play any role in her relationship with supervisors and fellow subordinates, she said that there is a lot of teambuilding and focus on the plans to raise the profile of the department to a higher level.

She presented an image of collaborative leadership in which the leader takes the initiative to inform all employees about (future) plans and status of on-going business. A participant with leadership role in the same department, MINEL01 explain it as follows:

> *Teambuilding is one of the ways we try to carry everyone along, even the content and strategy used in teambuilding is designed with input from anyone with relevant ideas. I have to admit that we are not as successful as we would like to but in communicating the objectives of our programmes, we ended up getting the participation of more than 85% of our employees (MINEL01)*

On teambuilding and support, MINFL01 argues that fundamental to the relationship is that leaders should not look down on followers or have the attitude that they are around to do whatever the leader wants. He shared his experience and asserted that leaders do not only need the companionship of followers, but they also need their practical view of the reality which the leader is too far away from.

> *If I am to recount the leaders I have worked with, I will say that it is those leaders who dare to show their vulnerability who succeeds in building productive relationship with their workers and fellow leaders, a leader who is not only interested in how much work is done, but in the circumstances in which the work is done is usually guaranteed of good result and enduring relationship (MINFL01)*

Another colleague supervisor, MINFL02 explains that communicating your ideas involve devising ways to reach the targeted audience, we chose to conduct townhall meetings every two months, as a way to offer a platform where all employees will not only be informed,

but given the opportunity to express their views, according to him the whole purpose of townhall meetings is essentially to propagate a feeling of inclusivity, and that all opinions matter:

> *During the townhall meetings, plans and any developments in the department are discussed, and all employees have equal opportunity to ask questions and challenge the chosen strategy. This is a highly anticipated meeting. It is partly aimed at discouraging rumours or selective dissemination of information. As a leader, townhall meetings allow me to test the acceptability or otherwise of my decisions and receive feedback (MINFL02)*

The culture is different at the only commercial firm involved in this study. VITTL01 from a commercial organisation argued that as a profit-oriented company organisational strategy and associated corporate culture play important roles in not only attracting personnel but in keeping them on board.

> *Here I discovered, rather learned that the influence of culture can be very important in getting support needed to build a productive team, I have people of different skills and behaviour, I invest a lot of my time in understanding the team dynamics and cultivating a relationship with them. Respecting subordinates and accommodating their opinions is what eventually proved valuable in the relationship (VITTL01)*

VITTF01 who is one of the subordinates in the team of VITTL01 who confirmed that people in his team have a wait-and-see attitude towards supervisors, especially those perceived not to be technically skilled like them, but leaders who show interest in their field, not even their work will have no problems connecting with them.

MINBF01 on the other hand stressed the importance of creating conducive atmosphere where employees feel accepted and appreciated, this he said is the basis for any relationship. He cited a report by the coordinating ministry which found that there is little difference between the number of non-western employees (referred to in Dutch as *allochtoon*) accepting employment at government ministries and those leaving the ministries within a short time after employment. This, MINBF01 linked to the absence of resources to accommodate and

mentor them. He concluded by saying that the challenge they are facing is how to cultivate a relationship which incorporates the cultural differences with them.

VITTF01 highlighted the role language plays in relationship building, in particular in an international multicultural work environment. He used his organisation which is active in 26 countries in all six continents to drive home his point. He related the adjustments which must be made in such situations:

> *As a leader, or even subordinate in such an environment you have to be flexible and recognise the peculiarities of different regions, for instance dealing with an American supervisor is radically different from a Dutch. While a Dutch supervisor is polite but direct, American supervisor undiplomatic and conscious of his power, and these affect the type of relationship (VITTF01)*

MINFF02 cited a survey conducted in 2020 which showed that the number of employees at the subordinate level with multicultural background has grown exponentially, he asserted that this change in demographic was not reflected in the top. The consequence of this is the imbalance in the relationship, subordinates complained of heavy workloads and leaders too complained of lack of resources.

Explaining that the problem is bigger than relationships, MINFF02 said that subsequent reports about the inability of ministries to recruit employees disrupted the ability of leaders to build productive relationship with subordinates. BELAL01 argued that this presented another challenge, an increasingly changing demographics requires a different type of management style in order to accommodate the changes in approach and understanding.

MINEL02 lamented that a lot of efforts are made to attract people with multicultural backgrounds to government employment, but the alarming rate at which they are leaving government employment points to the effects of the under-representation of ethnic minorities in leadership of government agencies:

The follower-leader relationship is evolving due to the increasingly diverse multicultural nature of the society, this means that the services we provide need to be relevant to the needs of people whose preferences we know little or nothing about. This has fundamental consequences for us as managers, in my team for instance, 10% of the subordinates have multicultural background, and knowing very little about the do's and don'ts of their culture is a problem (MINEL02)

Similar to the views of participants in Nigeria, all participants in the Netherlands confirmed the gains of teambuilding in strengthening their individual relationships and closeness to the leader, support in the form of allocation of resources needed to achieve objectives was also cited as showing the leadership identification with the challenges followers face.

Recognition

On the question about recognition, MINWF01 proudly confirmed that it is typical of Dutch people in general to always seek consensus; this involves giving everybody regardless of their position a place at the table to be heard. MINWF01 mentioned the well-known polder model system which involves trade unions, employees, employers, and the government, working together to deliberate on issues relating to employment conditions and wages and other issues.

All participants from governments ministries interviewed were comfortable with the level of recognition and appreciation of their work.

In the view of MINEL01, the recognition he and his colleagues are lacking is not from colleagues but from citizens. What people referred unofficially to as "ambtenaren cultuur" (civil servants' culture), which depicts civil servants in a derogatory manner using the words "*lazy and inefficient attitude*" to classify government employees. This unfair classification MINEL01

I try to give everybody the opportunity to say what they think, of course I am not bound by it but giving people the feeling that their opinion is appreciated is what I believe is helpful in

strengthening the relationship with subordinates. This is actually the case even with senior management (MINEL01)

The organisation coded SMAT is a middle-sized data company which implemented Holacracy®. SMATL01 who was responsible for implementing the Holacracy project motivated the decision to introduce Holacracy® as being based on the conviction that hierarchy in the organisation disrupts bi-directional flow of information and encourage the dominance of superiors. According to SMATL01, holacracy gives every employee the opportunity to participate in decision making processes. The objective of this management style, he continues is to eliminate hierarchies by organising self-managing teams called circles where the use of titles such as manager, supervisor is replaced with lead-link and other holacracy terms.

She explained that this is aimed at creating a culture where functional designation of roles does not form an impediment to communication and sharing ideas.

SMATF01 argues that holacracy allows them to explore the gains of equality, he argues that:

> *By leaving their positions outside the door, leaders are able to learn from subordinates and vice-versa. The psychological pressure of the leadership baggage can suppress information. I believe that any relationship which is not based on equality cannot be a balanced one, he asserted. The goal of this system and the way it is implemented here is to remove all obstacles created by different positions, and allow information to flow from the circle level to the GCC (SMATF01)*

Opportunity and Trust

The first participant to be interviewed is MINBL01, MINBL01 is a participant who combines the role of supervising a number of subordinates and working under a leader. He started by explaining that he had a background in education before going to work in the government ministry. MINBL01 discussed how he thinks that his experience helped him look at the follower-leader relationship probably differently than his colleagues.

According to the participant, the foundation of the follower-leader relationship is treating your colleagues as professionals regardless of their official designation. He iterated that the problem obstructing the relationship is partly due to followers being made to wait on the leader, even when this is not at the initiative of the leader. This statement prompted the researcher to ask for explanation, on further explanation the participant said that he was referring to the system and organisational culture which sometimes blindly determine procedures. This dependence, the participant contended kills any initiative employees may have, in his department he said he is lucky to have a supervisor who keeps her distance by giving him the freedom and confidence. He claimed that he only sees his superior once in a while, and he views this as confidence and trust in his ability to do his work as expected of him.

According to him, leaders who are constantly monitoring their subordinates are rather projecting their own insecurity to subordinates. The room to fail and correct your own mistakes should apply to leaders and followers, he concluded. He shared the opinion that this will contribute to the development and resourcefulness of employees and improved relations.

He referred to the phrase "following at a distance" many times, below is brief explanation, in his own words, what following at a distance means:

> *Having worked at the school system before joining the ministry where what I will say "following at a distance" is practised, I learnt that it only works if the leader trusts the subordinates who they are formally responsible for. If you treat your colleagues as professionals, and you give them the room to flourish, they will grow and develop the art of taking initiatives and develop independence in doing their job (MINBL01)*

The following participant, MINFF01 contended that leaders who trust their subordinates give them opportunities to improve on their performances without the leader pointing it out to them, he said that this is referred to as self-management at his ministry, self-management in

which the leader acts as facilitator. In reality MINFF01 continued, you know what you need to do, and you are given the opportunity to determine when and how you will do it.

In his own case, MINWF01 said he sees his boss once or twice in a few months, and still their relationship is excellent. He attributed this to the trust between them, the trust in which the leader believes in his ability to do his job without supervision, just as he also feels the same about the leader. It is basically a system of no news is good news, meaning you know all parties are doing what is expected of them, she concluded. Trust to him, is what strengthens their relationship. SSCIF01 talked about how procedures or protocols plays no role in strengthening the relationship. In her view, procedures and protocols are instruments rarely used except when the follower-leader relationship is under pressure, or lack of trust in the ability of either the leader or the follower. She asserted that when subordinates and supervisors know what is expected of them, she elaborated on this:

> *There is no reason to revert to procedures or protocols, referring to them is a clear sign that there are problems in the relationship, mainly trust issues. To me, the instruments are meant to clarify things up, but it also shows that there is strain in the relationship (SSCIF01)*

MINEF02 and BELRF01 reiterated that independence from the leader is what strengthens their ties to the leader. They explained that since their roles and responsibilities are different, trust and confidence in the capability of both parties to do what is expected of them is the foundation of their relationship.

> *I know what I am bringing to the equation, and it is important that I do not allow anybody, including the leader to dictate to me how it should be done. While I do welcome suggestions from others especially the leader, it should not be mandatory (BELRF01)*

Culture, Core Values and Beliefs

Majority of the participants are/were employees of different Dutch ministries, they explained that the policies of the ministries on generic issues are centrally formulated, except on

expertise areas which are to individual ministries. However, the implementation centrally formulated policies are at the discretion of each ministry. References were made to diversity as one of the central issues prominent in the relationship between leaders and followers. They referred to the changes in the cultural and ethnic composition of the population as affecting the relationship between employees in the workplace. According to SSCIL01:

> *In my role as department manager, I always stressed the importance of diversity and inclusiveness, it is easier to build relationships when policies are designed to allow people to exhibit their differences. There is a lot we can learn from embracing our differences (SSCIL01)*

A participant pointed that what is needed to improve follower-leaders relationship is multi-cultural leadership, to build a good working relationship, he continued, leaders need to find a way to incorporate diversity and inclusiveness.

Fear

Respondents from BELAL01 and SSCIL01 explained that fear is not really an issue with subordinates, but more the ability to understand how to handle multicultural related issues sometimes create insecurity in the relationship. They claimed that this is due to the open and direct culture Dutch people are known for. BELAL01 argued that there is no reason for employees to fear their superiors because they are well protected by labour laws; one of the protections is the collective labour agreements (*collectieve Arbeidsovereenkomst abbreviated as CAO*) which allows employees to seek redress whenever they feel that they have been treated unjustly.

According to SSCIF01, the yearly and anonymous employee satisfaction survey (in Dutch: *medewerkers tevredenheidsonderzoek*) which is conducted by external parties allow employees to ventilate their grievances and management made to address whatever legitimate

concerns they may have. SSCIF01 explained further in her own words how employees have been empowered:

> *I am able to confront the leader whenever I disagree with him, but frankly not all leaders take kindly to having subordinates point their mistakes to them. The fact that employees do not have to fear whether criticising the leader will adversely affect their career is our strength. The reality is that there are still reports of recriminations, in the past years the results of the survey have led to the establishment of vertrouwen personen, literally translated "trusted people" which allow employees to air their grievances in confidence (SSCIF01)*

MINBF02 ascribed the low occurrence of fear among employees in government ministries to the policies implemented to embolden low-cadre employees and at the same time imposing limitations to the perceived influence of supervisors/leaders. He contended that insulation of human resources tasks from leaders/supervisors is causing employees in general to be emboldened in sharing their opinions and objections.

> *One thing which has helped me to avoid experiencing fear is the protection I have in my job. I spend the greatest part of our working week in the office, with fear out of the equation, I can be myself, doing my job to the best of my ability, and offer my opinions without reservation (MINBF02)*

In the opinion of VITTL01 who leads a large group in his international organisation, the fear of failure is personal and no matter what measures are taken, it cannot be eliminated.

> *As a commercial organisation, I cannot say there is no fear with employees. we have to make profit, and decisions are centrally made leaving little room for dissent is limited. I will not rule out that there are cases of fear. My concern is the distance between the work floor and the management probably does not allow issues of fear to be properly addressed. My biggest is fear is it will affect our ability to attract qualified people (VITTL01)*

Digitalisation is the new challenge we are facing, MINBL01 continued, the challenge is from two fronts; we have tonnes of archive material which we need to digitalise, and secondly, not enough personnel, this combination is forcing government agencies to provide services with

expertise which they do not have and thereby putting pressure, and in some cases undermining work relationships. The participant expressed fear that the challenges may affect staff motivation and retention. The labour market for ICT functions presently requires new skills which are currently not available and needs to either be developed or recruit employees who possess the right skills

> *We are working on digital transformation, and my fear is that this is creating dependency on technological systems and may redefine the relationship between leaders and followers. The truth is that the skillset we have does not match what we need to get to the level we have to be (MINBL01)*

When participants, leaders and followers, from different ministries were asked whether they can recollect when they were confronted with fears of failure in the exercise of their duties, BELAL01 referred to the management of a project about new organisational model which he had difficulty in convincing subordinates that the project is not an improvised re-organisation project but rather a project aimed at creating an inventory of the resources needed to reposition the organisation to be ready for future challenges.

> *We are continuously looking for ways to make all employees feel the need to remain relevant in the fast-changing demands from citizens, and this can only happen if the problem we face in the area of staff shortage is resolved. We are forced to resort to recruiting temporary staff to perform our basic tasks, and you will agree with me that building relationship such staff is tantamount to a waste of time because it is not a lasting relationship (BELAL01)*

MINEL02 advised that the problem of leadership-follower relationship can only be solved with the improvement of multicultural leadership among ethnic minorities, in essence attracting more ethnic minorities and training them. If we continue to fail to get them on board, he added the problem of leadership and relationship building among employees will only deteriorate. He concluded by saying that this is the only guarantee in his opinion to acquiring the competences needed to address multiculturalism and get the best out of the diversity which could enrich our social system and the ability.

Intra-Organisational Communication

Communication is critical to every relationship, SSCIL02 asserted, especially in a situation where a mixture of different characters, cultures and perceptions exists, and all are expected to work for the same organisational goal. The idea that leaders have to formulate strategies and make decisions make it particularly important to carry as much stakeholders as possible along. MINWF01 viewed this as the challenge relationships present, she said leaders have power, but this power is relative and to a certain extent contingent on its acceptability. She said that her relationship with subordinates is primarily transactional:

> *First, there are some factors which affect building and maintaining relationships, especially with subordinates. It is important to do a due diligence of what you have when it comes to diversity and competencies; you can do this through performance appraisals, periodic meetings, workgroups, projects, etc. the truth is that leaders who are not able to communicate inter-culturally will have problems building relationship in the present workplace (MINWF01)*

MINFF01 further explained that intercultural communication and sensitivity is a competence in which language, emotion and culture plays a part. The ability to build relationship is grossly influenced by the culture in the organisation, she argued that the ingredients required for building a mutual relationship is dependent on a tolerant organisational culture where employees are valued, made comfortable, and above all recognises their differences and commonalities, and strive to turn the differences into advantages.

A majority of the participants interviewed expressed satisfaction at the way their department was being managed, this satisfaction SSCIF02 recounts is related to the open culture in which consideration is given to personal development and willingness of the leader to get involved in the determination of priorities. BELAF01 viewed the positive relationship with leader as having to do with separation of powers and responsibilities in which the follower is protected from the leader and the leader from followers.

When asked to expatiate on this, the participant explained that the self-management team system relieves the leader from the responsibility managing the teams, this surprisingly has contributed to improved relationship. MINBL02 described organisational culture as a set of values which revolves around patterns of behaviour, attitude, and sensitivity within the organisation. According to him, the organisational culture influences organisational climate which in turn affects the perception of employees and the relationship with peers and those above them. MINEL02 shared his belief that transparency and two-way communication is what is needed at all levels of his organisation to build durable relationship between followers and leaders, to achieve this he added, engagement at all levels is helpful.

> *Engaging each other in discussions about policy and strategic direction of the organisation allows gaps to be identified and eliminated, my experience is that people who are against each other can only discover their common grounds when they communicate (MINEL02)*

Power, Politics, and Influence

MINBL01 who is from the ministry responsible for management training and coordinating leaders deployed to other government ministries and agencies gave a brief but succinct description of why power in the Netherlands is based on consensus:

> *The way power is used here means that everyone is given the opportunity to explain their vision and/or standpoint on the issue being discussed, the aim of this is to negotiate an agreement in which all parties can identify with. We see this also in the way governments are formed, the so-called coalition agreements (Dutch: coalitie afspraken) (MINBL01)*

When the relationship between superiors and subordinates is compared to other countries, MINFL01 argued that notice that subordinates have substantial power because they are part of the decision-making process and are able to ensure that their interests are secured in any eventual agreement. This is something the Dutch people are well-known for, the famous "polder model" in which trade unions, employers, and government iron out their differences to make deals. This has significantly reduced the influence and power of leaders in decision

making by incorporating collaboration strategies. Subordinates play important roles in the formulation of decisions, and the consequence of this is fewer labour conflicts.

One phrase which was used repeatedly to describe what is expected from a government officer is political and administrative sensitivity, MINFL01 interpreted this to mean that they are expected to submit to political leadership and provide administrative support regardless of their ideological or political preferences. MINFL01 is of the view that this should be removed from the profile of public servants because they neither possess political power nor aspire to it, they are facilitators of political leaders.

BELRF01 summed up the consequences of the consensus mentality this way:

> *The system of consensus has literarily ensured that nobody is left out when deciding what to do and how to it. This has helped not only subordinates who have a seat at the table, but leaders too because it relieves them of sole responsibility for negative and positive results (BELRL01)*

BELRL01 concluded by ascribing the use of consensus as being responsible for the improvement in labour relations and reduced conflicts, the platform Poldermodel system of consensus offers all stakeholders the opportunity to express their views. MINBF02 added that the results may be impressive, but this should not neglect the many months, or years it sometimes takes to reach agreements.

Leadership perspective

The key statements on leadership during the interviews centred on whether the leader is transactional or transformational, or both.

BELRL01 said that the strategy he uses to improve relations with subordinates is to try and not remind them that there is a difference in their positions and remunerations:

> *Trying to avoid being arrogant, I will say descending to the level of subordinates, helps in getting them to open up to you and align with your standpoint. Offering subordinates*

perspectives and challenges is my way of encouraging them and stimulating their passion. Of course, it starts by winning their trust, trust that you are concerned with their development (BELRL01)

The expressions similar to the above were made by some subordinates, but others, mostly the ones with more than 25 years of service, were critical of the approach leaders use. MINBL02 argued that leaders who offer subordinates challenges should equally provide them with resources to accomplish the challenges, this in his experience is not always the case. Having good relations with followers depends on a number of factors:

It can be easy to build, or strengthen the relationship between leaders and followers, provided leaders show more interest in subordinates and encourage their development. It must also be noted that there are subordinates who do not want leaders to tell them what to do (MINBL02)

MINBF01 opines that leaders with transformational leadership style are better for subordinates. He said this type of leaders, in his experience build relationship with followers by first acquainting himself/herself with what followers do. MINBF01 shared his experience of transformational leadership and mentoring of subordinates as a recipient:

Through transformational leadership, I have worked with leaders who try to motivate, mentor, and stimulate skills development in my team. My experience is that doing this comes with rewards and challenges. One challenge I can point to the mixed composition of team members who are from outside western Europe. They require specialist attention due to their background which is different from here (MINBF01)

MINWF01 from another ministry confirmed the contribution of MINBF01 by confessing that the situation at all ministries is that average employees are getting older and the need to attract replacement employees is getting serious, this is complicated by the job employment market, and the not so positive image of public servants.

One way to attract people is by working to reflect the demographic changes in the society which is multicultural. VITTF01 introduced another perspective by dwelling on what the

scarcity of personnel is causing organisations, especially in the commercial where the sector has resorted to sourcing personnel from countries outside the Europe.

> *The problem with this, he explained is mostly that they do not speak the language, but they possess excellent skills for the job. So, relationship building becomes a matter of priority which we are temporarily prepared to sacrifice for business continuity and profitability.*
>
> *In short, their mannerism, work ethic is different (VITTF01)*

MINFL02 took time to explain building follower-leader relationship in a technical organisation, building (work) relationship with subordinates is much easier when you as the leader is technically oriented. This is relevant because this adds legitimacy to you as a leader. He recalled a situation whereby subordinates have a penchant to dismissing what a leader without technical background decides. The leader in question was not able to relate with his subordinates at the technical level which they prefer, this resulted in one party doing everything possible to assert his authority. We have situations where leaders think they have to say something even when have no part:

> *I work at a very technical department, and it is disheartening to see people with little or no technical expertise become supervisors. Not that I am against this, but the problem of bonding with subordinates is real. You don't want every decision you take to be questioned because of the feeling that they think you are not qualified technically thereby possibly does not know what you are talking about (MINFL02)*

MINBF01 believes that the relationship is affected by how involved the leader is in the daily operational issues, he referred to internal research about the cooperation and perception of follower-leader relationship. MINBF01 added that similar internal report showed that there is culture of impunity with employees who perform below expectation.

MINEF02 added that transparency in the process of selecting leaders is one of the factors responsible for the positive view of leaders and the ability to have relationship with them.

The open-door policy which is reflected in the way offices are designed makes it impossible to avoid interacting with followers and leaders:

> *The fact that nobody has a designated office or desk, means that you can get to the office and find out that the next desk to you is occupied by the director or someone of higher hierarchy. Before you know it you are sharing a joke or discussing your work him/her (MINEF02)*

During the conversations/interviews with participants, it was revealed that most of the ministries are yet to identify the stakeholders and needs of both followers and leaders with a view to embarking on enlightenment about how to create a corporate vision where leadership principles are embedded.

Summary

This chapter detailed the interaction the researcher had with participants during data collection, the in-depth analytic interviews conducted focused on the participants using their own words to present a detailed report of the factors which they consider important in their interaction with leaders and followers as appropriate, either positively, or negatively influencing the follower-leader relationship was provided.

The findings were presented per case using identical themes and thereafter the themes were applied to each case with the objective of identifying the significance of the themes and their application in each case. In all the organisations where participants work, it was noticed how determinant the organisational culture is, it was noticed that a mixture of formal powers, informal powers culture and ethnicity play roles in the behaviour and perception of participants. To present the findings, thematic analysis comprising of KWIC, and word-based techniques were used.

This chapter presented an overview of the findings which emerged from the data collected from two cases of this research. The nucleus of this study is predicated on how participants

experienced the relationship with their colleagues, whether their superiors or subordinates. In the succeeding chapter findings will be analysed and applied to the research questions.

CHAPTER 5:   Analysis of Findings

A review of the data collected from the cases showed the different factors which influence the follower-leader relationship. In analysing these factors, culture and socio-economic factors are found to be prominent in the data collected, and thereby presenting themselves as instruments for measuring group dynamics and co-existence in organisations. It also helps in understanding relationships by looking at the cultural aspects of the relationship (Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006).

Case Analysis – Nigeria

Most of the interviews conducted in Nigeria showed avowed obedience to the leader, and the relationship between followers and leaders appears to suffer from this bottom-up reverence of leaders. However, followers seem to have legitimate reasons for their inability to speak the truth to the authority represented by leaders (Bennis, 2010).

In a situation where the economic and political power is firmly in the hands of the leader, and the society recognises the leader as the only role that matters; it is not surprising that followers go to great lengths to keep the leader satisfied, if even for their continued employment which depends on the quality of their relationship with the leader (Haruna, 2009). Reposing considerable amount of power in the leader in Nigeria has created even more distance and increase the subservience to leaders and leadership in general. Given the roles culture and tradition play in the Nigerian case, it is impossible to ignore their influence on any relationship (Olaniyi, 2017), the initial part of this analysis was focused on the differences between culture and tradition in Nigeria, and the influence of environment. Another issue perennially affecting the relationship is gerontocracy; gerontocracy is deeply

rooted in the Nigerian culture, for example to contest certain political offices there is minimum age stipulation, which of course is not in favour of followers (Adeleye, Fawehinmi, Adisa, Utam, & Ikechukwu-Ifudu, 2019).

Tradition in Nigeria is usually associated with groups that share similar beliefs and behaviours which can be traced back to their ancestors, lineage, and family has footprints on different kinds of relationships (Falola & Adebayo, 1999). The gap between followers and leaders starts within families where a younger person is not expected to call an older brother or sister by name. In the Yoruba tradition, this is viewed as lack of respect and deficient upbringing which resonates with the parents (Elegbe & Nwachukwu, 2017). This Yoruba tradition, although not valid for Nigeria as a whole appears to sum up how leaders and leadership are viewed in Nigeria.

At each location where interviews for this study took place, participants were generous in the provision of information to the best of their ability, however, it was noticed that direct questions about their relationship with leaders were considered by some participants too sensitive notwithstanding the assurances given to them that their participation will not be shared with anybody. This was apparent during the interviews conducted within the place of employment of participants. The reasons privately cited by followers have to do with the power concentrated in leaders and the fear of the consequences. The power to *hire and fire* which the leader possesses, and taking the economic situation in Nigeria into consideration, it became understandable why followers exhibit subservient behaviour to leaders (Hassan & Lituchy, 2017).

This study discovered that the consequences of economic downturn and the high unemployment rate has put leaders at a position in which, for example, for every vacant position, there are thousands of over-qualified and sometimes experienced applicants to

choose from, and it is then not unexpected that those who end up getting the position are prepared to do anything to keep the job to the extent of tolerating any excesses of leaders. This has created a situation whereby leaders are virtually worshipped and are not scrutinised by followers (Ogbonna, Oguniwin, & Uzuegbu-Wilson, 2012). What this study also found is that few of the participants were forthcoming when it comes to offering critical views about the current leader, they rather prefer to compare their present situation to past situations when the situation was not better. Surprisingly, followers and leaders absolve leaders of complete responsibility or complicity for the situation and the overtly subservient behaviour of subordinates. Data showed that some leaders are not even aware of the behaviour of followers, leaders who were asked about the reverence to them, claimed not to be aware of the behaviours. This can be explained as a result of the system which is instrumental to the distance between followers and leaders (Thom-Otuya, 2012).

After analysis, a link was found between the behaviours and power distance. The power distance in some cases meant that leaders are in the dark about the real needs of their subordinates and vice versa. An example is a specific observation made during the interview in which subordinates have to stand up whenever the leader enters the office, enquiry with the leader revealed that the leader never instructed them to stand up for him nor is there any protocol for this behaviour. This is one of the actions this study did to validate the views expressed by participants. Subordinates appear to fear the possible consequences or sanctions by the leader, and therefore go to extreme lengths to satisfy him/her. In the case of Nigeria where there is no form of welfare system available (Bascom, 1951), followers are at the mercy of leaders for keeping their jobs and the effects of this on open and transparent relationship based on mutual respect for each other's views is considerably limited.

The study finds demographics and its influence on the labour market as another crucial element responsible for the subservient behaviour of followers in the Nigerian case, whereas the same elements is having the opposite effect on the second case of this study.

The result of this in both cases is deteriorating work relationships and lack of creativity. One of the participants explained that the high unemployment rate is the unspoken reason behind the over-the-top reverence of leaders because leaders hold the key to any hope of a career.

The fear of sanctions was discovered to be a determining factor in the relationship, the interviews revealed that the depth of this fear is in the exceptional working conditions followers have to accept, several instances of followers working after official working hours, or subordinates performing unofficial chores for the leader was observed (Oyetunji, 2013).

It was equally observed that supervisors(leaders) in some organisations have to sign off before subordinates can go home. This was a pattern noticed in all organisations in Nigeria, even some cited instances where they have to work at the private residence of leaders(Adeleye et al. 2019). This situation was observed in a Nigerian establishment operating in the Netherlands, this adds a new dimension to the data collected in Nigeria, because it shows that cultural practices transcend geographical environment or borders.

This study finds the situation so dire that more than 60% of participants claimed that they are under-employed, meaning that their job is below the educational qualification and experience they possess. Some confessed that they owe their jobs to some network connections, this is very common in Nigeria. The explanation for this can be linked to the enormity of applicants vying for few vacant positions. This explains the readiness of followers to accept whatever the leader demands from them. This study concludes that the present situation can be linked to the economic situation in which the number of jobs available is grossly below the number of applicants, this leads to competition for the few jobs and taking extreme measures to

keeping their jobs. From the perspective of this study, this specific finding in the data collected appears to be temporary and is neither related to culture or any attitudinal factors but exclusively related to the economic situation. This is expected to be invalidated with an improved economic situation, additional research may be needed to determine whether there is lasting effect of the economic situation on follower-leader relationship.

Culture is viewed as having permanent or at least generational influence, although it is undergoing transformation due to the influence and exposure to other cultures, culture remains a credible force affecting the follower-leader relationship. The interviews showed that culture is and remains an important factor that influences the behaviour and attitude of both leaders and followers. Government regulations were seen as enabling, promoting, and sustaining the gap between followers and leaders, the hierarchical protocols and regulations contribute negatively to the distance between followers and leaders, and the attempts to build sustainable relationships(Anazodo et al. 2015).

The conclusion of the findings from this case study shows that fear and threat to survive with limited opportunities and resources defined the follower-leader relationship (Dunaetz, 2019). This study finds that leaders are not necessarily autocratic or lack respect or compassion for followers, but the organisational culture encourages a hierarchical structure that maintained the dichotomy between the led and the leaders. Concluding this analysis, it is important to address the major problem confronting follower-leader relationship in Nigeria, unsurprisingly for those who are familiar with the multi-tribal and multi-ethnic composition of Nigeria that the challenges of multiculturalism in which every cultural entity, tribe or ethnic group asserts superiority over others is further worsening the relationship (Ejimabo, 2013). The fear of followers to confront the leader when unethical behaviour is noticed as a result of tribalism, and nepotism. Attacking your kinsman, political party colleague or ethnic compatriot is not

usually viewed kindly, even when all concerned agrees with you. To keep your (political) connections most people choose to keep quiet.

Case Analysis – The Netherlands

Data collected in the Netherlands showed that it is difficult to integrate employees with multicultural origins in individualistic groups; this is an issue which has received national attention in the Netherlands. Despite the steady growth of the population of citizens with multicultural background, their participation in national activities such as the labour market is dwindling (Hofhuis, van Oudenhoven–van der Zee, & Otten, 2008). Multiculturalism brings with it the influence from other cultures, and understanding these cultures is a challenge to followers and leaders, and how they view and interpret (Yukl, 2013). Multiculturalism is not necessarily a task only leaders should be held accountable for; actually, followers in most cases have more to do in successful integrating people with multicultural backgrounds.

The relationship between leaders and followers is characterised by the inability of ethnic minorities to adjust to the individualistic mentality which prevails in the Dutch system. Several studies have shown that recruiting ethnic minorities at the lower level does not solve the problem of inequality and inclusion, or improve the relationship, but rather that recruitment should be across board including leaders and followers with the purpose to preventing imbalance, the reports cited the insufficient number of leaders with multicultural background against the drive to recruit lower cadre employees (Hofhuis & van Drunen, 2019).

The Dutch system guarantees a relatively high level of independence between employees, leaders, and followers. The independence between followers and leaders in the Netherlands was seen as contributory to the improvement of the follower-leader relationship, however the relationship has been facing challenging situations in the area of culture and diversity. To

understand these two issues and others related to the follower-leader relationship, six (6) participants from the total of twenty-six (26) interviewed for this study participants have multicultural background. A further breakdown of the total number of participants revealed that two of the six participants with multicultural background are no longer working for the Dutch civil service.

The six participants with multicultural background were asked to relate their experiences and what is discovered in their analogy is the role language and culture play in their relationship with their co-workers, the leader, and the environment where they have to do their work.

A review of data collected showed that follower-leader relationship is experiencing challenges in the area of cultural identity and social integration. Most of the immigrants in the Dutch workforce are from tight societies, and they explained how difficult it is to accept the differences in culture and behaviour. They are finding it difficult to get used to the loose culture and the mentality of fellow employees. The interviews conducted for this study showed how urgent solutions to this problem is desirable, while diversity may not be the panacea to improving follower-leader relationship, due to cultural differences which requires a good understanding of the people from different and the ability to interpret their actions (Yukl, 2013).

Research in cross-cultural leadership has witnessed exponential growth due to globalisation and internet (Yukl, 2013), cross-cultural culture can positively contribute to the follower-leader relationship through the incorporation of novice ideas (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Van Dijk, Van Engen, & Van Knippenberg, 2012). Van Dijk et al. (2012) argued that all aspects of diversity are associated with task-relevant and contain perspectives which can enrich teams by exploiting the advantages of diversity in the area of language and values (Van Dijk, Van Engen, & Van Knippenberg, 2012).

The major factor which was common in the observation and statements of participants is the difficulty that exists in building relationships with employees of multicultural descent, differences associated with perception and language can become obstacles. The Dutch Ministry of Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations commissioned several reports amongst which three (3) were examined for this study, these reports were commissioned to investigate diversity, organisational culture, leadership, and the employment policy in the Dutch civil service, and make recommendations (Hofhuis & van Drunen, 2019). In the Netherlands, population is increasing and tensions in the labour market due to the scarcity of employees and resultant disruption of services. Presently, the Dutch Railway and the national airport, Schiphol among other organisations are signalling that the shortage of employees will affect their operations (RTL-Nieuws, 2022). The consequence of this shortage can be attributed to lack of diversity in the labour force (van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004; Hofhuis, van Oudenhoven–van der Zee, & Otten, 2008).

According to Van Knippenberg et al. (2004), research on the relationship between diversity and job performance is inconclusive due to the influence of factors such as language and culture (van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004). In the Netherlands, immigration is a complex and sensitive issue politically and economically, van Dalen and Henkens (2005) argues that the effects of immigration on the labour market is obvious, however the social interaction effects is mixed, the authors contended that the concentration of non-western immigrants in neighbourhoods where they do not have the opportunity mix with local population prevents their integration and the ability to build relationships (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2005).

The general attitude of Dutch people to leadership, which is based on consensus in which decision making involves many stakeholders who need to be consulted; however, this system

has failed to be flexible enough to accommodate the increasing changes in diversity of her population. The work environment and organisational culture is still predominantly employing the system of assimilation instead of integration, and this is causing feelings of lack of acceptance amongst those followers and leaders of non-western European origin who feel that they are being expected to jettison their culture in other to embrace Dutch culture. One of the challenges inhibiting the relationship is the way people from different cultures express themselves; there is little tolerance for direct undiplomatic system of communication for people with backgrounds outside western Europe.

The data showed that the direct approach which Dutch people are known for is perceived in some multicultural environments as depicting arrogance, talking to participants with this background shed more light on their interpretation of the pragmatism and the approach. The expectation of someone who lived most of his/her life in hierarchical society, will be that of culture shock when confronted with the independent-minded attitude of Dutch people.

One participant gave an example of how their parents must approve the profession they chose, or even choose one for them. What Dutch organisations, commercial organisations in particular are beginning to understand is that the form of communication matters.

Research has been done to understand the best approach suitable for building relationships (Canevello & Crocker, 2010; Bruning, 2002) with people of different cultures; there are knowledge centres (kennis en expertise centrum) where organisations can be advised on how to approach certain (sensitive) issues concerning multiculturalism. The Dutch Ministry of Interna Affairs and Kingdom Relations has established a division called "diversity and inclusion" under the department called UBR to enforce the recommendations aimed at increasing the participation of employees with multicultural backgrounds in the Dutch civil service (Hofhuis & van Drunen, 2019), this is at improving on the present difficulty in

attracting Dutch citizens of multicultural origins. Although this is not the focus of this study, but it provides opportunities to understand the dynamics of follower-leader relationship and the factors responsible.

Ashikali et al. (2013) in one of the reports called "De meerwaarde van diversiteit in de publiek sector (translated: The added value of diversity in the public sector)" commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations concluded that the difficulty of Dutch ministries to attract employees of multicultural backgrounds is putting pressure on the follower-leader relationship. The report cited two factors, the aging population and diversity, the effects of these factors is compounded by the saturated labour market which is adding to pressure on the relationship.

The second report this study examined cited the challenges the Dutch government ministries are facing in the area of diversity; this report which solicited input from heads of three ministries with the status of secretaris-generaals (equivalent of permanent secretary) of government ministries, identified the inability to be inclusive as contributing to the problem of diversity and building of relationships, one of them summed it up by using the phrase "*diversity is being invited to the party, inclusion is being asked to dance*" (Werken Voor Nederland, 2021). The quote appears to address the concerns raised by participants about the unsuccessful attempts to integrate employees with a multicultural background to the system. This report suggested the use of role models and mentorship in building and maintaining a follower-leader relationship (Werken Voor Nederland, 2021).

The change in diversity resulting from shifting demographics and the difficulty government agencies face in attracting and retaining employees, specifically employees of multicultural descent, is causing the agencies to embark on fact-finding sometimes using unconventional steps. The participants stressed the insufficient coaching from superiors as affecting the

relationship, another cited the composition of the workforce of the ministries which is dominated by people without multicultural background who are neither familiar with the minority population nor the challenges they face.

The stories participants with multicultural backgrounds narrate are that of situations in which they feel their input is view as unconventional. This group of employees, leaders, and followers alike, expressed discomfort with the direct and undiplomatic approach Dutch colleagues are accustomed to. Whereas a typical Dutch person will tell you if they do not like what you are doing or have done, they explained their preference for a way to communicate their displeasure without hurting the feelings of others. Documents such as the report by Ramnewash (2010) evaluated for this study showed the frustration in the area of communication. The table below shows inflow and outflow of employees with immigrant background in the employment of government agencies.
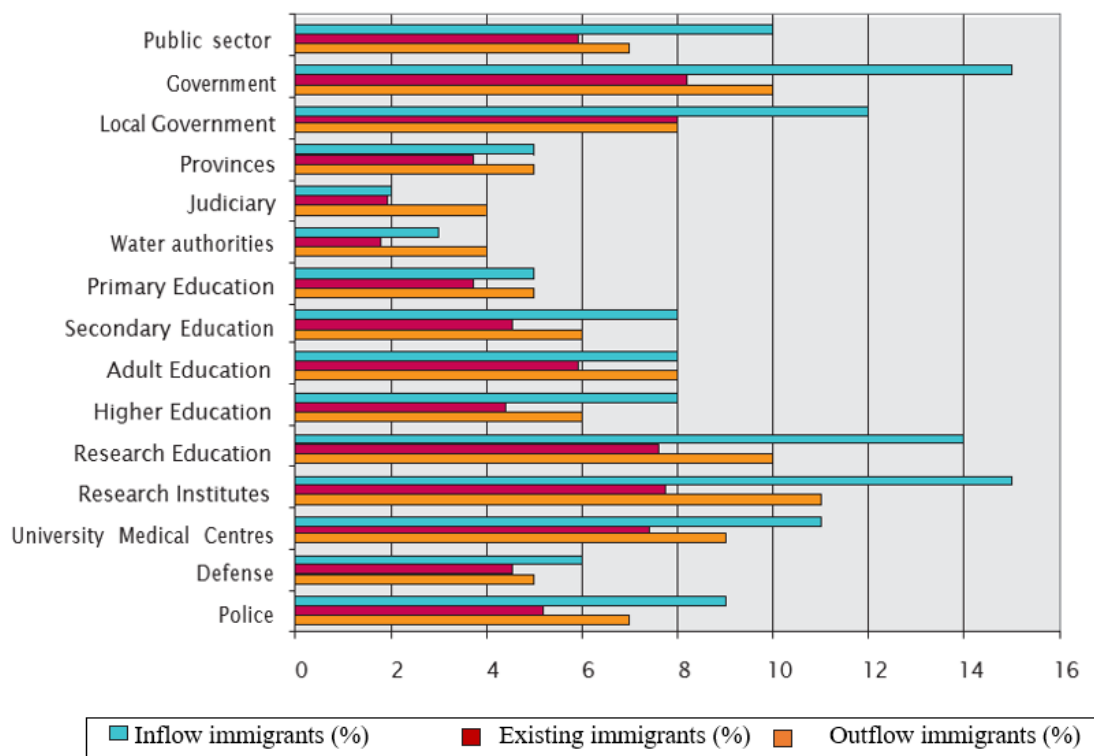
*Percentage Inflow, existing and outflow of immigrants per sector (*Source: (Ramnewash, 2010)

Another participant who is from outside of western Europe contended that employees with different backgrounds can bring a new perspective to issues by looking at issues differently, combining the experiences they have in tight societies with the reality in loose society may produce unique outcomes (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007). The need to investigate the quality of follower-leader relationship is becoming a necessity due to the changing demographics. The reasons given for the high outflow of employees with multicultural backgrounds were related to exclusion from social environment at work, cultural diversity, relationship issues with colleagues and supervisors, and the lack of proper approach to accommodate multiculturalism (Ramnewash, 2010).

These issues were linked to cultural differences in which the norms and values the immigrants consider non-negotiable were ignored, communication problems were also found to be contributory to the deteriorated relationship (Hofhuis, van Oudenhoven–van der Zee, & Otten, 2008). Hofhuis et al. (2008) enumerated the advantages of multiculturalism as being beyond merely the relationship between employees. The authors cited the contribution of ethnic minorities to the reduction of the shortage of personnel, and the additional insights multiculturalism can offer in solving common problems resulting from diversity in the society (Hofhuis, van Oudenhoven–van der Zee, & Otten, 2008).

The seriousness of the issue necessitated several reports, two of the reports contended that the role of leaders in retaining immigrant employees seemed crucial, however due to cultural differences, it was difficult for them to build relationship because the organisational culture is not equipped or tolerant of the differences involved (Hofhuis & van Drunen, 2019; Sociaal-Economische Raad, 2009). Nevertheless, the report concluded that social skills and competence of leaders will be helpful in realising the gain of diversity in the areas such as (low) unemployment, the changing work climate and tolerance of people with different

backgrounds together with the enrichment of organisational culture. A key role is played by leaders in ensuring that their organisations are equipped to deal with diversity and its effects on follower-leader relationship (Hofhuis, van Oudenhoven–van der Zee, & Otten, 2008).

In most of the reports and interviews, followers mentioned working climate and organisational culture as factors which strongly influence their relationship with colleagues, followers and leaders, these two factors can be related to diversity; communication problems stemming from the culture in which looking up to the leader/supervisor is common against the less personalised communication style of leaders in the Netherlands. The leadership style in which group responsibility is practised was experienced as uncomfortable.

According to the Dutch office of statistics (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek), the percentage of Dutch citizens with immigrant background has increased to 24,6% (CBS, 2022). The changing demographics as a result globalisation means that the labour force is also changing with an increasing percentage of the population. This change in population is also showing in the variety of services government agencies provide, and the unique knowledge and experience of the migrant population is needed to design services to suit their need (Hofhuis & van Drunen, 2019). The image of the civil service is already not very positive, but with diversity, they can attempt to show an image which is a reflection of the society (Hofhuis & van Drunen, 2019). To harness the specific knowledge of this group, leadership and organisational culture may need to be modified to accommodate the reality of multiculturalism.

The reports revealed that government agencies realised the need to re-design their services to reach citizens with other cultural backgrounds, but access to this section of the population is limited for a number of reasons relating to either language barrier, or other reasons such as education, or experience are reasons inhibiting the integration of ethnic minorities and their

abilities to cultivate relationships. The reports advised that for any improvement in the follower-leader relationship, the top of the organisations involved have to actively participate and make resources available, they also suggested smaller manageable organisations where there will be attention for mentoring team members.

The reports and interviews provided evidence which led to the conclusion that the follower-leader relationship is compounded by factors such as the ability of government agencies to make themselves attractive enough to attract multicultural employees at all levels, devise ways to keep them interested in staying on the job and be flexible enough to accommodate the different ethnic groups. One of the reports concluded that the change in demographics as causing a shift in the composition of teams. However, this is making the desired improvement to the follower-leader relationship complex. This was traced to the difference in cultural orientation.

The effect of the mismatch in government agencies is causing the recruitment agencies to engage in frantic efforts to recruit employees of multicultural sector as a way to reflect diversity in which people from different backgrounds are adequately represented, a report commissioned by the Dutch government expressed concern about the ability of the present staff composition which is a threat to the ability of the government to provide quality services and achieve results. The reports similarly concluded that inclusive leadership which recognises the advantages of diversity in the search for employees (Hofhuis & van Drunen, 2019; Ashikali, Erradouani, & Groeneveld, 2013; Werken Voor Nederland, 2021).

Although the relationship between followers and leaders is mainly loose, and there are factors responsible for this. Followers have control over their career progression, and the organisations have a loose culture in which the leaders and followers are protected thereby giving them the freedom to express their views without the threat of facing any sanctions.

There is a marked difference labour laws have on the relationship, in the Nigerian case where followers are reliant on leaders for the success of their careers, the interviews showed a reference for the leader which is not the case in the Netherlands where leaders have limited influence on the employment of subordinates.

The situation in the Netherlands further weakens the power of the leader, and at the same time emboldens followers by affording them the freedom to operate independent of the leader by expressing their honest feelings without fear of any repercussions. Data shows that this can be a double-edge sword which can lead to imbalanced relationship. The interviews with participants in the four locations in the Netherlands were cordial and information were voluntarily provided. The interviews revealed the influence of direct communication style on the relationship between followers and leaders. This was not always appreciated, particularly by employees of multicultural descent.

The analysis of the interviews viewed the relationship between followers and leaders as transactional, the leaders interviewed in the Netherlands explained that they are not used to giving compliments because they do not see the need in rewarding someone for doing what he/she is expected to do, but this was viewed differently by participants with multicultural backgrounds who expressed discomfort with the style of communication, they complained that the manner of communication can come out as rude and unappreciative.

Another research corroborated the influence of multiculturalism in solving problems, this time conducted by the Dutch railway, it showed a difference in the way people of multicultural backgrounds employ different problem-solving techniques, in the research, train managers were asked how they de-escalate difficult problems with passengers, the Dutch train managers preferred using direct approach while managers with multicultural background preferred less direct approach in handling the situation, the research showed that

the multicultural managers recorded more success in resolving the situation than their Dutch colleagues (Sociaal-Economische Raad, 2009).

The report concluded that the manner diversity issues are implemented by managers is crucial to how it is experienced by employees. Unlike Nigeria, leaders in the Netherlands civil service do not possess the hire and fire power, while a leader can make recommendations regarding the capability of employees, he/she cannot unilaterally discipline an employee.

It is common for employers to provide incentives to employees who are able to facilitate the recruitment of employees, this also means that employers go a long way to make the job they offer attractive to prospective employees. This study discovers that to a certain extent that it is leaders who do most of the adjustment needed to accommodate employees. In the Netherlands, the issue of multiculturalism is changing the relationship between leaders and followers. Dutch people are known to be direct in their communication and approach to others, a study conducted by the Ministry of Internal affairs concluded that government employers are having a hard time attracting candidates with multi-ethnic backgrounds. And the prominent reason cited is the direct approach which is against the diplomatic approach in which is mostly viewed as confrontational and generalising (Dunaetz, 2019).

The main reason which seemed to explain the attitude of Dutch people to leadership in general is the difficulty leadership will have in a society where the people are opinionated, and sometimes classified as stubborn. Followers do not see themselves as unequal to leaders when it comes to expressing their opinions, and due to their strong independent attitudes. This is one of the issues which is causing disruption in multiculturalism. Followers of multicultural descent are accustomed to putting in extra effort to attract the attention of the leader with the objective of building a beneficial relationship, and they expect extra attention which a typical Dutch leader will not pay attention to.

The conclusion of the Erasmus University report commissioned by the ministry of Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations advocated for the implementation of inclusive organisational culture which can take advantage of the diversity in the society. Generally, the reality is that focus is placed at recruiting ethnic minorities at subordinate level, but they have realised that improving the follower-leader relationship requires recruitment of ethnic origins at all levels of the organisation before any tangible progress is possible in integrating them.

Cross-case Methodology

This analysis is a combination of elements in the data collected which will be referred to as themes, the themes will be applied concurrently to both cases. The themes emerging from the process of coding were obtained after categorising the data collected from participants. The themes emerge from the analysis of data collected through interviews, fieldnotes, and document review. The goal of the themes is to identify regularities and irregularities which may lead to establishing connection with the research purpose (Given, 2012 p.248). In the preceding chapter, individual cases were analysed, and findings presented. This chapter will follow up on these analysis by discussing the findings and relating them to each other. To do this, this study made use of simple approach in developing the themes across both cases. Initially, data collected from each case was analysed and the themes which emerged are based on key-words-in-context (KWIC) technique, attention was paid to the use of specific words, patterns, and the context in which the words were used. Data from cases was presented including the narratives using quotes from participants. Cross case analysis is used to examine areas of commonalities and differences in multiple cases in Nigeria and the Netherlands using the elements earlier identified in the tightness-looseness theory to analyse data collected from both cases. Simply defined, cross-case analysis is the process of

comparing multiple cases to identify the commonalities and differences which can offer further depth to the analysis of data collected, and the discovery of patterns.

The data collected showed that culture is one of the most frequently cited factors during interviews, the rationale behind certain behaviours and mannerisms were attributed to cultural background. Therefore, this analysis will start by defining culture, and the pertinent definition was that of Hofstede (2011) who defined culture as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others (Hofstede G. , 2011). According to Hofstede (2011), culture is usually associated with ethnic and/or tribal groups. Culture differs from tradition by the fact that while tradition comprise of beliefs and peculiarities which are passed from one generation to the other, culture is viewed as holistic system phenomenon in which basic assumptions, and shared values discovered or developed in the history of the group are taught and passed on to others (Schein, 2012).

What became prominent in both cases is the role outward societal constraints typified by, for instance, the role upbringing, culture, and tradition play in shaping the strengths and weaknesses in some cases. The weaknesses of societal norms and sanctions aimed at discouraging or encouraging certain behaviours (Dunaetz, 2019; Schein, 2012). While comparing the cases for this study, it became evident that there is the possibility that culture can inconsistently be applied in organisations, more so in organisations where organisation-wide application of culture is determined by the management (Schein, 2012, p. 323).

The coding process involved the use of "*find*" function in Microsoft Word to search raw data for words, phrases, and patterns in the interviews. In the Nigerian case, it was surprising to find out that religion was not viewed as having any major impact on the relationship with either the leader or the follower, despite the clear religious divide in the Nigerian society. The conclusion is that religion possibly because of its sensitivity politically was viewed as part of

cultural identity. However, unlike the Netherlands which is largely judged to have loose culture in which individuals have greater freedom and self-determination, without the influence of peer pressure in expressing their beliefs, opinions, and preferences without paying much concern to who is at the receiving end, the situation is the opposite in Nigeria. Alternatively, the follower-leader relationship may have profited from the absence of any strong culture in the Netherlands.

In a tight culture like Nigeria, there are expectations about how subordinates should conduct themselves, the belief which permeates all facets of daily activities is that everywhere you are, you represent not just your family but your community. This is noticeably a heavy burden particularly on young people who experienced a mixture of cultures facilitated by social media and internet in general. In the organisations which participated in this study, it was noticed that there are certain expectations from leaders and followers, a kind of social contract to which both parties are expected to adhere to. This is not the case in Dutch society where, at work and elsewhere, you are viewed purely as an individual representing your norms and values. The contrast explains the different approaches to the construct of the leadership-followership relationship in Nigeria where the communal alliances play a role. According to Gelfand et al. (2006), the difference between tight and loose societies is in the strength of social norms and values, social norms define the level of tolerance for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and the corresponding sanctions. In exploring the differences and similarities which exist between the cases, the tightness- looseness theory elements are used. It was observed that certain elements, for example, communication, although identical but were experienced differently in the Netherlands and in Nigeria.

Communication between leaders and followers is exclusively top-down in which the suggestion or opinion of the leader is not questioned, I found out that although followers have

their opinions and views, there is little avenue to bring this to the attention of the leader, the hierarchical structure of the system works against followers. The opposite is the case in the Netherlands where the structure is flat and devoid of hierarchical layers, followers have the opportunity to exchange ideas with leaders without the psychological barrier created by status and power.

Another noticeable finding is that while there are clear stipulations regarding sanctions and rewards for certain behaviours, the ability to enforce the regulations was a critical element in both cases for different reasons. Whereas in the Netherlands, regulations are strictly observed, and social control is strong, the opposite is the case in Nigeria where regulations are poorly observed, and the social control is weak. A general definition of tight culture describes tight culture as a culture in which members share the same cultural attributes; these attributes could be language, customs, religion, ancestors, or a combination of some of the communally shared norms and values. These attributes reflect in the members' approach and behaviour to others inside and outside their culture.

Leaning on the theorisation of tightness and looseness by Pelto (1968) in which the author gave examples of tight societies, this study analysed the norms and values which took prominent positions in the views of participants and the influence they have on the relationship with others. Antecedents such as demographics as they relate to Nigeria were referred to as having a strong influence on their relationship, surprisingly this was observed in the statements made by leaders as well as followers.

Conclusively, the difference between tightness and looseness approaches lies in the tight cultures being strong at structured communication and effective; it is more focused on maintaining the status quo and less receptive to new developments (Dunaetz, 2019). What is characteristic of tightness cultures is the strength of leadership and weakness of followers.

However, culture plays a dominant role in the use of power and influence in relationships and the quality of the follower-leader relationship (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007, p. 493).

The use of sanctions to enforce compliance is another distinctive difference of tightness. Although as mentioned earlier, religion, culture, and tradition play a prominent role in tight societies. Contrary to tight cultures, loose cultures are open to alternative explanations of occurrences, loose cultures are more tolerant of deviant or radical opinions. Pelto (1968) argued that antecedents such as population density and economic system influence whether a culture is tight or loose.

Leaders in the Nigerian case study confirmed that they have no problems rewarding employees who they see as loyal and ambitious by investing extra resources in their development, this is in sharp contrast to leaders in the Netherlands case study where the leader has little influence on the career development of employees, the employment system in the Netherlands civil service shifts the responsibility partly to employees for their own career development by offering them employment package known as Individual Choice Budget (*individueel keuze budget*). In addition to the basic salary and other remunerations.

Several observations can be made about the loose organisational cultures and its effects on follower-leader relations, it may help to look at its effect on conflict management. While tight cultures prefer leaders who combine management with mentoring, and who sets boundaries, values politeness and hierarchy, loose cultures prefer a leader who encourages creativity and vision and relate to subordinates. In a loose culture, team-oriented with good knowledge solicits input from all stakeholders (Dunaetz, 2019)

Summary

In this section, the findings of this work are methodologically presented and linked to research purpose of follower-leader relationship using themes identified in the data collected.

Each of the themes was explained in relation to how they apply in case study countries and the factors which influence them. This analysis led to the development of a framework which classified the themes and their applicability in the tightness-looseness theory. With all the themes, communication is deemed to be critical and integrated to all themes, nevertheless it was included in the social inclusion theme because of its relevance in ensuring that despite the differences in levels as depicted by roles and responsibilities, it is the universal instrument for measuring the depth of relationships.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion and Future Research

The conclusions emanating from the findings of the follower-leader relationship will be presented in this chapter, data from two cases, Nigeria and the Netherlands was analysed. The conclusions are related to the research purpose, research questions and findings from data collected during fieldwork. This study found that culture is critical in follower-leader relationship, the cases used showed surprising differences in factors affecting the relationship, for instance how personalised relationship can be the key to improving some aspects of the relationship. The study shows the degree to which it is necessary to broaden the focus to include more than just the work relationship between leaders and followers by arguing that the value of personalised and socio-economic factors in cultivating durable relationship between followers and leaders should not be underestimated. It also challenged the conventional way of studying followership by contending that followership is not an integral part of leadership but rather an independent phenomenon which needs to be included in higher learning curriculum, this study further posited that studying followership is essentially tantamount to employing a bottom-up approach to studying leadership due to the inseparability of both phenomena.

Overview of the study

The approach chosen for this study centred on the lived experiences of participants, this was an outcome which emerged from the pilot study in which questionnaire was used to solicit for information, the use of questionnaire was found unsuitable in allowing participants relate their stories and share their experiences without limitations. It was discovered that due to the nature of the interactions that a conversational (narrative) setting was more productive in obtaining data from participants, although this led to the collection of data which was considered irrelevant for the study, however the quality and richness of relevant data

compensated the extra effort required. The need to encourage participants to use their own words and expressions to detail their perspectives on the follower-leader relationship was deemed invaluable. The findings and recommendations are based on the interactions with 44 participants in Nigeria and the Netherlands, these interactions informed the themes and the framework which were developed from analysis of data collected, and how these helped in answering the research questions:

- RQ1: How do culture, socio-economic and sectoral factors affect the relationship between leaders and followers?
- RQ2: Are there any differences and similarities in collaboration between followers and leaders in case study countries, the Netherlands and Nigeria, and how do any possible differences impact the ability to build effective and productive relationships?

To answer the research questions, I drew on the data collected from the conversations with participants. The conversations reflected the level of engagement between leaders and followers and the influence factors such as hierarchy, culture, self-management have on the relationship. In all cases followers look up to the leader but with different motivations, nevertheless the effect of economic dependence was found to weigh more on the quality of the relationship.

Research themes and their wider implications

Eight themes which emerged from data collected in both cases are presented below in tabular form, these themes were analysed and related to each case to show their implications. Despite the many differences in each of the two cases, interesting similarities, and different ways of looking at identical issues were discovered, one of the differences centred on the different perspectives of the follower-leader relationship. Data showed that followers and leaders

influence each in different ways. In the Nigerian situation, it was not possible to determine how active listening influence the relationship because it is usually the leader doing most of the talking and followers the listening part, and it was not clear whether their silence is induced by fear of the leader, or the effect it may have on their relationship with the leader. Data also showed that participants are of the opinion that understanding the dynamics of follower and leader relationship is very useful to building and maintaining a productive relationship. There were elements which apply the cases differently, for instance, in the Netherlands, the interviews confirmed that the shortage of employee is leading to stress due to heavy workloads and deteriorating relationships, but in Nigeria, the effects is more damaging to the relationship due to the increase in power of the leader resulting from the high unemployment.

Themes	Description of themes	Case 1 - Nigeria	Case 2 – The Netherlands
Power distance is perceived differently	Power in organisations, even in the society, is unevenly distributed with factors such as age, wealth, and position. This theme investigates the extent to which power distance play a role in the follower-leader relationship	There is high power distance due to the hierarchical and organisational culture which encourage the concentration of power in the leader. The level at which power is associated with position is defining the follower-leader relationship	Distance of power between follower and leader is low. Power play insignificant role in the follower-leader relationship. While power is not completely non-existent, it does not play any determine or dominate the follower-leader relationship
Career development	The ability of employees to plan, develop and manage their career can be indicative of the quality of the relationship between the leader, follower, and the organisation.	Followers depend on the leader for their career progression, the leader determines who gets promoted, working hours and vacations are approved at the discretion of the leader.	Leaders have little or no input in the career choices of subordinates. Due to the low unemployment rate, and the prominent role HR plays in recruitment exercises, followers enjoy a separation of powers with the input of the leader limited to resource availability(budget)
Economic conditions influence the relationships	The consequences of (bad) economic condition can impact the exercise of power, with power shifting to whoever is in control of economic resources	Due to economic insecurity and lack of alternatives, employees are forced to accept and endure autocratic measures, and a compromised relationship with leaders	Employees have alternatives in the form of employment benefits and favourable economic conditions if the relationship with the leader, colleagues or organisation does not work, they can voluntarily choose to leave
Impact of labour laws	Labour laws can influence follower-leader relationship by setting clear parameters and protecting employees against dominance by either party and the organisation	The possession of hire/fire power by the leaders is responsible for the imbalanced relationship in which followers is made subservient to the leader	Job protection laws gives employees protection and independence from excesses. The separation of human resources (HR) from functional leadership removes this as a factor in the relationship
Leadership expectation	How leadership is exercised can result in different outcomes, for example,	Cultural influence and social norm of looking up to the leader as mentor and/or	Only task-related impact, independence to act without much consideration for the leader. Leadership is not personalised but limited to being a role/function

	loyalty, innovation, and productivity can act as motivators	father-figure prevents a healthy and constructive relationship	
Social security and its effects on the relationship	To protect the weak in the society, governments provide citizens with social security resources. This can add to the independence of employees and assertiveness in the ability to speak their minds and seek productive relationships	The absence of a social system or any alternative sources of income increases the dependence of followers and reduces their assertiveness by making them more prepared to tolerate the eccentricities of the leader and fellow followers	Employees have social security benefits to fall back on and thereby are less dependent on the leader, this can embolden them to cultivate equal relationship and serves as a balancing factor in the relationship
Diversity and inclusion	Workforce and the society are getting diverse. The ability to feel included, accepted and respected in group setting is a pre-requisite to any attempts to build a durable and productive relationship	Demographic diversity does not play a role, but decisions are generally made with little or no input from followers using a top-down approach	Followers are regularly consulted for their input before decisions are made, this strengthens the relationship. Demographic diversity is judged as playing a role with factors such as language and culture as factors
Communication a tool open to different interpretations	Leaders communicate vision and strategy and inspire others to align with the goal of the organisation, two-way communication builds trust and internal communication reduces rumours	Communication is top-down, and controlled by leaders, followers are dependent on leaders for actionable information. This also affects the behaviour of both parties to align	Regular meetings called town hall meetings comprising of all levels of employees allows followers and leaders to exchange ideas about impending changes and given the opportunity to contribute

Table 4: Emerging Themes based on analysis of open-ended responses

Leaders indicated that they cannot perform their responsibilities without followers, neither can followers do their jobs without leaders, this indispensability was evident in both cases, and should form the basis for a productive working relationship. During the interviews, references were made to each other's contribution in the development of (good) working relationships, and how they sometimes have to venture out of their safety/comfort zones. This study found that followers irrespective of the common perception about their role in organisations are able to influence the leader in subtle ways. Participants explained how they use PowerPoint slides and other tools to convince the leader about the viability of their ideas and proposals.

The management and execution of organisational tasks require followers and leaders to cooperate; the roles and expectations of followers and leaders are essentially the same in that they complement each other in the quest to achieve organisational aims and objectives. While independence of opinions is not very strong, there was clear commitment to organisational goals. Leaders and followers expressed willingness to adjust their behaviours to accommodate dissenting views when judged to be in the interest of the organisation. This flexibility is less pronounced in the Netherlands case, but data showed that leaders exhibited reciprocity in their dealings with subordinates. Leaders formulate policies with the input of followers and the realisation of the vision of the leader is executed by followers, data revealed that no one is exclusively either a leader or follower, there is always a measure of both in each. The impact of culture on the relationship between followers and leaders partly depends on the organisational culture, the group dynamics and social environment. Data from the cases showed the differences individualistic and collectivistic cultures can have, especially in situations where employees are from multicultural societies

While the attitude of followers to leaders in Nigeria may seem transactional, followers appeared to view the leader as a necessity in the quest to achieve their career ambition, in this vein they make the extra effort including sacrificing or investing their personal resources like time to serve the leader. It is peculiar to note that this extra effort may not be at the request or prompting of the leader, follower in their quest to be viewed favourably by the leader take extra steps to show their commitment. In the Netherlands, where self-management is practised, leaders are not distant and relationship with them is not necessary because it does not change the outlook of their career prospects, however it can facilitate it. This study finds that, in both cases demographics play a role, the unbalanced demographic has consequences for the relationship. In the Nigerian case, majority of the workforce classified as followers is below the age of 35 years while the majority of workforce with leadership positions are circa 56 years.

The influence of political and social systems which are operated in case countries is also found to affect the relationship; the use of politics in this context refer to inter-personal behaviour within the civil service and organisations included in this study. This behaviour is related to social interactions involving the use of power and network connections to achieve individual or group goals. Followers in Nigeria are dedicated to achieving the goals and objectives of the organisation, although there is a lot of complaining and politics, which is summarised in what they called "*Godfatherism*". This may not be unconnected with the lack of alternatives workers in Nigeria have, whereas in the Netherlands, the opposite is the case. Employers in the Netherlands compete to secure the favour of prospective employees due to the scarcity of employees. In both cases, followers have strong personal motivations that are important to them and their pursuit of achieving goals within the organisation. There is a level of satisfaction with their achievement when it comes to efforts made to cultivate durable follower-leader relationship. The analysis of the data collected infer that both parties seem to

focus on ways to improve the relationship by making sacrifices and investing in knowledge and skills acquisition. It was also observed that followers and leaders recognise the importance of constructive relationship and the advantages it has on their personal and professional engagements, but cultural and organisational specific factors remain the challenges preventing any considerable improvement in the relationship.

The roles and objectives of followers and leaders are intertwined, this study concludes that no one is exclusively either a leader or follower, there is always a measure of both in each. What unites them is the actualisation of organisation goals, information dissemination is crucial to the relationship. Kellerman (2007) for instance advocated for a level playing field in which followers will not only be doing what others want them to do but be recognised as a force to be reckoned with in formulating the vision and strategy of the organisation, the author argued that this can go a long way in improving the relationship. This admonition was noticed in both cases, this could be associated with the improvements in data management and access to data needed to make decisions, not so distant past access to data and information is the prerogative of leaders. The availability of data through internet and social media has broken the hitherto monopoly of production and access to data, this positive development is contributing positively to the improvement of follower-leader relationship since the source of management information is no more limited or exclusively top-down.

This study found that followers may have good ideas, but often the avenue to share their initiatives is not always available, or accessible, however this differs per organisation. Further it was found that leaders who delegate responsibilities are the ones who are able to build relationships with followers; by delegating tasks, leaders get to know and appreciate the skills of followers and thereby creating a situation in which the distance is reduced. Followers are found to have the propensity of actively listening to leaders than leaders listening to

followers. It also emerged that communication between leaders and followers do affect the relationship. Evaluating communication between followers and leaders and the challenges in situations where communication is mostly directive, and hierarchical system is used, the relationship is more abstract and transactional in which followers have to wait to be formally told what to do. In situations where there are hierarchy and power distance, constructive engagement is replaced by rumours and unconfirmed reports.

While the attitude of leaders to followers in Nigeria may appear oppressive, or condescending, it was found that followers are very dedicated to their organisation. Followers seemed to view the leader as the important key necessary for them to achieve their ambition, and therefore prepared to tolerate the eccentricities of the leader. Extra effort including sacrificing or investment of personal resources like time to serve the leader was noticed. It is worth noting that this extra effort may not be at the request or prompting of the leader, this may not be unconnected with the culture and the economic circumstances. Even in the Netherlands, some followers view leaders as distant, and relationship with them is judged not to be necessary because it does not necessarily change the outlook of their career. The quality of follower-leader relationship is important for the realisation of organisational goals and the creativity needed in guaranteeing the continuity of organisations irrespective of the approach used in conducting the daily activities of the organisation. There is consensus that the ability of followers and leaders to cooperate and synergise in the execution of strategic goals is indispensable. Followers in Nigeria expressed dedication to achieving the goals and objectives of the organisation, although there is a lot of complaining and politics and self-promotion just to impress the leader, this may not be unconnected with lack of alternatives whereas in the Netherlands, the opposite is the case. Employers complete to obtain the favour of prospective employees, or even to attract employees from competitors. In both cases, followers have strong personal motivations that are important to them and their quest to

achieve their goals within the organisation. There is a level of satisfaction with their achievement when it comes to efforts made to cultivate durable follower-leader relationship. Both parties seem to focus on ways to improve the relationship by making sacrifices.

Follower and leaders recognise the importance of constructive relationship and the advantages it has on their personal and professional engagements. It was found that both leaders and followers showed interest in improving their relationship, several participants contended that the fact that they spend the greater part of their working day at the office justifies investing in the relationship. Discussion on leader-follower relations centred on the current analysis across the two sets of interviews, Nigeria, and the Netherlands, and on some of the less expected findings that have emerged from the data. One interesting theme in the discussion was how leader-follower relations in the Netherlands, a low power-distance culture in Hofstede's terms might differ from the leader-follower relations in the high power-distance culture of Nigeria. In the Netherlands power relations were less personalised but more likely to involve critical feedback to subordinates, whereas in Nigeria the emphasis was more on a personalised relationship with the leader but less on the performance of the follower.

The reward system in Dutch civil service is based on merit, competence, and achievement, however all these have to be built on relationship, relationship is what will allow these criteria to be judged fairly. Power distance is defined as the relationship between authority and subordinates, power distance is primarily about unequal distribution of power, this is usually linked to the organisational culture and the ethnic cultures (Hofstede G. , 2011), what the data collected showed is that power distance in the Nigerian situation is not always viewed as inequality, this against the conclusion reached by Hofstede (2011), but part of the culture, an example of this is a statement by one of the participants in Nigeria who described

her relationship with the leader as father-daughter relationship. Several other participants referred to a follower-leader relationship inspired by ethno-cultural backgrounds. At certain times, the researcher thought maybe statements like this could be motivated by fear of the consequences, or sanctions by the leader, however when interview conducted with participants in the organisation's premises was compared with those conducted outside the organisation, it was found that the relationship with the leader was intertwined with their cultural orientation. Most participants did not see any difference between leaders at work and leaders of their communities. The interviews showed participants who viewed resolving issues related to power distance as the prerogative of leadership. The question about power distance was put before participants who are subordinates, some of them even defended power distance by linking it to their cultural background in which respect for elders, is in-built in their character and way of comporting themselves.

Furthermore, the view on power distance in Nigeria may be influenced by the collectivist orientation of the main ethnic groups in the country in which loyalty to extended family and the community play important roles in their upbringing (Hofstede G. , 2022). An explanation for the acceptance of power distance may be unconnected with the aspiration of followers to become leaders. There are followers who in their capacity within groups already showed signs of power distance. The influence and consequence of power distance extends beyond work environments, unlike in the Netherlands where your commitment is to your immediate family, the Nigerian situation extends to the extended family and in most cases to the community. Data showed that power distance in the follower-leader relationship context in Nigeria and the Netherlands can be better explained using individualism and collectivism as explained by Hofstede (2011). The follower-leader relationship in Nigeria is personalised, while in the Netherlands the group mentality dominates the relationship. Contrary to Nigeria where subordinates have to impress the leader because of the indispensable role leaders have

in their career, the leader in the Netherlands is not only distant but abstract. The difference in power-distance in Nigeria and the Netherlands can be related to the influence of wealth. Ethnic minorities cited the low expectation their colleagues have about them as the main reason building work relationships is difficult (Hofstede G. , 2011).

The second theme which emerged from data is how career development affects the relationship, there are sharp differences from the cases. In Nigeria, career development is mainly in the hands of the leader, this further monopolises the dependence of followers on leaders. Followers in the Dutch workforce are entrusted with decisions relating to their career development, as mentioned earlier in this analysis, employees have individual choice package in which their career plans are captured, this is possible because human resources responsibilities are out of the control of leaders. In both cases, power and decision making are predominantly concentrated in the leader, sometimes at the expense of followers. But there are organisations which attempt to reduce the unequal distribution of power by offering followers the opportunity to make decisions relating to their work and how it is executed. This self-management system is being used in the Netherlands to mitigate the perceived inequality in power distribution. Societies not just organisations are changing and becoming increasingly multicultural and the need to build relationships across multi-ethnic groups becomes a challenge. Multiculturalism has become an invaluable component in understanding and analysing the relationship between followers and leaders, and its effects on cross-functional groups. Effective followers and leaders are those who are able to explore the differences between different cultures and view them as resources (Lippitt, 1982).

Summary of findings

Reviewing the data collected and relating them to the cases revealed some factors which are localised to either of the cases. While the general perception of followers looking up to the

leader is confirmed in both cases of this study, the perceptions however are found to be limited to the formulation of strategy and taking final responsibility for the realisation of the goals. In the Nigerian case, the understanding of leadership is much more encompassing than in the Netherlands, the relationship with leaders in Nigeria extends beyond work relationship, it was found that followers view the leader more as a parent figure and the relationship extends to social relationship. Alternatively in the Netherlands the relationship is formal and exclusively related to work, this difference in follower-leader relationship is strongly connected to the culture and the society.

The difference also lies in the commitment and available resources; participants gave reasons such as the level of experience and skill acquisition which were sharply different per case. As expected in both cases, leaders(supervisors) are usually employees with many years of experience and with formal power and authority, and very often they are employees who have worked their way up the organisational ladder. These factors, in some cases were used to justify the hegemony of leaders over followers on one hand, and on the other hand, it also shows the invaluable connection between leaders and followers, and the need for the cultivation of productive relationships based on their working experiences and the determination to achieve goals. In this age of information technology in which technology is increasingly playing critical roles in the achievement of organisational goals and objectives, years of employment becomes less important when compared to the ability to respond strategically and promptly to customers and issues which can affect the running or profitability of the organisation. This puts followers more at the receiving end of data gathering, these are the data the leader needs to make decisions. This interpretation of the research findings which is based on the themes which emerged from analysis of data collected will be presented in this chapter. The themes which emerged from the analysis of

data collected will at this stage, be related to research questions with the goal of answering research questions.

This research concludes that efforts to develop leadership must begin by having an independent followership process which can work at equal level with leaders, and at the same time empower followers to identify with the vision of the leader without the fear of retribution and thereby improving the quality of their contribution to organisational development. The framework developed to show the classification of the themes and their enforcement will be explained below.

Theme: *Power differential* is perceived differently in both cases, and this perception is influenced by factors such as employment opportunities and economic conditions.

The contention is that although the expectations of followers and leaders are different, there are areas of collaboration and cooperation, and if the power is not evenly distributed, distance between both parties is created, and this affects the quality of the relationship. This theme relates to the second research which explores the differences between both cases in terms of collaboration. If one of the parties is unfavourably disadvantaged in power acquisition, it automatically leads to a superiority-inferiority complex.

Data showed high power distance in Nigeria, power is concentrated in the leader and power is effectively and exclusively by the leader, the consequences of this is that power distance in which followers depend on the leader.

The ability of followers to be fully empowered to make decisions about the execution and the associated responsibilities for success and/or failure will help in elevating the position of followers and allow leaders to concentrate on policy formulation and strategy. The nucleus of this study relates to issues about how followers and leaders view their relationship and the role power distance amongst other factors play. There are opinions or suggestions that the follower-leader relationship is weighed down by the concentration of power in leaders, while

this is mostly the case, followers need to discover the power they have as the source of information leaders need to make decisions.

The two cases used in this study showed how power concentration in leaders distorts the relationship between leaders and followers, and how followers are used as instruments and manipulated in the power struggle between leaders. Power struggle is found to be predominantly between leaders who strive to increase their area of influence mostly in situations where resources are scarce, this essentially have nothing to do with the relationship with followers, however followers end up being used as instruments to acquire power.

In the commercial organisations examined, it cannot be concluded that there is meaningful relationship between followers and leaders, the relationship is more between leaders who involve followers in their power games. An example was given of the re-organisation plans in which cost-cutting measures meant that the focus of the business needed to be re-focused, and with decisions like this, the opinions of followers were solicited in the Netherlands but in Nigeria, followers were merely informed of the impending re-organisation.

Both leaders and followers constitute power bases to promote their interests and influence other people within their groups or the organisation. Followers find themselves being forced to choose sides in the powerplay, however whichever side they find themselves, it is not based on mutual interest, but rather based on strategic approach depending on which option is better for their survival in the politically volatile corporate environment. The political aspect of power complicates the relationship by creating distance between leaders and followers. This is in addition to the uneven distribution of tasks and responsibilities.

Theme: *Career Development and Labour Laws*

While labour laws can play a double-edged sword role in follower-leader relationship when it comes to protecting followers and/or leaders, followers were more outspoken about the (negative) effects of labour laws which they argued were more favourable to leaders. There is

clear difference in the effects labour laws have on the relationship, in the Netherlands labour laws are more favourable to employees, especially followers, in the sense that leaders have minimum influence on it, while in Nigeria the labour laws are of no significant effect, labour laws are loose and hardly enforced.

The weak enforcement of labour laws in Nigeria is partly can be related to the high unemployment and how this have played into the hands of leaders by putting them willingly or unwillingly in the position where the imbalance in employment opportunities and the competitiveness of available jobs has shifted the focus of followers to doing anything to secure employment. In the absence of the opportunity to choose career paths, followers are left with no other alternative than submit to the leader who is at the determinant of their future career. This is typified in the framework to show that career development in Nigeria is tight because there are no options other than to use any available network to get the attention of the leader. The issue of career development is particularly relevant to followers who aspire to become leaders or grow within their roles. This is not an issue in the Netherlands, and it has insignificant impact on the relationship between followers and leaders; the reason for this has been highlighted earlier in this document. The flat organisation operated by the Dutch civil service implies that leaders are minimally involved in recruitment exercises, meaning that both leaders and followers can concentrate on work relations. Contrary to the situation in Nigeria where leaders are more involved in recruitment exercises, career development puts followers at the mercy of leaders, and this has impact on their relationship with the leader and at the same time contributes to the power of leaders and increases the distance between the two.

Theme: *Socio-Economic conditions and Empowerment*

Data shows that economic inequality is a tool capable of undermining relationships, the difference in the power and access to resources was found to be important in cultivating and

maintaining the quality of relationships. The fact that leaders control, or manage resources gives them an edge over followers and also put them in a situation to dominate the relationship, socio-economic inequality at the dyadic level is capable of undermining relationship quality in any relationship.

The effects of socio-economic conditions are judged significant, data shows that this factor influences the behaviour of followers and leaders. In the Netherlands where collective labour agreements are negotiated and implemented, there is a clear progressive trend in the ability of employees to develop their careers and act independently. Alternatively, it was noticed that in Nigeria where such collective agreements exist but are hardly implemented, relationship with leaders are under pressure, one-sided, and that followers are forced to accept whatever is offered them with little or no bargaining power. The key word in this theme is independence to act and not be subjected to pressure from leaders or groups, relationship should be mutual and beneficial to all parties, but it was observed that follower-leader relationship in Nigeria is mostly an uncomfortable and unbalanced relationship. It is commonly argued that leaders should possess the qualities to inspire and motivate subordinates, this study adds that it is only leaders who are able to build relationships with followers who succeeds in realising organisational potentials.

Theme: *Social Integration*

Social integration which is the process of improving the conditions which allows individuals and groups; in this case, of particular ethnic and multicultural groups to take part in activities aimed at improving their integration and acceptability to the organisation and the society is an important discovery of the research. Initially social integration may be viewed to be important to followers than leaders, however the data shows that it is equally relevant to leaders just as it is relevant to followers, the reason for this lies in the reality that both

followers and leader require social interaction. This research found out that the virtues of dignity, security, and opportunity to excel in teams are not necessarily dependent on the role or function, but rather on the ability of the individual to build and maintain formal and informal relationships. It has been proven how important the support of colleagues and individuals can be in feeling connected, supported, and valued within teams. Communication both complements social inclusion, and at the same time it is the connecting pin which is an independent part of social inclusion, and which is a universal theme used for social change.

This theme is related to the second research question; Do the relationship between leaders and followers work differently in a situation whereby followers also have leadership roles or leadership ambition? The basic concept of social integration and inclusion is the reduction of the gap between followers and leaders by facilitating avenues where ideas can be exchanged and work together productively.

Theme: *Diversity and inclusion*

Diversity is a broad subject which can have practical as well as psychological impacts on the ability to build and maintain relationships. Diversity as it relates to the purpose of this study, can be grouped into two different categories, one is physiological needs comprising of the basic human needs and relatedness, the other focuses on social and institutional policies aimed at equal opportunities based on geographical and/or ethnic considerations.

The approach to diversity in cases of this study is different for obvious reasons. In most situations diversity and inclusion are two separate, but intertwined concepts. Diversity is about representation while inclusion is about how the representations are equipped to make meaningful contributions to the entity they belong to, the drive of some organisations is more focused on representations than inclusion.

An example is the Dutch civil service which is just beginning to understand the difference between diversity and inclusion in their quest to project a truly representative and inclusive image as employers of labour. Diversity was initially viewed as an end in itself, and this drove the recruitment processes which ended up in disappointments due to the lack of attention for whether the government ministries were equipped to handle the differences which is inherent to diversity. The percentage of multi-ethnic employees increased but so does their exit rate. Therefore, the Netherlands was classified as loose in the follower-leader relationship framework. Analysing the situation using the framework, it was evident that diversity and inclusion in Dutch system is loose, this implies that the implementation is not structured, and it is driven by the search for new employees with not enough attention being paid to how they will fit the existing structure or make it adaptable to the differences diversity incorporates. It is also observed that the focus was more on low-cadre recruitments which as reports have shown connotes meaningless representations in the sense that their over-representation in low cadre jobs where they cannot contribute to policy, strategy or able to influence how decisions are made in relation in terms of any relevance to follower-leader relationship. Evaluating both cases, leadership does not appear to be the source of motivation for followers. Accounts and experiences related by participants suggest that followers are more aligned with the content of their position in the organisation, including their relationship with leaders. What can be alluded from data is that followers prefer a life without leaders. Leaders cause them to behave differently, or sometimes assume other personalities whenever they are in the presence of leaders. This characterisation is more the case with Nigeria where relationship with leaders appears to be pre-determined by circumstances beyond the power of followers.

Research has not been kind to followers in the way they are portrayed, leaders are the only ones which that matters, it seems judging by the attention given to leaders. This study

concluded that approaching issues relating to follower-leader relationship requires a two-way and shared approach, finding a common ground in forging a way forward is a task for leaders and followers as stakeholders. Additional research may be needed to address the role culture and societal differences play in the quality of the relationship. The needs of followers are essentially identical regardless of the geographical differences, but the influences and its impact on followers are different. To better accommodate followers, organisations need to be re-constructed, and it does not appear that any research can change the perception, although any steps in this direction will go a long way in making positive contribution to the follower-leader relationship.

Contribution to knowledge

This research using an in-depth narrative approach, undertook a phenomenological study of the factors and circumstances which characterise follower-leader relationship. Almost immediately it was discovered that certain factors which influence the relationship do not necessarily have anything to do with the leader or the style the leader employs, but rather has more to do with factors relating to the background, socio-economic situation, culture, and social interaction. This led to the extension of the framework developed by (Uhl-Bien et al. 2014) called reversing the lens to include socio-cultural and economic factors, which is discussed in detail in page 152 of this document.

In addition to extending the framework referred to above, using the tightness-looseness theory, this study was able to identify elements which are, regardless of the geographical or organisational location, analyse how they affect or influence the relationship. This study presented how culture and diversity are elements which should play a prominent role in any evaluation of follower-leader relationship. This study also analysed the importance of multiculturalism and diversity in follower-leader relationship, it showed that followers in most cases felt not understood, while considerable attention was paid to leaders and the need

to cultivate relationship with followers by showing interest in them. The comparison of the cases revealed distinct differences in the perception of power and the context. By highlighting the role culture plays in any relationship, this study is able to identify how upbringing plays a vital role in the attitude and the personality of both leaders and followers.

The Follower-Leader Framework

The contribution of this work to the study of follower phenomenon is the development of a framework. The framework is aimed at providing context to the analysis of follower-leader relationship by explaining the possible complexities and the different dynamics of the relationship; the framework consists of four dimensions: tight-strong enforcement, loose-strong enforcement, tight-weak enforcement, and loose-weak enforcement. In studying relationships, it was discovered that relationships cannot only be either tight or loose. This led to the addition of enforcement. The purpose of enforcement is to show the severity factors such as culture, diversity and socio-economic circumstances play in the relationship. This framework attempted to analyse the relationships by looking at the role rules and regulations, environment and their enforcement play in either strengthening or weakening follower-leader relationship. In figure 10 below the themes are grouped to show their inter-relatedness with follower-leader relationship by identifying tight and loose cultures and the level of enforcement. Each of the combinations in the framework and their relevance to follower-leader relationship will be explained in this chapter. These factors and their impact will be discussed below.

Strong Enforcement

Power Differential (NG)
Economic Independence (NL)
Diversity & Inclusion (NG)
Labour Laws (NL)
Leadership expectation (NG)
Social Security (NL)
Health Services (NL)

Social Integration (NL)
Health Services (NG)
Economic Independence (NG)
Empowerment (NG)

Tight ← → **Loose**

Labour Laws (NG)
Recognition (NL)
Career Development (NG)

Power Differential (NL)
Career Development (NL)
Empowerment (NL)
Diversity & Inclusion (NL)
Social Security (NG)
Leadership expectation (NL)
Social Integration (NG)

Weak Enforcement

Figure 10: Follower-Leader Relationship Framework

The figure 5 shows the classification of the elements which play roles in cultivating and maintaining relationships. What is evident in the framework are the factors which stimulate either strong or weak enforcement.

There are elements which are tight in rules and regulations, or norms and values, and are strongly enforced while there are some which are both loose and loosely enforced; loose may signify absence or weak regulations, while loose enforcement can be weak social control or implementation of rules and regulations. For instance, social integration which refers to situations where minority groups are incorporated into the mainstream of the society by recognising their differences and finding common grounds, is loose in the Netherlands and surprisingly in Nigeria, which demographically is an ethnically and culturally diverse country. This indicates that there are no strict or formal rules and regulations guiding how the elements should be implemented, however there is a marked difference in approach and enforcement.

In Nigeria where there are over 200 ethnic groups, people are used to diversity and are comfortable with cultural and ethnic differences, whereas in the Netherlands which is primarily a mono-cultural or ethnic society, there is little knowledge about integrating people of different cultures despite the changing demographics. The importance of the issue of diversity and its effects of follower-leader relationship was earlier discussed in this study. Another example is labour laws, both cases used for this study have tight rules and regulations on labour laws, but in Nigeria the rules and regulations are weakly enforced, and this creates an imbalance in the follower-leader relationship by accentuating the power difference between leaders and followers, the result of this is increase in unsolicited power. For example, it was observed that subordinates in Nigeria work more hours than it is officially allowed without extra pay, or subordinates being made to work at unofficial times and locations by the leader. Contrary to the situation in Nigeria, in the Netherlands labour laws are tight and strongly enforced with regular controls to ensure compliance. Also, contributory is literacy; literacy in the sense of being aware of one's rights and obligations. In the absence of enforcement, organisations can exercise at their volition whether to implement the element or not, it can be noticed that the enforcement is approached differently in both cases, and this is due to other causational factors like unemployment and socio-cultural relations. In Nigeria, immigration is not an issue while in the Netherlands, immigration is a national issue due partly to shortage of employees caused partly by aging workforce and low birth rates. While a high percentage of unemployed population in Nigeria is made up of youths; 42.5% (Nigeria Office of Statistics, 2022), the percentage for the same group in the Netherlands is 6.7% (CBS, 2022). Assuming that the majority of these figures are followers, this provides a bleak future for youth who aspire to become leaders in Nigeria when compared to the Netherlands. If these two percentages are related to the second research question, to a certain extend it can also be used to explain the subservient attitude of

followers in Nigeria. In Nigeria the leader is centre of attention and followers look up to them because of the power they have over their career, so expectation from the leader is tight and strongly enforced, alternatively in the Netherlands where the career of followers does not depend on leaders, there is low expectation of leaders and the effect of this is near equal relationship between followers and leaders.

Tight → Strong Enforcement

Under the category of tight cultures, earlier defined in this document, tight cultures have as basis strong social norms and severe sanctions for violating the norms. Also in tight societies, there is strong social control, this was extended in this framework to include strong enforcement. An example of this type of culture is typified by the role of power difference in Nigeria, power difference in this context shares some qualities of power distance as defined by Hofstede (2022), according to Hofstede (2022) power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

The difference in power cannot be blamed solely on leaders, or even followers, but more on the construction of the society and the social infrastructure which favours one group above the other. Nigeria as the most populous country in Africa, is faced with disproportionate power difference complicated by strong leaders and weak followers, the fact that leaders usually have access to resources can be a strong factor in the relationship which shifts the balance. The chronic inequality in the distribution of wealth and resources has negatively influenced the growth of the distance between the poor and the rich (OXFAM International, 2022), this puts followers at a disadvantage. Another factor found to be of significance in the relationship is labour laws, labour laws are not only tight in the Netherlands, but it is strongly enforced, and sanctions are stringent. This is against Nigeria where there are labour laws, but they are weakly enforced. This model if applied to follower-leader relationship, may result in

a hierarchical relationship in Nigeria in which a rigid system which discourages creativity and initiatives between leaders and followers is the consequence. Alternatively, in the Netherlands where the labour laws are not only efficiently implemented but are designed to increase productivity through participative agreements with employers and employees, the rights of followers and leaders are protected, and this contributes to a positive relationship with followers and leaders.

Loose → Strong Enforcement

Loose cultures with strong enforcement represent situations where the underlying norms and values exist but are loosely or liberally implemented. Comparable to tight-strong enforcement, the laws and/or norms exists, but are loosely implemented, however the social control is high. This does not reduce or lessen their impact on the people affected, however the enforcement is strong due to individual situations and circumstances. The argument is that there are situations when formal or legal authorities, or organisations do not place priority in upholding certain norms and regulations, this leaves room for individual or corporate interpretations when such norms or regulations should be enforced. An example of loose-strong enforcement is empowerment in Nigeria, followers as leaders of tomorrow require resources, both human and material to advance their career progression, unlike the Netherlands the system for providing the resources is weak and devoid of processes to achieve them.

Tight → Weak Enforcement

During the fieldwork for this study, situations when followers were made to undertake actions which are clearly against existing regulations were noticed, but the fear of losing their jobs and the consequences of not being able to build a relationship with the leader weigh

more than anything else. The influence of the economic and social dependence of followers in the Nigerian case cannot be ignored as having impact on the follower-leader relationship.

The tight-weak enforcement corresponds to situations where the laws, norms and/or values are tight, however enforcement is weak. People in this situation have rules, laws and norms which are formally written but hardly enforced. Relationships, especially professional relationships are usually formalised in the form of function designations with operational and authority clearly defined. Since people work together, the authority of superiors, or even subordinates may only become issues when misunderstandings occur. An example is labour laws in Nigeria, laws and other legal entitlements of employees which are clearly stipulated but there is little (proactive) enforcement of applicable labour laws. The dire economic situations in addition to politicisation and/or lack of institutional mechanism to enforce laws may constitute a reason why workers' rights suffer (Nwokpoku, Nwokwu, Nwoba, & Goodness, 2018).

Loose → Weak Enforcement

There are environments in which certain resources are helpful in achieving good working relationship, this model assumes a situation where all parties have vested interest in achieving the goals and objectives of the organisation, this element also assumes that everybody knows what is expected of him/her and will willingly conform to social norms with or without social control. In a loose environment with weak enforcement, there will be no need for stringent or strong enforcement of rules, norms and values which are agreed to by all parties. There is a recognition of the element, but it is not considered an issue in the relationship that is worthy of enforcement. This does not mean that there are no rules and regulations guiding the enforcement, example is career development in the Netherlands. Although there are clear rules and regulations stipulating career development of employees, it is mainly left for the

employee to decide to make use of the provisions. Only in extreme cases where the employer can prove that the refusal of employees to undertake certain actions is affecting the performance of his/her duties.

Limitations of the study

Interacting with people in form of interviews to solicit for information and data means that there may be some information participants do not want to share (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 93), this is a limitation to the completeness of the data gathered. While participants are expected to be honest and helpful when it comes to the information provided, there is the possibility that they can be selective, or embellish the information they provide.

In Nigeria, religion is a very sensitive topic which require some diplomatic approach, but this limits the ability of the researcher to ask probing or follow-up questions aimed at revealing its influence on follower-leader relationship. Lune and Berg (2017) referring to data collection through interviews reminded researchers of the reliability due to fading memories or intentional omission of information considered unfavourable (Lune & Berg, 2017).

The level in which participants will be prepared to tell their career stories is outside the influence of the researcher. Other limitations envisaged which can affect the ability to gather the information required are listed below:

- *Lack of reliable data* – on a subject which is believed to be widely under researched, access to verifiable and reliable data to conduct research is not readily available or guaranteed, and this could eventually affect the completeness of the research. To mitigate this risk, the researcher invested more time in networking and devised ways to explore alternative resource areas such as linguistics and social engagements in both case study countries in the attempt to obtain direct information.

- *Lack of resources* – in this study, there are several references to limited research on the phenomenon of followership, this may equally mean limited resources in the form of research materials which can inhibit the ability of the researcher in conducting fully representative research.

- *Response to interview request*- Another limitation is the ability to obtain enough response for participation and get people to honour appointments for scheduled interviews, to mitigate this anticipated risk, telephone calls and e-mail communication were used to intermittently remind participants of any pending appointments.

- *COVID-19 Pandemic* – conducting research at this time of social distancing and other precautionary measures such as safety regulations relating to the corona pandemic may affect the response or ability of participants to agree to face-to-face interviews, anticipating this challenge, participants will be offered the possibility of online (virtual) interview if it is considered the only option, this option is however characterised by challenges in the area of reliable real-time technology, and the possible disruptions in building rapport with participants (Lupton, 2020). The anticipated consequence of virtual interviews with participants in developing countries is the poverty which can be a factor in procuring mobile data needed for conducting interview using online collaboration tools such as WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams or Zoom which require internet data. An obvious reason this option is not the preference of this research is the difficulty it poses in analysing non-verbal communication.

Even though assurances were given to respondents about the anonymity and confidentiality of their contribution, there is no way to ascertain whether they are telling us everything, people may, in the attempt to avoid putting themselves or their jobs in jeopardy be reluctant

to volunteer certain pieces of information. Initially, this study is designed with face-to-face interview in mind, but alternative plans had to be made for online virtual interviews due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic which has greatly impacted the way research is conducted. Online interviews present credible challenges in the area of reliable internet connection in Nigeria, there is also the reduced ability of the researcher to exercise some control regarding where and when the interview will take place.

This limitation is particularly daunting with interviews planned with participants in Nigeria where issues of power outage is common and unreliable internet connection is a significant issue which cannot be ignored. The researcher is proposing, in the case of Nigeria to offer compensation to participants to buy internet mobile data to mitigate this challenge.

Future Research

The idea to conduct research on follower-leader relationship was necessitated by the perceived seeming neglect of followership in academic study and empirical literature, the position of this study is that paying more attention to followers and followership can be the instrument which may help in understanding leaders and leadership. Multiculturalism is no more limited to multi-national organisations, research on how multiculturalism is affecting the follower-leader relationship will shed more light on its effects and provide tools which followers and leaders will need to effectively execute their responsibilities. As at present, the shift in international traffic of people is making organisations become more diverse whereas many indigenous organisations have no strategy to address this development.

This study was able to highlight diversity as one of the elements which can be used to mitigate against negativities disrupting the ability of followers and leaders to build durable working relationships, more research will be needed in this area. The Dutch government ministries commissioned several reports, while the reports are not conclusive on how to

approach the issue of diversity, they concluded that a change in attitude and orientation is desirable. More studies are needed to understand and suggest what changes are needed to achieve positive results. The classical example of the reports reveals that more needs to be done to understand the cultural sensitivities of citizens from non-western origins, and how this can be integrated and used to positively impact follower-leader relationship. This becomes inevitable due to the transformation of the society and changing demographics which are exposing the differences and the need to use the differences to enrich professional relationships. Future research needs to critically analyse and propose ways of dealing with cultural differences. This study recommends future research to approach the study of leadership with bottom-up approach, an approach in which understanding followership precedes leadership, in addition future research needs to demonstrate how follower-leader relationship can contribute to improved organisational efficiency and productivity.

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Appendixes

Appendix i: Participant Information Statement

<u>Participant Information Statement</u>

<u>Title of the proposed study</u>

The Determinants of Follower-Leader Relationship: A Cross-National Study of Follower-Leader Relationship in Nigeria and The Netherlands

<u>Invitation to participate in a research study</u>

You are hereby cordially invited to take part in a research study investigating the perception of followers and their indispensability to leaders and organisations. The purpose of this document is to let you know what this research study entails by providing you with a brief background of what the study is about, and this document is equally intended to help you decide if you want to participate in the research. To ensure minimum interruption during the interview, your permission is hereby sought to make an audio recording of the interview for the sole purpose of transcription at a later time.

Please read this document carefully and feel free to ask any questions about anything that you do not understand or want to know more about.

<u>Description of the proposed study</u>

This study is a cross-national comparative study being carried out in Nigeria and the Netherlands, this study by James Taye Olaniyi is part of the requirements for a PhD

programme under the supervision of Dr Adrian Campbell and Dr Karin Bottom both of the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom.

This research intends to focus on how followers and leaders perceive their roles and influences. In organisations, leadership is always at the forefront, while followers are perceived as the unseen power behind the leaders. This study intends to look at different approaches to followership and the cultural, social and the organisation influences, the tools that will be used include among others the cultural tightness looseness (CTL) theory, narrative approach. Participants will be given the opportunity to narrate and/or recollect their experiences which are essentially a sequence of events they are directly or indirectly involved in with the aims of presenting a dimension of followership as experienced by the participants. The expectation of this research is that through open-ended questions and interactions, the stories of participants will represent a socially constructed reality of how followers and followership is perceived.

This study will comprise of open-ended questions in which participants are requested to use their individual experiences, the narratives will be used to identify and explain the differences in similar followership behaviour and perceptions in case study countries. The goal is to learn how different perceptions influence followership and their relationship with others, especially leaders.

Confidentiality/anonymity and data security

The information which you supply, and which may be collected as part of the research project will be anonymised and entered into any filing system or database. The information will be retained by the University of Birmingham and will only be used for the purpose of research, and statistical and audit purposes. The information will be processed by the University of Birmingham in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. The audio

recording, which will intentionally exclude personal information will be used for analysis only.

Participation is voluntary

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw your consent at any time without any commitment or obligation whatsoever. Except your valued time, there are no costs or risks involved in this research. A copy of this document will be given to you for your own administration.

Results of the study

Study findings may be published, but you will not be individually provided with feedback in the publication of this research project. The information you provide for this project will be a valuable resource for both current and future research. The information collected for this study may be kept for use in future ethically approved research.

Contact details

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<u>Supervisors Contact details</u>

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3. Name: Dr Karin Bottom

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   E-mail address:

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:

The Determinants of Follower-Leader Relationship: A Cross-National Study of Follower-Leader Relationship in Nigeria and The Netherlands

Name of Researcher: Olaniyi, James Taye

This information is being collected as part of a research project concerned with the cross-national comparative study of followership and the cultural, socio-economic influences with the Netherlands and Nigeria as case studies by the Department of International Development in the University of Birmingham.

The information which you supply and that which may be collected as part of this research project will be entered into a filing system and/or database and will only be accessed by authorised personnel involved in the project.

The information will be retained by the University of Birmingham and will only be used for the purpose of research, statistical and/or audit purposes. By supplying this information, you are consenting to the University storing your information for the purposes stated above. The information will be processed by the University of Birmingham in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. No identifiable personal data will be published.

Statements of understanding/consent

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information leaflet for this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. If I withdraw my data will be removed from the study and will be destroyed. ☐

3. If I choose to withdraw for whatever reasons, I agree to inform the researcher five (5) days from the commencement of the interview. ☐

4. I understand that any information or data provided will be processed for the purposes detailed above, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. ☐

5. Based upon the above, I agree to take part in this study. ☐

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Appendix iii: Interview Questions

Part 1: For leaders

Leaders in this study are employees who possess formal power and authority to cause employees with lower roles to undertake tasks as part of their responsibilities.

1. Can you tell me about yourself, and how would you describe your position in this organisation/company?

2. What do this organisation/company do, and how long have you been working/worked here?

3. How often do you meet your subordinates?

4. What is your image and/or perception of followers in your organisation?

5. Are there situations when you combine the roles of leader and follower in your work?

6. How has this experience impacted the decisions you subsequently had to make?

7. What are your expectations of followers?

8. If subordinates are asked to give their opinions about leaders, how do you think they will evaluate their relationship with leaders?

9. What role(s) do you think socio-cultural factors like culture, education, or religious differences play in your work and the organisation?

10. What is your opinion about the productivity of subordinates?

11. What do you think about the development of subordinates?

12. How would you describe your relationship with subordinates?

13. What do you think in your opinion are the pre-requisites an effective follower should have?

14. How can the position of followers in your organisation be improved?

15. Are there instances when you collaborate with followers?

16. What in your opinion are the challenges subordinates face?

17. Do you think that followers need to be supervised to ensure that they do their job?

18. How, in your opinion can followers with leadership ambitions be recognised, and should they be encouraged?

19. How much independence do you think followers should have in deciding how and when they do their work?

20. Do you think it is possible for followers to combine followership roles with leadership roles? Give instances you are aware of

21. Do you think leaders should ask subordinates what they can do for them?

Part 2: For followers

Followers in this context do not necessarily have to be adherents of the leader, they may be individuals or groups of people who because of their subordinate position have to work under the authority of a leader or supervisor who represents a higher organisational authority.

1. Can you tell me about yourself and how would you describe your position in this organisation/company?

2. What do this organisation/company do, and how long have you been working here?

3. As a follower, how would you describe your relationship with the leader?

4. Do you think it is possible for followers to combine followership roles with leadership roles? Give instances you are aware of

5. Do you feel that contributing, often doing more than your share is encouraged and appreciated?

6. Do you independently think about and introduce new ideas that will contribute significantly to the organisation's goals, or make your work more efficient, and how is this initiative received? Give example(s) if applicable

7. Do you attempt to solve difficult problems (technical or organisational) rather than look to the leader to give you directions?

8. What do you think, in your opinion are the pre-requisites an effective leader should have?

9. What are your expectations of the leader?

10. What is your image and/or perception of fellow followers in your organisation?

11. How do you pro-actively identify activities which you consider most critical for achieving organisational goals?

12. How much independence do you have in the determination of how you execute your tasks?

13. Can you give an example of when you took initiative to seek and successfully complete assignments that go beyond your job specification?

14. Do you think that employees need to be supervised closely to ensure that they do their job?

15. What is your opinion about involving followers in the decision-making process?

16. What role do you think socio-cultural factors like cross cultural differences, education, or religious differences play in your work and the organisation?

My calculation is that since the interview process will be conducted in conversational format, some of the questions will be answered during the conversation, but I will have to ensure that critical questions are answered either automatically during the conversation, and if I am not satisfied or have the impression that particular questions have not been answered, I will ask them directly.

CO-PRODUCTION

- When was the last time you and your supervisor(leader) sat down to discuss issues relating to your work and how do you feel about it?

- When was the last time you and your supervisor jointly undertook any actions together?

- What is your opinion about involving followers in the decision-making process?

- How much independence do you have in the determination of how you execute your tasks?

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

- If you notice a pattern in the behaviour of your subordinate/supervisor, what do you do?

FOLLOWER-LEADER RELATIONSHIP

- How often to do you engage in a conversation with your subordinate/supervisor?

- How do you get along with your supervisor/subordinate?

- When was the last time the supervisor showed interest in your work? By addressing issues like stress, workload, and general wellbeing

CULTURAL INFLUENCES

- What role do you think socio-cultural factors like cross cultural differences, education, or religious differences play in your work and the organisation?

Appendix iv: Data collected from Nigeria

The table below shows a breakdown of the organisations where the participants works and how they are classified:

Location	Organisation Code	No. of participants	Classification	Age Range	Average years of employment	Gender(M/F)
ABUJA	ABJ1	6	2 followers	27-65	14	1M/1F
			4 leaders	45-65	38	3M/1F
	ABJ2	7	3 followers	30-48	12	2M/1F
			4 leaders	43-55	30	4M
	ABJ3	1	1 follower	40-60	25	M
LAGOS	LAG1	1	1 leader	30-58	26	M
	LAG2	1	1 follower	25-54	10	F
IBADAN	IBAD	2	1 follower	32-60	6	1M
			1 leader			1F

Appendix v: Data collected from the Netherlands

The table below shows a breakdown of the organisations where the participants works and how they are classified:

Location	Organisation Code	No. of participants	Classification	Age Range	Average years of employment	Gender(M/F)
The Hague	MINF	4	2 followers 2 leaders	35-62 55-65	25 40	3M/1F
	MINE	4	2 followers 2 leaders	25-44 30-57	30 34	2M/2F
	MINB	4	2 followers 2 leaders	36-50 40-60	25 30	1M/3F
	SSCI	3	1 follower 2 leaders	20-46 44-58	25 30	3M
	MINW	3	2 followers 1 leader	27-50 45-64	24 40	2M/1F
Rotterdam	BELR	2	1 follower 1 leader	30-58	26	2F
	VITT	2	1 follower 1 leader	25-45	10	2M
Breda	SMAT	2	1 follower 1 leader	24-50	6	1M/1F
Apeldoorn	BELA	2	1 follower 1 leader	34-62	35	2M

Appendix vi: Projected Thesis Completion plan

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Projected Thesis Completion plan

								Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Project Start Date	9/13/2021 (Monday)		Display Week	1				13 Sep 2021	20 Sep 2021	27 Sep 2021	4 Oct 2021	11 Oct 2021	18 Oct 2021	25 Oct 2021	1 Nov 2021
Project Lead	James Olaniyi														

1	**Interviews and Data Collection Nigeria**	-			-	
1.1	Main Data collection	Tue 9/14/21	Mon 10/18/21	35	80%	25
1.2	Flight to Lagos	Mon 9/13/21	Mon 9/13/21	1	100%	1
1.3	Interviews in Lagos	Tue 9/14/21	Sun 9/19/21	6	100%	2
1.4	Interviews in Abuja	Mon 9/20/21	Thu 9/23/21	4	100%	4
1.5	Interviews in Ibadan	Fri 9/24/21	Tue 9/28/21	5	100%	3
1.6	Flight to Amsterdam	Fri 10/01/21	Sat 10/02/21	2	100%	1
1.7	Data collaction/Analysis	Mon 10/04/21	Wed 10/20/21	17	10%	13
2	**Interviews and Data Collection NL**	-			-	
2.1	Main Data collection	Wed 10/20/21	Fri 12/03/21	45	15%	33
2.2	Interviews in The Hague	Wed 10/20/21	Thu 10/28/21	9	2%	7
2.3	Interviews in Rotterdam	Fri 10/29/21	Wed 11/03/21	6	10%	6
2.4	Interviews in Apeldoorn	Thu 11/04/21	Mon 11/08/21	5	0%	5
2.5	Interviews in Breda	Tue 11/09/21	Fri 11/12/21	4	2%	3
2.6	Collate data and misc.	Fri 11/12/21	Tue 11/16/21	5	0%	4
2.7	Data collation/analysis	Wed 11/17/21	Fri 12/31/21	45	0%	33
3	**Analysis of Fieldwork results**	-			-	
3.1	Meeting with Supervisors	Fri 10/29/21	Sat 10/30/21	2	0%	1
3.2	Data analysis	Mon 11/22/21	Wed 1/05/22	45	0%	33
3.3	Progress review	Thu 1/20/22	Thu 2/03/22	15	0%	11
3.4	Process review comments	Thu 3/03/22	Mon 3/14/22	12	0%	8
3.5	Meeting with Supervisors	Wed 3/16/22	Fri 3/18/22	3	0%	3
3.6	Processig comments	Mon 3/21/22	Sun 3/27/22	7	0%	5
3.7	Process review comments	Mon 3/28/22	Wed 4/06/22	10	0%	8
3.8	Finalizing	Wed 4/06/22	Sat 4/30/22	25	0%	18
3.9	Preparing to submit	Sat 5/07/22	Sat 5/21/22	15	0%	10