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**Understanding trust-based leadership: an inquiry into the Nigerian public  
sector**

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**Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy**

**York St John University**

**York Business School**

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late Dad, Bashiru Adegoke Folorunsho.

Your legacy lives on. I know you would be very proud.

And

To Rev Patrick Coghlan,

your passion for books and reading was a great inspiration

Finally, to my wonderful wife and kids (Oluwaseun Folorunsho, Ruby Taiwo Folorunsho, and Robert Kehinde Folorunsho). My biggest supporters. Thank you for your many sacrifices and understanding all through this period. In the late stages of my thesis, you all put up with the intrusion into family life and my periods of grumpiness. I hope you will both read this thesis and be inspired one day.

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## **Abstract**

Trust is a vital factor in the successful running of an organisation, resulting from social exchanges or interactions between leaders and employees. Before trust is developed, employees always draw inferences from their leader's behaviours, which determines the nature of their work and personal relationship. Different empirical studies have established that the presences of trust in employee and leader relationship result in positive outcomes. As a result, through the research question, this thesis set out to understand the factors that give rise to trust between organisational actors and the effect of the trusting relationship.

Twenty participants, both leaders and employees from five departments within the Nigeria public health sector organisation, provided their experience to answer the research question. A case study approach was employed and was guided by an interpretivist-constructionist perspective. Semi-structured interview and observation were employed to gather data. This study identified significant findings which provided more theoretical insight into trust-based leadership. From the resulting study, a clear picture of trust-based leadership was formed, which provided the basis for a trust-based leadership model for this phenomenon in a developing country. The findings report other factors that give rise to trust-based leadership in a developing economy. This study considered different factors that facilitates trust and its outcome provides a trust-based leadership framework in a developing country—a subject area that lacks literature background.

In sum, this thesis has made a case by contributing towards the theoretical understanding of trust-based leadership in a Nigerian public health sector organisation. This is in response to the mounting awareness that how trust is formed between organisational actors must be understood in its context. As such, the scarcity of study in this area highlights the necessity to investigate the concept under study in Nigeria. This study provides practical and policy implications for better understanding of trust-based leadership.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides discussions about the research context to pinpoint problems centred around trust and leadership in relation to applicable existing studies. As a result, this chapter will also discuss the motivation and rationale of the research to highlight the aims and objectives, contribution to knowledge, and research questions. Besides, this chapter provides the research method overview of the study, enhancing the readers' clarity on how the research will gather information. The research outline is vital because it provides a summary for the remaining chapters of the thesis with brief discussions; this ensures the readers are kept abreast of what to expect for each chapter of the thesis. Furthermore, this chapter concludes with the summary and expectations of the following chapter.

## 1.1 Background to the study

This study seeks to investigate trust-based leadership in the public sector of a developing economy, Nigeria. Researchers have questioned the significance of trust for decades, with early exploration of books and empirical articles (Argyris 1962; Likert 1967; McGregor 1967). Over this passage of time, how employees develop trust in their leaders has been an important concept in psychology and other related disciplines (Simpson 2007). For instance, trust is a significant concept in various theories of leadership. An example is the leader-member exchange theory (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). This theory suggests that leaders tend to form two types of relationships with their employees. Leaders create a high-quality leader and member (employee) exchange relationship with some employees. This relationship is based on mutual trust, respect and commitment. Literature has also emphasised the importance of trust across multiple disciplines such as economics, psychology and other disciplines (Kirkpatrick and Locke 1991; Brown and Treviño 2006; Groves and LaRocca 2012). More recently, research on trust has emerged as a theme in its own right. This trust emergence is evident in the rise of interest in edited books and particular issues of journals devoted to the concept of trust and a rising number of individual articles (Dirks and Cremer 2011; Savolainen and Malkamäki 2011; Bello 2012; Lu et al. 2017).

In line with the ongoing, researchers have demonstrated the significance and mounting awareness of the concept of trust; however, some significant areas still need further investigation (Dirks and Ferrin 2002; Gomibuchi 2004; Burke et al. 2007; Tschannen-Moran 2014). It remains unclear what empirical research has uncovered regarding the factors that give rise to trust and the effect of a trusting relationship between leaders and employees in an organisation. As a result of this, Dirks and Ferrin (2002); Burke et al. (2007); Sharkie (2009); Bligh (2017) point out the need to further investigate trust and leadership and how it impacts various concepts.

## **1.2 Need for the study**

Several scholars have conducted extensive research into how the workplace is impacted by trust through various leadership attributes (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Burke et al., 2007; Martin et al., 2015; Hasel and Grover, 2017) and how the quality of the leader and dyadic employee relationship affect employee performance (Knoll & Gill, 2011). The ability of employees to concentrate on work-related tasks improves when they trust their leader (Frazier et al., 2010). According to Werbel and Henriques (2009), behaviours aimed at fostering a high-quality leader-member interchange are influenced by the perceptions of the leaders and employees. By way of illustration, when the level of trust an employee places in the leader increases, it could lead to higher job satisfaction (Dong & Howard, 2006; Gibson & Petrosko, 2014; Gockel, Robertson, & Brauner, 2013). Welsh (2015) stated that trust could be a favoured form of intrinsic reward by employees, and Gockel et al. (2013) provided quantitative evidence that employees who trust their team had better performance outcomes. Thus, trust can produce a variety of desirable positive outcomes in the workplace, and many factors, such as studies on cognitive and affect-based trust, contribute to a high trust workplace culture (De Jong, Dirks, & Gillespie, 2016). This establishes that employees consider trust a vital factor in the workplace (Peck, 2003). Based on different reviews of articles, it can be assumed that extensive research has focused on the concept of trust from the leader's perspective (Cho & Perry, 2012; Galford & Drapeau, 2002; Martin et al., 2015). However, no in-depth study has concentrated on the employee's and leaders' ideas about trust-based leadership or the

factors that give rise to trust based on leader and employee exchanges in a developing country. Although there is literature on an employee's perspective on trust (Peck, 2003), the research did not present a theory of how to develop a trustful relationship between a leader and employee from the employee's and leader's viewpoint. Although Mayer et al. (1995) explained that leaders' trustworthiness behaviours could enhance trust, however, they were tested in a developed country. This thesis argues that these factors might not be the same when tested in a developing country, and the factor that gives rise to trust might differ. This lack of research has left a gap in the literature. Although insight into the attributes of individuals that positively affect leader–employee relationships is provided in literature, it remains unknown. There is a dearth of information on how to combine various factors that make up the trust-building process between leaders and employees. By researching the behavioural components of leaders that are regarded as factors that develop employee trust, leaders could be provided with more purposeful guidance toward creating and maintaining these trusting relationships. As a result of these trusting relationships, an employee's role and overall organisational performance may improve.

Despite the increasing body of literature on trust and leadership from both empirical and conceptual perspectives (Bhatnagar, 2008; Ohemeng and Darko, 2019; Omeihe et al., 2020), there has been little research on the subject from the perspective of a developing country. There has been no substantial qualitative research on trust and leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa. Exploring trust and leadership from the standpoint of a developing country will provide a proper contextual perspective. According to Bjørnskov (2012) and Dasgupta (2011), a balance between general conditions and leadership and trust framework conditions must be established; however, this balance depends on the level of economic development. The Nigerian economy has recently suffered a number of issues that have had an influence on its total economic activity, with real growth rates and GDP falling (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015b). The focus of this research study is Nigeria's public sector.

### **1.3 Research aim**

This study aimed to examine the concept of trust-based leadership within a developing country context in order to understand the factors that give rise to trust from the employee and the leaders' perspective in such a setting and to determine the effects of a trusting relationship in the environment of a developing country. More precisely, this research focus was based on trust-based leadership within a health sector organisation in Nigeria. To construct the theory of trust-based leadership from the subjective view of leaders and employees in a public health sector organisation in Nigeria, this study will employ an interpretivist-constructionist approach.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

To satisfy the research aim, four research objectives were developed as follows:

- Research Objective one: to contribute to the understanding of trust-based leadership, particularly in the setting of a developing economy, by providing reliable empirical evidence
- Research Objective two: to identify the factors that give rise to trust through the perception of leaders and employees in a Nigerian public sector organisation.
- Research Objective three: to understand the effect of a trusting relationship in a Nigerian public sector organisation.
- Research Objective Four: To utilise the empirical evidence to contribute to theory and develop a model of trust-based leadership.

### **1.5 Research questions**

This study was carried out in an attempt to address the following research questions, which were formulated following a literature review:

- Research question one: *What are the perceptions of leaders and employees about what gives rise to trust in a Nigerian public health sector organisation?*
- Research question two: *What are the effects of a trusting relationship in a Nigerian public health sector organisation?*

## **1.6 Overview of Research Methodology**

The method employed the use of interviews to understand better the concept under study through the participant's lived experience. The study used a qualitative method (which encourages participation and allows for an in-depth comprehension of the interpretations these individuals make of their reality) since the study was exploratory, and the goal was to understand how employees draw inferences from their leaders' behaviour (Galloway and Haniff, 2015; Lee, 1999; Yin, 2003). Based on the findings of the literature review, an interview guide was created, and the questions were used to investigate the leaders' and employees' perceptions of the concept of trust in an organisation in the Nigerian public sector.

In this study, 20 respondents were examined. In-depth interviews were performed with the leaders and employees at the case study organisation. The interviews were taped and transcribed, and the transcripts were analysed with NVivo 10 software suite. Chapters 6 and 7 discuss the research philosophy, data collecting, and findings in greater depth.

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

The significance of this study is embedded in the knowledge-based this research aims to advance. The findings of this study can advance the knowledge of leaders and employees who aim to create and sustain trusting relationships in the workplace. Organisations might also adopt the findings to enhance organisational performance and constantly reorientate their leaders and employees to maintain good working relationships. This research provides further insight into how employees comprehend cognitive, affective and behavioural interchanges that shape how they perceive trust-building with their leader. The participants' insights were based on their years of working experience and exposure to a number of leaders within various departments in the case study organisation. Through these personal experiences and interactions over time, they brought professional maturity, allowing them to provide insight on how to build trust with their bosses. There were a lot of behavioural components in the data that linked leadership to trustworthiness. In reference to Zak (2017), these trusting relationships can boost employee engagement and satisfaction, which

impacts performance. The findings could help leaders empower their staff, enhance their talents through mentoring, and encourage employee participation in order to keep them motivated. By acquiring the trust of their employees, leaders can influence their employees' performance. It is essential to think about the methods that can aid in the creation of a trustworthy leader because achieving this goal leads to overall employee wellbeing (Pirson, 2017). The findings of this research could provide solutions on how to build a trusting relationship between leaders and employees, and they may promote further research into the concept of trust since the insights gained can support leadership behaviours that promote harmony, cooperation, and agreement. Finally, this research will develop a model that organisational leaders can adopt to foster trust in the workplace.

## **1.8 Originality and contribution to knowledge**

The thesis' originality and contributions to the canon of knowledge on the subject topic are described in this section.

### **1.8.1 Originality**

Academic scholarship is evaluated on a number of criteria, one of which is originality. Originality in research, according to Guetzkow et al. (2004, p. 190), might include any or all of the following criteria:

- Using a new approach, theory, method, or data
- Studying a new topic
- Doing research in an understudied area
- Providing new findings.

In addition, Phillips and Pugh (1994) (quoted in Eggleston (2001, p. 62) identified 14 distinct ways in which research can be distinctive (see Table 1):

**Table 1. Originality of research**

1. Setting down a significant piece of new information in writing for the first time
2. Continuing a previously original piece of work
3. Carrying out original work designed by a senior colleague
4. Providing a single original technique, observation or result in an otherwise unoriginal but competent piece of research
5. Having many original ideas, methods and interpretations all performed by others under the direction of the writer
6. Showing originality in testing somebody else's idea by carrying out empirical work that has not been done before
7. Making a synthesis that has not been made before
8. Using already known material but with a new interpretation
9. Trying out something in one country that has previously only been done in other countries
10. Adopting a particularly well-known technique and applying it in a new area
11. Bringing new evidence to bear on an old issue
12. Being cross-disciplinary and using different methodologies
13. Looking at areas that people in the discipline have not considered before
14. Adding to knowledge in a way that has not previously been done

As a result, this study can be considered original based on the ninth criterion established by Guetzkow et al. (2004) and the tenth, eleventh, and fourteenth criteria established by Phillips and Pugh (1994). These are outlined below:

### **1.8.1.1 New dimension to knowledge**

The study produced a trust-based leadership model for the public sector in a developing economy. This has added knowledge in a way that has not been previously done.

### **1.8.1.2 Application of a case study method**

This study includes a case study strategy to understand the concept of trust and leadership in a developing economy which has not been provided in past research.

### **1.8.1.3 Area not considered before**

This study contributed to knowledge by spotlighting a new perspective on the concept of trust. Previous studies have argued for integrity, ability and benevolence (Mayer et al., 1995, Whitener et al., 1998, Hope-Hailey et al., 2014). However, this study uncovered several other factors that could promote trusting relationships in the Nigerian public sector.

### **1.8.1.4 New evidence**

Trust-based leadership is a new phenomenon with a dearth of research. New evidence on this phenomenon was provided in this study.

## **1.8.2 Contribution to knowledge**

Contribution to knowledge is a significant element of any doctoral thesis. A contribution to knowledge, according to Phillips and Pugh (1994, p. 34), "does not mean a huge breakthrough that causes the subject to rock on its foundation." On the other hand, the findings of a thesis should demonstrate that the researcher has a thorough understanding of how such activity is carried out in the relevant field (Cryer, 2006).

This study has contributed to knowledge in the following ways:

### **1.8.2.1 Empirical contribution**

- The leaders and employee factors that are necessary to give rise to trust in a developing economy's public sector organisation and the effects of a trusting relationship to enhance trust between leaders and employees are identified in this study.
- The study will also serve as a valuable document for the case study organisation when making decisions.

### **1.8.2.2 Theoretical contribution**

- This study established a trust-based leadership model for leaders and employees in a developing country to address a significant knowledge gap in the literature.
- Although the focus was on trust-based leadership, additional causal conditions influencing trusting outcomes were also identified in the trust-based leadership model.

### **1.8.2.3 Methodological contribution**

This study adopted a qualitative and case study strategy; these approaches have not been applied in a developing country's leadership and trust domain.

## **1.9 Structure of the Study**

The thesis comprises of nine chapters:

The first chapter (introductory chapter) comprises the study background and need for the study. It also covers the research aim, objectives and research questions. Also detailed are the study's significance and the methodology employed in the study, along with the study's originality and contribution to knowledge.

The literature review comprises four chapters (chapters 2,3,4 and 5). Chapter two contains an extensive review of literature on trust concepts and definitions. Types and importance of trust in organisations. This chapter also examined the effect of trust and the factors that gives rise to trust. Chapter 3 focused on the conceptual framework that guides this study. It includes the definition of trust, leaders and leadership and the different debates on the concept among scholars in the field of trust. A diagram was presented that shows the interplay between leaders' behaviour

and employee perception and how it develops in a relationship, leading to trust-based leadership. Chapter 4 discussed the applicable theory related to this study. The chosen theory was the social exchange theory (SET). In chapter 5, the role of trust-based leadership related to a developing country was discussed, and the researcher chose Nigeria as the context appropriate for this study. The study describes the economic landscape, geography, and political situation. The public sector and the potential challenges facing them were also discussed.

The research methodology adopted is outlined in Chapter 6, which includes a detailed description of the research approach and paradigm employed and a justification for the research methodology used in the study. The data gathering procedure and analytic approach are also detailed, and the study's ethical concerns.

The results of the semi-structured interviews with leaders and employees of the case study organisation are given in Chapter 7. The causal conditions and the factors that give rise to trust are identified with the effects of a trusting relationship.

In Chapter 8, the findings in relation to the literature on trust-based leadership are presented and discussed as an empirical model of trust-based leadership. The factors that give rise to trust to enhance the relationship between the leaders and employees of the case study organisation are covered in this chapter. Furthermore, the model implies that, while leadership behaviour is necessary, an additional causal condition such as leadership style and employee development could also give rise to trust, thereby fostering a trusting relationship in the case study organisation. Based on the outcomes of this study, this chapter concludes with a definition of trust-based leadership.

The study's contributions and research implications are presented in Chapter 9. The study's limitations are explored, and suggestions for future research are proposed.

## **CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW (PART 1): Trust**

### **2.0 Introduction**

In the last two decades, increased attention has been given to trust in organisational research (Colquitt et al., 2007; Schoorman et al., 2007; Balliet and Van Lange, 2013; Ferrin, 2013). This chapter introduced the different conceptualisation of trust, how it differs from the concept of trustworthiness, and how trust impacts the relationship between supervisors and their subordinates. Furthermore, this chapter is structured as follows: section 2.1 reviewed how trust has been conceptualised and developed over time by different scholars. The work of scholars such as Mayer et al., Noteboom and Six, Granovetter and other scholars in the field were adopted in this section. In session 2.2, the importance of trust in leadership and employee followership was explored, while the trust typology was the focal point in session 2.3. Having discussed the types of trust, the following session outlined the different factors that give rise to trust according to Dirks and Ferrin, Hope Hailey et al., Colquitt et al. and Gillespie et al. session 2.4 takes a closer look at the trustworthy behaviour of leaders and how subordinates draw inferences from these behaviours. Session 2.5 examines how trust-based leadership is shaped by employees' perceptions and supervisors' behaviour. The following two sessions explained distrust, its impact, and how trust is repaired in a supervisor-subordinate relationship. The chapter concludes by examining trust in the Nigeria/African context.

## 2.1 Conceptual Definition of Trust and Trustworthiness

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the concept of trust and leadership. Several researchers, such as Mayer et al. (1995), and Nooteboom (2003), have pointed out that trust is a multidimensional, complicated, and sometimes ambiguous term that is difficult to define and study (Cheema 2010; Van der Meer 2010). As a result, the notion of trust may take on a variety of meanings (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2013). Therefore, it is not unexpected that many individuals, including researchers, journalists, funding organisations, and governments, have differing perspectives on trust. Trust research abounds in the disciplines of social science, psychology, sociology, economics, and administration. Considering these fields together affirms that the literature on trust is quite extensive. These fields and research have generated their own set of definitions, concepts, and conclusions.

Trust is viewed as a developing effect or a collection of interacting emotions and judgments that grow and evolve over time (Young, 2006). According to Nooteboom and six (2003), trust occurs when a trustor believes a trustee in one or more elements of conduct under specific conditions. Noteboom (2003) submitted that trustees could be individuals and collectives such as institutions and organisations. According to Robbins and Coulter (2005), trust is the belief in a leader's integrity, character, and skill. Trust, according to Mishra and Mishra (2013, p. 59-69), is "one party's readiness to be vulnerable to another party based on the assumption that the latter party is open, competent, concerned, and dependable." To Connell et al. (2003), trust is earned rather than given; it is continuous.

Trust as a foundation for social interactions is a concept that has been defined and gained increased interest across different disciplines. While there seems to remain a lack of clarity surrounding the concept of trust, there is consensus among academics highlighting the need for trust in social relationships and organizational actors. For instance, trust was depicted by Lewis and Weigert (1985, 2012) as a property of a collective unit; they argue that social networks or systems are based on trust. Scholars such as Gambetta (1988) and Mayer *et al.* (1995) refer to trust as a lubricant fundamental in shaping social interactions. In the same vein, trust has been described

as an essential lubricant that enhances social exchange (Dyer and Chu, 2003; McKnight and Chervany, 2006).

Correspondingly, to a large degree, different academic scholars (Granovetter, 1985; Zucker, 1986) concur that trust is rooted in ties between individuals and institutions. Luhmann (1979) further asserts that the reduction of uncertainties in aspects of social life is a crucial feature of trust. Trust is essential in all aspects of social life. It strengthens friendships (Gibbons, 2004), facilitates negotiations (Olekals & Smith, 2005), lowers transaction costs in exchanges and has the potential to settle international political disputes (Bharadwaj & Matsuno, 2006). In a review of primary studies from an economic standpoint, Gordon and Scott (2006) argue that it is a calculative or logical choice between the dangers and advantages of trusting. In other words, a strategy is implemented that will provide the maximum advantage to the individual. According to Barney and Hansen (1994), trust is a strategic resource foundation for long-term competitive advantage. From the viewpoint of Zand (1972), trust is defined as the increase in one's vulnerability with an exchange partner in a circumstance where one has little control over the partner's behaviour, and the perceived costs of breaking trust outweigh the benefits retaining trust.

Furthermore, Yang and Holzer (2006) explained that trust as a psychological state is characterised by the readiness to incur risks based on favourable perceptions about a trustee's intentions or behaviour. This perspective is a necessary and important foundation for psychological research on the topic of trust. According to its psychological structure, trust is an emotion with direction, strength, and endurance. Based on its value, it has two poles: trust and mistrust. It establishes one's relationship with occurrences, other individuals, and oneself. The term derives from an anthropological concept of believing, and it includes five essential components: entrustment, conviction, hope, self-trust, and faith (Mayer, 2004). Trust may also be described as a component of a two-person relationship that entails the trustor's voluntary acceptance of risk depending on the other party's conduct (Thomas et al., 2009).

Simmel (1990) reveals that trust encompasses components of socio-psychological quasi-religious faith. In this regard, the perception that trust is a 'leap of faith' becomes fundamental to the essence of trust (Luhmann, 1979; Mollering, 2006).

Different authors have adopted the notion by Simmel (1990) when describing trust as a leap of faith (Nikolova *et al.*, 2015). Additionally, scholars in several literatures (Lewis and Weigert, 1995; Mollering, 2006) posit that trust generates prospects for strategic relationships by the reduction of uncertainties through a leap of faith without being sure of the possible outcome.

In line with the concept under study, trust can also be conceptualised as a mental state that recognises susceptibility centred on positive expectations (Rousseau *et al.*, 1998). These scholars describe trust as a party's willingness to be susceptible to another party's action based on the premise that the action will be carried out without any form of supervision. According to Rousseau *et al.* (1998), trust is usually described as a psychological state comprising the intention to consent susceptibility founded on positive expectations of another party. It is noteworthy that being susceptible is a requirement to trust because it involves the willingness to be vulnerable (Mayer *et al.*, 1995) and the intent to consent to vulnerability (Rousseau *et al.*, 1998), and it displays the positive anticipation of the trustor. This trust definition equals the definition of Gambetta (1998), and Rousseau *et al.* (1998), with essential respect to vulnerability. The act of being vulnerable implies risk exposure. However, a degree of convergence may be determined because trust includes being vulnerable to risks.

The above definitions of trust show the consistency of the significance of risk-related behaviour as evidence of trust and the trustee's trustworthiness as trust antecedent. Hosmer (1995) examined trust definitions and discovered that trust requires risk. Scholars such as Mayer *et al.* (1995), Lewicki and Bunker (1996), Dirk (2000), and Dirks and Ferrin (2001) also emphasised the role risk plays in defining the concept of trust. Without uncertainty, choices can be reasonable and risk-free. Thus, the most frequently accepted definition of trust is a willingness to be vulnerable to the acts of another party (Mayer *et al.*, 1995). This act of susceptibility leaves the trustor vulnerable to disappointments and betrayal.

The trust definition of Mayer *et al.* (1995) assumes that when leaders trust in their employees, the leader shows a willingness to engage in risk-taking conduct that will demonstrate confidence in the future behaviour of the subordinate. These risk-taking behaviours can include delegating responsibility and being vulnerable in revealing

the intentions and difficulties of the organisation or involvement in a project or decisions that employees may exhibit. Resulting from these behaviours, employees will draw conclusions about the degree of their leader's trust in them. Hence, even though trust is a personal attitude (Brower et al., 2000; Mayer et al., 1995), an outsider may witness activities and form opinions about the trustor's beliefs. As a result, we can anticipate that subordinates will perceive how a supervisor assesses the employee's trustworthiness.

The definition of trust is also a source of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is defined as a perception or confidence in another's abilities, fairness, and integrity, which leads to a readiness to take risks in the relationship, as demonstrated in various behaviours (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001: p. 452). The attribution process, which leads to either trust or distrust, is fuelled by these judgments about an individual's trustworthiness (Simons & Peterson, 2000). The willingness to accept vulnerability and risk based on confident expectations that another person's future actions will produce positive results appears to be a common theme across these dozens of trust definitions. This implies that trust operates under conditions of acknowledged interdependence and is characterised by a willingness to accept vulnerability and risk based on confident expectations that another person's future actions will create some positive outcome (Bigley & Pearce, 1998; Hosmer, 1995; Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998; Kramer, 1999; Zand, 1972). A choice to trust simply suggests a desire to act, but in order to be proved, such a decision must be accompanied by trust-informed risk-taking behaviours. In the model that explains the development of interpersonal trust, Lewicki, Tomlinson, and Gillespie (2006) explain that trust entails taking a series of potentially risky acts with the confidence, anticipation and belief that the other party would honour the trust. One's willingness to be susceptible to the acts of another party can be exhibited by such trusting behaviours (Mayer et al., 1995).

While trust considers the effects of being broken and hurt, it also implies there is a means to behave trustfully and learn what the other party finds trustworthy. Individual trustworthiness is a term used to describe this perspective on trust. Because trustworthiness lies at the core of trust, judging another person as trustworthy encourages the trustor to take risks and exposes him or herself to the

trustee's actions (e.g. Whitener et al., 1998; Schoorman et al., 2007). There is a difference between the concepts of trust and trustworthiness. Individuals' trust in one another is determined by how trustworthy the other person appears to be from his or her perspective. As a result, different trust bases exist, depending on the strength of the relationship between the parties and their emotions, which can fluctuate and vary over time (Chen et al., 2011). Because interpersonal trust emphasises interpersonal exchange, it is self-evident that the exchange includes negotiating procedures and performance between the parties. As a result, trust leads to smoother negotiations and fewer interpersonal disputes (Brower et al., 2000).

The main distinction between trust and trustworthiness is that trustworthiness pertains to the trustee's characteristics. According to Chen et al. (2011), perceived trustworthiness is an important component of the trust process, even when trust implies the risk that the other does not respond to the expectations of an individual's trustworthy conduct. Chen et al. further argue that the propensity to trust is a personality trait, with some individuals more trusting than others. According to Brower et al. (1998), trustworthiness comprises everything in the relational process between individuals and might exist before people have met. This type of trustworthiness is based on an employee's mental image towards the supervision (e.g., expectations about a person's behaviour based on his/her position/role in the organisation) (Atkinson, 2007). For example, followers typically have a high level of trust in their leaders since they set the goals for work results, ensure that everything is completed, and make decisions that benefit the organisation (Dirks, 2006).

Trust appears to be an essential element when it comes to the relationship between supervisors and their subordinates. Subordinate trust in their supervisor has also been linked to several attitudinal outcomes, such as high task performance, increased citizenship behaviours and positive behaviours towards their job and the organisation (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; McAllister, 1995; Serva et al., 2005; Colquitt et al., 2007; Brower et al., 2009). Furthermore, employees' willingness to accept their supervisors' influence increases when trust is present. In turn, it tends to intensify its effect on the ethical climate of the employees (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Mulki et al., 2006), such as their morale, attitude toward work and behaviours because the supervisors are

positioned as significant ethical guidance source for their employees (otken and Cenkci, 2012).

The trust research conducted by (Brower et al., 2000; Lau and Lam, 2008; Salamom and Robinson, 2008) affirms that to date, most empirical research on trust focuses on trust in leaders and the perceptions of employees on how well they are trusted by their supervisors (Lester and Brown, 2003). Researchers uncovered that felt trust, which is the perception of trust held by employees towards their supervisors, is positively associated with employee performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (Lester and Brown, 2003).

Based on the above, the foundation of trust is rooted in the leader's actions and behaviour, hence determining the relationship between the parties involved. Gillespie et al. (2020) claim that supervisors are responsible for taking the first step to initiate trust. As a result, supervisors need to be attentive to how they behave in the organisation and towards their subordinates. As a result, leaders should be aware of their actions and engage in trust-building activities as part of the leadership development process, which is connoted as a leader's trustworthy behaviour. Leaders must first trust and regard their followers as trustworthy before beginning the trust process. The more competent the subordinate is at completing the job requirements at the outset, the more the supervisor will participate in trustworthy conduct, such as sharing control, communicating freely, and demonstrating concern (Whitener et al., 1998).

## **2.2 Importance of Trust in Leadership Research**

Cooperative relationships require a high level of trust between the participants. In the workplace, trust can be a key predictor of productivity for people, groups, and the company (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001, 2002; Kramer & Tyler, 1996; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Two recent meta-analyses conducted by Dirk and Ferrin, for example, indicated that trust in the leader is positively connected to work performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) but adversely related to counterproductive outcomes like the intention to leave the organisation (Colquitt, Scott & LePine, 2007; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). In reference to the quote above, it lays

emphasis on the importance of mutuality, in which each party trusts the other. Similarly, Brower, Schoorman, and Tan (2000) emphasised that it is imperative to examine trust in leader–subordinate dyads from both perspectives. Work-related behaviours are classified as organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) that have nothing to do with the employment contract. Although, not all work-related behaviours are classified as OCBs. In other words, while these behaviours increase organisational performance, they are voluntary and unrelated to the organization's official reward system. In previous studies, OCBs were found to have a strong link with trust (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Pillai et al., 1999).

Nevertheless, many empirical studies have thus far concentrated on only one of these perspectives: subordinates' trust in their leaders (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Most studies looking into the effects of trust on subordinate behaviour and intentions have focused solely on the subordinate's trust in their leader. Trust is essential to the development and advancement of an organisation because it could directly impact performance (Cingoz and Akilli, 2015; Boies, Fiset and Gill, 2015). Trust has a profound effect on the attitudes of the leaders and employees in an organisation and can positively impact the organisation. Employees in an organisation with a high level of trust presumably will be motivated and committed to their work and trust in the decisions of their leaders (Meyer, Fevre and Robinson 2017).

A review of the literature supports the claim that when employees place trust in their leaders, they remain motivated, their level of performance increases and positively impacts their attitude (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995; McAlister, 1995; Brockner et al., 1997; Zaheer, McEvily and Perrone, 1997; Jones and George, 1998; Mayer and Davis, 1999; Dirks, 2000; Davis, Schoorman, Mayer and Tan, 2000). Bennis and Nanus (1985), Hogan, Curphy and Hogan (1994), Kirkpatrick and Locke (1996), Zand (1997), Shamir, Zakay, Breinen and Popper (1998), and Dirks (2000) explain that research has shown that trust is a critical element of effective leadership. They claim that one of the responsibilities of a leader is to create a trusting environment, and they also have to be trustworthy. In so doing, employees will trust their leader and be inspired to do what their leader wants. Previous and current literature has focused on how employee trust in leaders affects their perceptions and leads to various outcomes (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman and Fetter, 1990;

Konovsky and Pugh, 1994; Pillai et al., 1999; Davis et al., 2000; Dirks, 2000). Nevertheless, Brower et al. (2000) assert that when employees perceive their leader's trust in them, it enhances their performance and affects their attitude positively. They further assert that to determine the level of trustworthiness between employees and their leaders, they assess each other. In addition, the cue employees pick up from their leaders, based on their attitude towards them, enables them to create a perception of the leaders' trust in them. This trust growth is consistent with the literature's broad view that trust is an expectation or belief that one can rely on another's good intentions toward oneself (Dirks, 2000). In a relational dyad, both sides (employees, leaders, trustees and trustors) develop opinions about the other's trustworthiness, and perceptions are developed about how the other member of the dyad evaluates their trustworthiness.

To understand the concept under study, this study will explore the perspective of the leaders and employees from the context of a developing country. Exploring these perspectives will attempt to provide clarity around the factors that give rise to trust in the Nigerian public health sector and the effect of a trusting relationship.

In relation to Meyer et al.'s (2017) assertion of trust, the view of Mach and Lvina (2017) postulates that when employees trust in their direct leader, it might result in compliance with organisation policies and practices. It can also facilitate the implementation of organizational change, leading to improved employee work performance. However, when there is a lack of trust in their leader, it might hurt the employee's work performance. This lack of trust could result from perceived dishonest behaviour from their leader, bad decision making, or if the employees discover their leader is taking advantage of them (Kramer and Tyler 1996; Bligh, 2017). Such employees tend to have little or no trust in such leaders. When a low level of trust exists in an organisation, it can result in inefficiency within the organisation (Meyer, Fevre and Robinson, 2017). The importance of trust discussed above points out the need for further examination into the impact of trust in organisations. The concept of trust discussed above assumes trust and leadership are relational and have an impact on employees' work performance in organisations.

In line with the ongoing, different authors assert that the development of trust positively impacts the performance of the employees in organisations (Farndale et

al., 2011). This claim has stimulated the interest of the researcher to investigate the concept of trust-based leadership. Hope-Hailey, Gustafsson and Abbey (2014) argue that one of the significant challenges management researchers and professionals face today is how leaders and employees cooperate to enhance performance in a rapidly changing business environment. Hence, employees' performance and contribution in demanding situations become an essential business issue. Thus, the need for organisations to make the best use of employee skills and capability. Organisations need a core of employees who show their maximum potential and engage in organizational goals and values (Möllering and Sydow, 2018). Hailey, Gustafsson and Abbey (2014) support Korn, Pratt and Lambrou (1987) that there is a link between leadership and trust in organisations, leading to positive job behaviours such as employee satisfaction and performance. In regard to the above assumption, research has previously tested the influence of employee trust in their leader and employee performance. It was uncovered that while trust has a continuous, positive link with job attitudes like job satisfaction, its effect on job-related behaviour varies (Dirks and Ferrin, 2009). While the goal of this study is not to disprove that having trust in one's leader is a positive outcome. This study understands that subordinates' evaluations of a leader's trustworthiness can positively impact both individual (Rich, 1997) and collective performance (Dirks, 2000).

Conversely, literature on trust suggests that leader trustworthiness alone does not adequately represent the quality of the relationship between leader and subordinate (which can affect employee performance) (Brower et al., 2000). Krammer and Tyler (1996) discussed the development of the leader's trust in their employees and the employee trust in the leader. They claim that these are two distinct notions that grow in different ways. In addition, trust is important in employee job satisfaction. In previous research, Dirks & Ferrin (2001) and Locke (1976) found a positive result between job satisfaction levels and employee trust in their leader. According to Locke (1976) and Burke et al. (2007), they assert that employees have a positive perspective about their work and work environment when they trust their leaders. When a subordinate sees that their supervisor believes in them (i.e., he has high levels of felt trustworthiness), they tend to be more enthusiastic about the job because previous measures of job satisfaction included satisfaction with their supervisor and the supervision they receive (Hackman & Oldham 1975). It seems reasonable that an

individual would respond positively to interactions with their leader, which suggest the leader views them as deserving of trust. These conversations could include sharing extra knowledge or taking on new responsibilities.

The concept of trust-based leadership is significant as one of the objectives of this study sought to understand the perception of employees and leaders regarding what gives rise to trust in a Nigerian public health sector organisation. Hope-Hailey, Dietz and Searle (2012b) argue that understanding what gives rise to trust and the effect of a trusting relationship has become a key concern in management and organisation research. It has become an essential issue in the last few decades. Vermeeren, Kuipers and Steijn (2014) also point out that organisations that perform well will make a difference in employees' lives and build and restore trust.

### **2.3 Types of trust**

Dietz and Hartog (2006) identified two distinct types of trust. The first is a subjective conviction in the other party's trustworthiness and that the other party's probable behaviours would benefit oneself (Robinson, 1996; Cummings and Bromiley, 1996; Seligman, 1997; Lewicki et al., 1998). Theories that look at trust as a subjective judgment of the other party's trustworthiness focus on the individual qualities used to make subjective assessments of a trustee's motivations and intentions. However, they are frequently considered the only source of proof without understanding that building trust may be due to other variables impacting the relationship outside the trustee's control (Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006).

The second type of trust is the willingness to trust the other party in order for the confidence in their trustworthiness to be realised. A leader might believe that an employee is trustworthy and so opt to take the risk of being hurt on the assumption that such a result is rare. In order to achieve an actual state of trust, both the anticipation of trustworthy behaviour and the desire to act on it must be present (Huff and Kelley 2003; McAllister 1995). The "willingness to leave oneself vulnerable" has been used to describe such purpose in the literature (Rousseau et al., 1998; Mayer et al., 1995).

It has been pointed out in several studies (Jones and George, 1998; Williams, 2001; Dunn and Schweitzer, 2005; Schoolman, Mayer, and Davis, 2007) that affective trust between individuals exist in the form of emotional bonds and it links people together hence creating a basis for trust (Lewis and Wiegert, 1985). Affective trust depends on interactions between individuals that may cause the trusted individual to display concern about the other's welfare and benevolent feeling; that is, trust is founded on perceptions regarding awareness of the motives of others. In reference to the above discussion, this study identifies cognitive and affective trust as the trust typologies applicable to this study.

Affective trust (also known as emotional) is based on an individual's actions, such as benevolence and empathy. The commitment and dedication of employees to their organisation can also be referred to as affective trust. Employee commitment to the organisation plays two important roles in the company's success: employee commitment is a trustworthy element for their leaders, and commitment to the organisation represents their trust. Employees and leaders expect specific attributes from each other. According to Kramer and Tyler (1996), these attributes are assumed to be either cognitive-based or affective-based trust. Lewis and Wiegert (1985) expound that trust is cognitive, resulting from leaders and employees deciding on whom to trust, in which respect, and under what circumstance. Through cognitive-based trust, organizational actors can use the track record of other individuals, which is the perceptions of how they have previously discharged their work-related responsibilities, to access their trustworthiness (Cook and Wall, 1980; McAllister, 1995). Additional research was conducted by McAllister (1995) on cognitive and affective trust. His research was designed to contribute to understanding interpersonal relationships of trust by distinguishing between cognition-based and affective-based trust. In his study, affective and cognitive-based trust were conceptualised as two trust forms. Cognitive trust is founded on the premise that the trustees will be honest and reliable.

In contrast, the latter derives from interpersonal interest and attention. This involves an intimate relationship and a sincere interest in the partners' welfare. He further claims that an increase in an individual cognition-based trust level will lead to an increased level of affective-based trust. By illustration, Burke et al. (2007) also

differentiated between cognitive-based and affective-based trust. Cognitive-based trust relies on the belief of a trustor in the trustee's honesty and reliability, whereas affective-based trust stems from emotions. In addition, Burke *et al.* (2007) argue that cognitive-based trust parallels the behavioural aspect of trust since it reflects issues (reliability, integrity, honesty, and fairness) embedded in the trustor's character. On the other hand, affective-based trust also parallels the relational aspect of trust; it displays the different relationship between the trustor and the trustee by demonstrating concern for each other's welfare.

Lewis and Weigert (1985) also differentiated between affective and cognitive trust content from a sociological perspective. Interestingly, their trust conceptualisation shows a cognitive and affective dimension. They further postulate that positive emotions drive affective trust behaviour while cognitive trusting behaviour relies on 'good rational reason' (why is it worthy for the trustee to be trusted). The authors argue that day-to-day behaviour is marked by a combination of logical thought and emotion. As such, it can be assumed that trust thus succeeds where cognitive reasoning fails, as the actual displays of trust can best be clarified by positive affections towards the trustee (Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Møllering, 2006). Affective base trust is dependent on frequent interactions, and it requires some degree of cognitive-based trust for trust to develop (McAllister, 1995). When it comes to engendering positive performance and the behavioural outcomes in employee response to a leader's behaviour, it has been argued by Johnson and Grayson (2005) that affective-based trust is assumed to be more essential than cognitive-based trust in this regard. This is possible owing to the fact that affective trust is a more profound type of trust that develops over time through the act of reciprocity, while cognitive base trust is a more rational assessment of a personal attribute (competence and reliability) of the leader (Miao, Newman and Huang, 2014). A separate study further uncovered that cognitive assessment of another individual's main attribute was less significant for inducing a positive subordinate response to participative leadership (Punyatoya, 2019). The potential explanation for this assumption is that in the same way as affective trust, cognitive trust does not induce social exchange among leaders and subordinates.

Correspondingly, subordinates can appear to overly rely on the reliability and competence of their supervisor if they display an extreme degree of cognitive trust. In a similar vein, cognitive base trust tends to decrease cooperation and self-initiative. A subordinate can free ride on the benevolent act of their leader. Nonetheless, the strength of cognitive and affective-based trust depends on social relationships, circumstances, and the context under investigation (Lewis and Weigert, 1985). Cognitive-based trust is embedded in the trustor's behaviour, while affective-based trust is founded in the interpersonal relationship between the trustor and the trustee.

Atkinson and Butcher (2003) also assume that the formation of a trusting relationship entails a logical calculation based on some assessment criteria (cognitive) as well as social identification and empathy (affective processes). As a result, the choice to believe an organisation's referent(s) depends on both affective and cognition-based trust (Hansen et al., 2002; Hansen & Morrow, 2003). Hansen et al. (2002) contend that cognitive trust is a trustor's objective, reasonable, and methodical assessment of a target's trustworthiness. Affective trust is thought to be subjective since it refers to a trustor's sentiments, emotions or mood about the target's trustworthiness.

Deliberation-based trust and knowledge-based trust were described by Lewicki and Bunker (1996). In organizational and professional situations, deliberation-based trust is founded on the people's confidence in each other's steady conduct. Individuals are also aware that they will be penalised if their stability and anticipated conduct are compromised. As a result, trust may be linked to the role that each member plays in the organisation.

Because it is based on information individuals exchange from one another, the second (knowledge-based trust) is connected to the first. Knowledge-based trust may be described as an individual's or a group's confidence in another person's trustworthiness as a judgment on their veracity. Knowledge-based trust has been proven essential in moulding behavioural intention in a new system (Bhattacharjee, 2002). Furthermore, (Mayer and Schoorman, 1995) propose an integrated model of trust in which knowledge-based trust is based on a conscious cognitive appraisal of essential trustee qualities. Knowledge-based trust is defined and validated by three primary elements: competence, kindness, and integrity (McKnight, Choudhury and

Kacmar, 2002). When there is a strong bond between leader and employee, it will lead to several positive exchanges.

Robbins and Judge (2007) identified deterrence-based trust as another trust typology in his study of organisational interactions. They explain that organisations' connections generally start with deterrence-based trust, which is built on the fear of repercussions if trust is not established. This means that deterrence-based trust is in play when a leader uses punishment with precise repercussions. Deterrence-based trust is described as individual trust in others when they feel that the costs of breaking their trust will outweigh the advantages of being untrustworthy. Owing to the explanation of Shapiro et al. (1992), deterrence-based trust is assumed to be the most fundamental kind of trust. It is imperative in the early phases of trust formation (Rousseau et al., 1998; Lewicki, Tomlinson & Gillespie, 2006).

### **2.3.1 Interpersonal trust**

Interpersonal trust is defined as an individual's belief about an employee or supervisor's dependability and integrity (Ferrin et al., 2006). These perceptions are associated with workplace attributions made by individual dyads. These attributes are typically tested by examining both members of the dyad's perception of ability, compassion, and integrity (Colquitt, LePine, Piccolo, Zapata and Rich, 2007). Several scholars of trust research maintain that trust development undertakes a gradual process (McKnight *et al.*, 1998; Holmes and Zanna, 1985). Based on this conception, trust is presumed to rise at a gradual pace depending on the results of previous exchanges (Zucker, 1986; Ring and Van de Ven, 1994). It is also asserted by scholars such as Luhman (1979) and Giddens (1990) that interpersonal trust develops when there are frequent face-to-face interactions between individual actors without having recourse to institutional arrangements and become acquainted with each other's interest. Six (2007) views interpersonal trust as a psychological state characterised by the willingness to tolerate vulnerability to the acts of another party in exchange for the expectation that the other would execute a specific activity that is essential to you. McAllester (1995), on the other hand, claims that interpersonal trust is described as a person's confidence in and willingness to act based on another's words, actions, and decisions

In organisations, the interpersonal trust of individual workers has at least two potential focuses: the supervisor and their subordinates. The relationship of dyadic trust involving these two parties has received more research than trust in co-workers (Koopman, Den Hartog, and Shippers, 2002). In support of the viewpoint of Koopman, Hartog and Shippers, Ting (1997) also differentiates two forms of interpersonal trust inside organisations: trust in managers and coworkers. This may lead to the conclusion that interpersonal and organizational trust has two distinct elements. The first is concerned with whether an employee trusts their boss, whereas the second is concerned with coworkers' trust in one another (Guinot et al., 2014).

In his research on interpersonal trust, Geller (1999) discovered two elements of interpersonal trust: confidence in others' intentions and confidence in their ability. In an organisation, interpersonal trust should also relate to how individuals believe their peers have good intentions and capabilities. In addition, Geller asserts that the most common means for facilitating interpersonal trust is to act in a trustworthy manner. In a study he conducted with his students to identify the practices that build trust, seven trust-building elements such as Communication, consistency, character, commitment, compassionate appreciation, continuing trust-building, and coaching were uncovered.

In comparison with the trust factors of Mayer et al. (1995), Hope – Hailey et al. (2014) and Nooteboom and Six (2003), Geller included coaching, continuous trust-building and communication. The interpersonal trust-building factors from all the scholars are significant. These factors will be explained in the latter part of this thesis. Interpersonal trust can develop bilaterally (the relationship between two people) or multilaterally, where trust is fostered with individuals from within the same group or community (Lyon, 2000). These social networks are embedded within personalised sources. The inclination to interact with people with existing credibility reveals that interpersonal trust is vital in relational exchange. Interpersonal trust is essential and is regarded as the backbone of every form of organisation partnership (Deutsch, 1973; Blau, 1964). This shows that interpersonal trust can be seen more broadly as the valid anchor of trust (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Williams, 2001; Simon, 2007).

With interpersonal trust, the balance between reciprocal action and the threat of sanctions by the other partner is maintained by continuous cooperation (Lyon, 2000).

Zucker (1986), who referred to interpersonal trust as process-based trust, argues that establishing interpersonal trust takes time and effort. This supposition indicates that even though trust in institutions is regarded as an advanced stage, the essential starting point with exchange relationships is interpersonal trust. Interpersonal trust can fulfil additional functions regarding trust created by institutional arrangements (Bachmann, 2001).

### **2.3.2 What gives rise to trust?**

Scholars with the same views regarding the process of trust development have consistently argued about the essentiality of trust because it is viewed as a concept that fosters successful teamwork in the organisation. A body of work conducted by Nooteboom (2002) also supports this claim. In a survey conducted by Nooteboom, he focused on the measurement and consequences of trust, where he revealed that trust is premeditated by actions. The empirical work of Zand (1972, 1977) shows that specific actions need to be exhibited by both supervisors and subordinates before trust can be developed. Zand further reiterated that trust is linked to vulnerability to the acts of others; hence it is influenced by the behaviours that are experienced. By means of illustration, individuals make themselves vulnerable to abuse or risky situations when they act trustingly toward other individuals, thereby communicating their own trustworthiness. Therefore, to improve our theoretical understanding of trust, we need to look at behaviours that help develop trust and how those actions are evaluated.

In the trust process, trust and distrust usually go together; distrust impedes trust development, but this can be repaired by trustworthy behaviour. According to Lewicki and Bunker (1996), the process of trust and distrust can be separately developed. Interpersonal trust between leaders and followers results from trust-building (Rousseau et al., 1998). From the followers' perspective, the trustworthy behaviour of a leader is necessary for trust-building. Butler (1991) describes the trust process as a cyclical and mutually reinforcing process, Zand (1972) describes it as a spiral reinforcement process, and Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, and Werner (1998) describe it as a process of social exchange. As a result, trust can be developed over time but also delivered at once. As discussed above, Lewicki and Bunker (1996)

explain that trust involves three stages. In the initial stage, an individual's presumptions of the other's trustworthiness are founded on the reputation of the other's trustworthy behaviour. In this instance, the leader's trustworthiness and trustworthy behaviour are critical. This stage is identified as discretion based-trust. The second stage, trust, is based on understanding the individual's behaviour in the organisation (Knowledge-based trust), and understanding is based on the kind of information each individual has gathered through time in various circumstances. As a result, trustworthiness is based on each other's predictable behaviour.

Furthermore, predictability fosters trust (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Dirks, 2006; Connel et al., 2003). The third step (identification-based trust) is typical in an interpersonal relationship in the organisation. It is based on detecting others' feelings and meanings of ambitions (e.g. leaders' desired aims of job outputs). This last stage is also manifested closely in interpersonal connections, making it difficult to detect someone's feelings (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996). Trust arises between two or more autonomous actors in an organisation through their interactions and dyadic relationship. Trust is a susceptible process that may be lost far more quickly than it can be developed, and as a result, rebuilding appears to be more difficult. According to Chen et al. (2011), before trust can be restored, it is necessary to understand how trust can be harmed or violated (Schoorman et al., 2007).

Based on the employee (trustor) characteristics, Mayer *et al.* (2006) assume that the characteristics of the leader are part of a factor that will influence the trust of a party since some individuals are more trusting than others (propensity). They define propensity to trust as “the general willingness to trust others”. They propose that the higher the trustor’s propensity to trust, the higher the trust for a trustee before the availability of information about the trustee. Nevertheless, there are certain factors that can affect supervisors' trust propensity. Hope Hailey *et al.* (2020) perceived these factors as; one’s personal development experiences, type of personality, and cultural background). Hope Hailey also argued that the propensity to trust is essential at the start of the relationship.

The relationship between managers and employees is primarily influenced by trust. Social relationships cannot form in the workplace without a foundation of trust. For

all nature of management, trust is a necessary component. Employees evaluate an organisation's trustworthiness based on the outcomes of their exchanges with their leaders. Although trust is intangible, it aids in the understanding of interpersonal and collective behaviour, as well as employee and leader performance. Cooperation requires trust, leading to constructive conduct, which is critical in relationships (Mishra, 1996). It is then necessary to understand how trust develops. This study focuses on the factors identified by Mayer et al. (1995), Geller (1999) and Hope – Hailey et al. (2014). Mayer et al. (1995) mentioned three significant factors that could potentially give rise to trust (Empathy, integrity, and benevolence). Geller identified these factors as the seven c's while Hope – Hailey referred to them (Empathy, integrity, benevolence and predictability) as the pillars of trust. The factors mentioned above are dependent on exchanges and behaviours. Dietz and Gillespie (2011) stated that a leader's behaviour is one of the critical factors contributing to how trust is created between supervisors and their employees. Trust established in this relationship likewise has a reciprocal impact between the employee and their supervisor, which concerns the elements of organizational citizenship behaviour and the perceived fairness of the supervisor. The leader's behaviour that was found to establish trust, according to Dietz and Gillespie (2011), includes loyalty, a reward system, integrity, empathy, communication, competence, and benevolence. These behaviours remain relevant in today's workplace, and employees continue to seek them out in their leaders (Savolainen, 2014).

Before any form of interaction, some factors need to be in place (McKnight *et al.*, 1998). They report that (1) an individual disposition to trust; (2) an individual, institutional-based trust and (3) cognitive processes are the combinations through which interpersonal trusting behaviours between parties are formed. The willingness to depend on others is described as the disposition to trust. Disposition to trust imply to the conception that there is a tendency for individuals to display a high degree of trust without a history of previous exchanges or interactions (Meyerson *et al.*, 1996; Kim *et al.*, 2004). In such instances, the trustor's propensity to trust and belief in impersonal structures would reinforce the likelihood of success or be taken for granted (McKnight *et al.*, 1998). The cognitive process indicates that individuals depend on immediate initial experiences and cognitive signals instead of previous encounters (Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Meyerson *et al.*, 1996).

Furthermore, they maintain that a cognitive process impacts the formation of trust through the following: (1) character inference, which denotes that supervisors draw inference about their employees through secondary information; (2) categorisation of ingroup and outgroup, which raises the idea of placing the trustor and trustee in the same or different groups; and (3) stereotyping which points to placing the trustee in a category where inference about his or her character can be gathered.

Based on the above trust descriptions, this study assumes a working concept of trust as an ingrained set of positive mutual expectations which is formed and determined by the behaviour and relationship of the trustee and the trustor. This embedded set of shared positive expectations could be shaped by the confidence in ability, benevolence, reliability, predictability, and the integrity of the parties involved. Having ‘confidence in a person’s ability, a firm belief in a person’s ability, and a knowledge of positive expectation’. In this respect, trust is the basis of social interactions that provide information about the integrity of the trustee (Lyon, 2005). These social interactions determined by context and norms of social structures may also provide penalties for the violation of trust. Summarily, the development of trust may be dependent on context.

Support of the integrative model of Mayer et al. (1995) and the empirical research conducted by Hope-Hailey *et al.* (2012) indicate that their concept of trust requires the ability of the trustee to be open to the actions of the trustor. They further propose in their report that the trustees’ ability, benevolence, predictability, and integrity give a unique perspective to understanding trust. The first element, ability, is described as a collection of competencies and skills that enables specific tasks to be influenced by the trustee; conversely, benevolence is the trustor’s optimistic perception or disposition towards the trustee. It implies that the trustees are believed to put aside opportunistic motives by acting positively.

The third aspect, integrity, includes the view that the trustees will adhere to a set of moral standards such as equality, reliability, and promise fulfilment. The factors mentioned above are key to trust; benevolence has the tendency to create an emotional attachment with the trustee, thereby fostering a positive orientation; ability

is a competency attitude which is essential for the trustee; while integrity results in long-term predictability which allows individuals to cope in an uncertain situation (Lind, 2001; Colquitt *et al.*, 2017).

While this study is interested in understanding the factors that give rise to trust and the effect of a trusting relationship, these questions beg for further study. Koeszeki (2004) pointed out that trust is multifaced because it includes relationships, actions, and behaviours. It also allows people to decide if they want to relate with one another, thereby putting individuals at risk of being susceptible, betrayed and disappointed in trust. The antecedent put forward by Mayer *et al.* (1995) and other factors of trust that could potentially give rise to trust are discussed below in detail.

**2.3.2.1 Ability:** In line with the ongoing longitudinal study conducted by Gabarro (1978) into how a working relationship is developed between leaders and their supervisors, they assert that one of the bases of trust is ability because it captures the expertise and the competence which is required to carry out a specific task along with the needed interpersonal skill and knowledge to succeed in the organisation (Gabarro, 1978). In other words, ability encompasses the employee's perception of their leader's competence and skill essential for a positive outcome in a specific field (Mayer *et al.*, 1995; Zapata *et al.*, 2013). One commonly discussed trustworthiness component is ability (Kee and Knox, 1970; Barber, 1983; Butler and Cantrell, 1984; Butler, 1991; Mayer *et al.*, 1995). Scholars clarify that the ability and competence of the trustee relate to the extent to which they have experience and skills (Dietz, 2011). In addition, Jarvenpaa *et al.* (1998) equal ability to competence and a skill that is obtained and utilised professionally. Likewise, Mishra (1996) explains that ability is the 'know-how' of the leader or the employee and further claims that know-how can be ingrained into ability.

Different scholars interchangeably adopt the concept of ability and competence (Gabarro, 1978; Colquitt *et al.*, 2007; Krot and Lewicka, 2012). Competence in the work of Kim *et al.* (2013, p.3) includes the degree to which an employee retains the technical and interpersonal skills needed to execute a task. These interpersonal skills can include a wide range of interacting skills. Based on theoretical reasoning,

Colquitt et al. (2007) explain the unique relationship between ability and trust combined with the leader's character. Competence in literature is also found to be explicitly operationalised, even though it can cover a wide variety of definitions. Characteristically, an employee may trust that his or her leader is highly competent in the substance, although he or she may question whether the leader can manage conflicts.

Being influential and having the abilities and capacity to be trusted by others are all aspects of competence (Mayer et al., 1995). The Sherwood and DePaolo (2005) article claim that workers appreciate skill as a precedent of trust. Employees will be less likely to support their supervisors if they do not believe in their competency. As a result, the risk level will rise. The more trust the manager has in his or her abilities, the more probable the employee would choose to be influenced by him or her (Sherwood & DePaolo, 2005). This indicates that employees' faith in their daily supervisor is impacted by whether or not they believe their daily supervisor has the ability to perform the job.

In support of the above, Hope-Hailey et al. (2014) reiterate in their empirical study that trustworthiness is defined based on competence and capability in some organisations. A leader who wants to earn the trust of their employees should have the ability to take on responsibility and is capable of getting the task done. In order to achieve these, varieties of skills and capabilities are involved. Foremost, as leaders, there is the technical element. They should have the appropriate level of technical knowledge in their field that is required of them. Capability is also included in understanding the social dynamics that underpin work. As such, leaders should be acquainted with individuals in the organisation along with individuals outside their organisation who may be vital to their department and mission.

In organisations where work is divided into a range of divisions and specialism, employees around the company have to trust in their colleagues' experience and specialist knowledge to work effectively (Gillespie et al., 2020). This shows that employees will perceive their leader as trustworthy depending on their confidence in

their skills and knowledge. Performance standards need to be met and surpassed to be seen as a trustworthy leader, so capacity and competence are essential.

**2.3.2.2 Benevolence:** Trust literature indicates that benevolence and goodwill apply to the trustee's confidence to protect one's well-being (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). In order to understand the concept of benevolence, Zapata et al. (2013) and Mayer et al. (1995) identified the concept as "interpersonal care and concern". They further characterise benevolence as the perceived extent to which the leader wants their subordinate to do well, excluding self-interested motives. Mayer et al. (1995) also explained that benevolence involves the act of commitment, caring, encouragement, and transparency. It has been demonstrated that benevolence relates to mutual assistance, unprecedented actions of a leader for their subordinates' well-being, and a desire to take the interests of the subordinate into account in a decision-making process (Krot & Lewicka, 2012). One of the factors central to an organisation is a sense of strong relationship and interpersonal interaction. Underpinning these is a strong sense of benevolence.

Employees deem a leader trustworthy when perceived as knowing how to care and pour out themselves for their employees. A benevolent leader listens to the concerns of subordinates, recognises their needs, and exhibits a caring attitude towards members of the organisation in times of personal and organisational crisis (Hope-Hailey et al., 2014). It is noteworthy to understand that one characteristic of trustworthiness is not more significant than the other. By way of illustration, Hope-Hailey et al. (2014) suggest that benevolence cannot be emphasised over ability. The danger of emphasising benevolence over other features like ability could mean that organisations could experience low work accountability from subordinates.

**2.3.2.3 Integrity:** Integrity and honesty are related to perceived credibility. Different scholars refer to integrity as the trustee's honesty, sincerity, character, and authenticity (Mayer et al., 1995, Mishra, 1998, Dietz, 2011). Integrity is also related to principles (Jarvenpaa et al., 1998, p. 31). Integrity, according to Mayer et al. (1995), Dirks and Ferrin (2003) and Hope – Hailey et al. (2014), involves the spoken words of the leader in the organisation. When discussing integrity, several traits need

to be considered. Traits such as consistency, transparency, honesty, sincerity, and ethical traits are considered. Integrity is strongly connected with how employees measure the trust level of their leader (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). While the concept might appear ambiguous, leaders with integrity are usually seen as individuals who can be relied upon to do what is considered proper and required of them regularly. They are dependable in their interactions with their subordinates and will stand up for the truth.

Supported by extensive evidence in the literature, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) view integrity as the employee's perceived notion that the leader will adhere to a set of values that the employee considers essential. In view of the above definition, Mayer et al. (1995) and Jones (2012) argues that honesty is measured in past actions, value similarity and accuracy of words and behaviour. Mayer et al. (1995) further suggest that integrity is significant in trust formation, and the sense of benevolence rises in the course of the relationship in the early phases. In support of Mayer et al. (1995) definition of integrity, Kim et al. (2013) state that integrity implies the degree to which the trust member considers the trustee to be in accordance with moral and ethical principles with synonyms including fairness, sincerity, consistency and fulfilled promise. Integrity typically refers to the congruence between what the Parties say and what they do, although it can have many other definitions.

**2.3.2.4 Predictability:** Hope-Hailey et al. (2014) argued for an additional component, predictability, which comprises employees' judgment of the leaders' expected behaviour. However, Mayer et al. (1995) argue that the addition of this component is not significant because when there is a high degree of integrity, it facilitates behavioural consistency and congruencies in actions. However, Hope-Hailey argues for predictability as one of the essential pillars of trust. These trust components could vary differently in organisations. There is a potential link between predictability and integrity as it also leads to behavioural consistency and, over time, consistency in performance. This trust component includes the requirements for delivering on previously established timelines and standards. Predictability relates to how the other party would respond in the future if a situation changed (Aldrich &

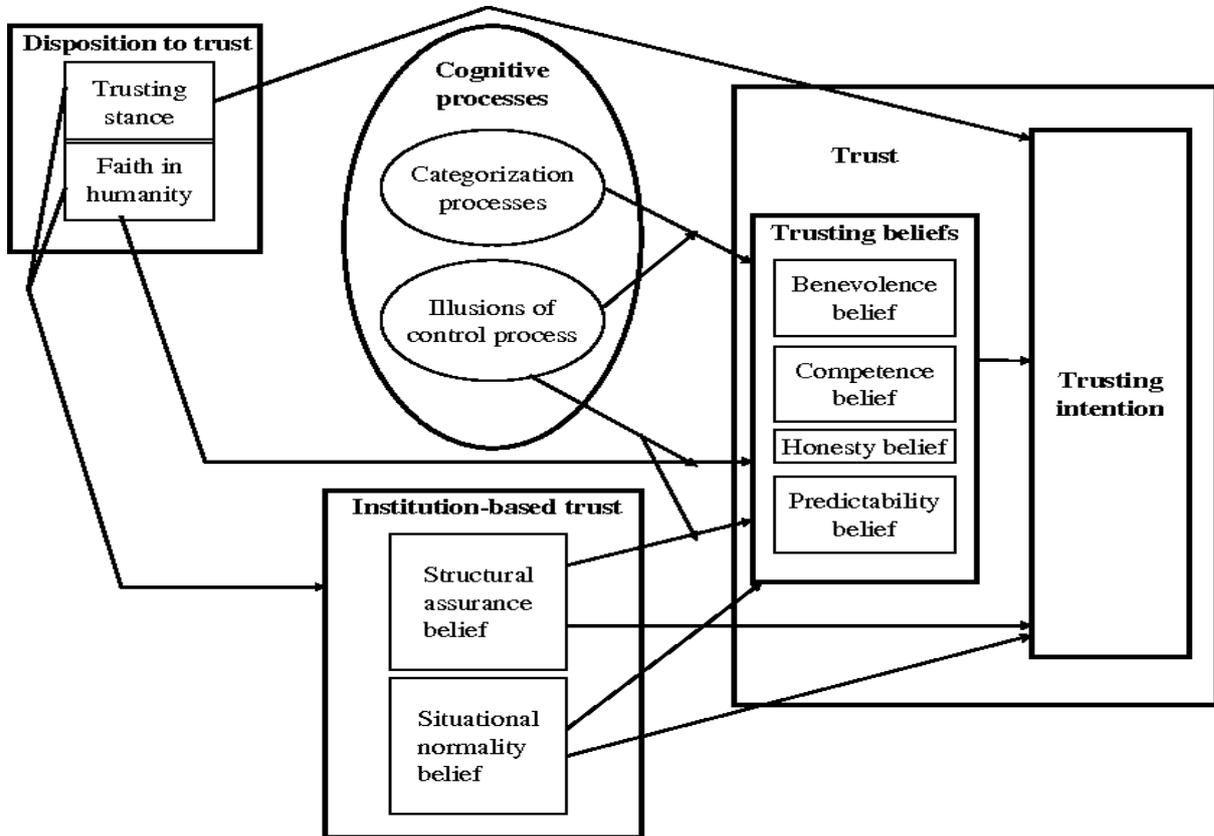
Ruef, 2006, p. 70). Predictability is suggested to serve as an aspect of trust (Dirks, 1999), while Lewicki and Bunker (1996) Claim that trust is based on predictability and that predictability boosts trust.

However, Hope Hailey further argues that focusing too much on predictability risks stifling creativity and personal growth. Predictability also seems to be related to leaving less room for workers to experiment and make mistakes. As such, the opportunities for empowerment are diminished. Whether predictability is regarded as a component of integrity or not, all components may have potential consequences since a trustor can decide not to trust if he or she finds some of the qualities lacking from the trustee (Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006).

Several researchers believe that benevolence, integrity, predictability, and ability/competence are the characteristics that give rise to trust. However, an examination of the literature reveals that the list is not exhaustive and that more factors can give rise to trust. Although not widely considered or mentioned in the literature, other elements contributing to trust will be explored below.

**Fig 1** *Initial trust-building*

Source: McKnight *et al.* (1998)



**2.3.2.5 Appreciation and Recognition:** Recognition and appreciation are two crucial tools for supervisors, organisations, and HR professionals in increasing worker motivation and organisational performance when it comes to employers and employees having innate satisfaction. According to a study conducted by (Tessema *et al.*; 2013; Allen and Helms, 2002), it is necessary for leaders to conduct regular research on expressing appreciation to encourage employee behaviour to achieve strategic goals. Appreciation is generally about feelings and expression, whereas recognition is about highlighting something unique or well done. The key is to recognise that both are valuable in and of themselves and to recognise that both are required to establish a workplace culture that keeps employees loyal and engaged. Recognition and continuous appreciation instil confidence in employees, and happy employees are more productive. As a result, it is vital to express your confidence in your employees' abilities and capabilities and discuss how highly you regard them with others. According to White (2017), when people feel valued and acknowledged

for their contributions to the workplace, it generates positive results, such as increased worker commitment, lower staff turnover, more outstanding customer loyalty ratings, and the business develops its sense of motivation.

Dejours (1993) attempted to establish that recognition and appreciation consist of two main elements: recognition in acknowledgement and recognition of the reality of an employee's commitment and contribution to the organisation. Recognition may also be used to appreciate an employee's contribution to the completion of a task. The acknowledgement should be taken from the interaction viewpoint, which embraces the concept of reciprocity and hence takes account of the two-way nature of a leadership-employee relationship. This viewpoint emphasises that the manifestation of recognition presupposes the creation of a trust-based relationship between two or more persons in the workplace. Either party can therefore convey it. In addition, it creates a sense of belonging in the employees. They will begin to have a feeling of belongingness when they are valued by their colleagues and, especially, by their boss. When employees are recognised for their unique way of completing their duties (Clot 1999) and the attributes that set them apart from others, it has a positive psychological effect on them.

**2.3.2.6 Confidentiality:** The literature on trust (Dirks and Ferrin 2001; Mayer et al. 1995) identifies substantial evidence that a trusting relationship between supervisors and employees leads to an exchange of personal information. The expectation of confidentiality and the significance of trust in a supervisor and employee relationship, according to Kobocow, McGuire, and Blau (1983), are vital components in the facilitation of self-disclosure of personal and sensitive information when working in an organisation. Siegel (1979) posits that Confidentiality is an ethical term implying an express contract or pledge by the leader or supervisor not to reveal anything about their employee unless the individual agrees to it. It is worth noting that confidentiality does not always have to be a pledge or express contract. It could be a personal belief of the employee that is based on the existing relationship or previous interactions; the supervisor will act ethically. Exchanging personal information put both organizational actors in a vulnerable position. They expect that these pieces of information will not be exposed and kept confidential. The importance

of confidentiality was stated by Lewicki and Bunker (1996); both scholars explain that one of the fastest means of violating trust is divulging personal information to third parties without consent. They further explained that the act of keeping personal issues could be written or verbal. This concept involves a high level of integrity. The supervisor and the employee may face ethical/moral dilemmas due to a breach of confidentiality. Although it is critical to investigate the leaders' motivations for violating secrecy, nothing changes the fact that a moral compact has been broken. As a result, the trust component may be altered, and individuals may experience cognitive dissonance.

**2.3.2.7 Empathy:** According to Kail (2011), empathy is understanding another person's feelings. At times, employees evaluate leaders based on the empathetic influence they have had on their lives. Empathy is critical in supervisor and employee relationships because it helps employees and leaders notice each other's emotions, feelings, opinions, and worries (Matthewman, Rose, & Hetherington, 2009). Empathy is significant in assisting leaders in motivating their staff to achieve above and beyond their capabilities, resulting in increased self-esteem (Boseman, 2008). The importance of empathy in organisations cannot be exaggerated. Hope-Hailey (2009) states that leaders cannot connect with and encourage their employees to achieve a common goal, particularly in challenging periods without empathy. According to Mahsud, Yukl, and Prussia (2010), leaders in this contemporary age must learn to deal with various circumstances in the organizational contexts (i.e., adaptability). Bahadur et al. (2020) argue in favour of the concept under discussion that empathetic leaders have a more favourable attitude about adjusting to new settings and global trends. Empathy is becoming more crucial to effective leadership, particularly during organizational development, because it leads to approachability and adaptability (Choi, 2006; Atwater & Waldman, 2008; Goleman, 2000; Feng, Preece, & Lazar, 2004). Trust should not be taken for granted (Lewicki and Bunker, 1985; Baier, 1986). Generally, the trustor hopes that the trustee will behave compassionately and acquire skills and knowledge to exceed expectations (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Lewicki, 2006). Similarly, Gilbreath and Benson (2004) carried out a similar study and reported that employees are not only motivated but also

committed to their task when they perceive their leader as being empathetic and showing concern towards their wellbeing.

**2.3.2.8 Inclusivity/Participation:** Inclusivity and participation are concerned with removing limitations that hinder employees from participating in organizational processes (Miller, 1998; Mor-Barak and Cherin, 1998; Roberson, 2006). Employee engagement in organizational systems and procedures is central to definitions of inclusion (Sabharwal, 2014). Inclusion aims to create a work climate where all employees are treated equally and in a professional manner, given equal access to available resources and opportunities while participating fully in the organisation's success. The engagement of employees in organisational processes such as decision-making should provide a bridge between inter-person differences and the ability of a person to make an effective contribution to the organisation (Mor Barak and Cherin, 1998). As a result, policies and practices that encourage inclusion should be frequently viewed as having the capacity to integrate different people into work teams, allowing teams to perform more efficiently while fostering positive interpersonal and group outcomes (Matz-Costa, Carapinha and Pitt-Catsoupes, 2012, Roberson, 2006). Leaders need to discover methods to include the perspectives of employees in their daily activities. Inclusivity does not just involve employing diverse, skilled employees but involves employees contributing actively to decision-making that will lead to the organisation's growth.

**2.3.2.9 Openness/ Accessibility/Approachability:** The level of transparency in communicating task-relevant information between organisational actors is referred to as openness (Schein 2010). Openness helps leaders and employees create a transparent and reciprocal knowledge of each other's intentions by facilitating the alignment of goals and expectations (McLeod and MacDonell 2011). It also aids in the development of shared understanding, improves the relationship's environment, encourages commitment, ensures deadlines are met, and strengthens trust between leaders and employees (Dyer and Chu 2003; Bstieler 2006; Zidane et al. 2016). Leaders are considered to be influential individuals in the organisation. Thus, the leader's openness is worthwhile in enhancing the relationship and trust level between supervisors and their employees. Based on the above discussion, openness is the act of being transparent, while approachability leads to accessibility.

John (2007) adds to the discussion of openness by outlining the qualities of a high-performing team. One of these qualities is openness, which indicates mutual interaction between the leader, employees, and coworkers. Employees can open up freely without fear of being judged harshly. Openness in organisations fosters transparency, work engagement, effective communication, and high levels of dedication (Kouzes, 2007). Furthermore, openness decreases mistrust and conflicts of interest while improving employee performance (Turner and Müller 2004).

In addition to this, trust-building is focused on: (1) degree of personal integration between and among allies; (2) degree of past positive cooperation and (3) observing the norms of benevolence and equality in these relationships (Gulati, 1995; Cummings and Bromiley, 1996; Möllering, 2006). By way of illustration, previous experience promotes trust-building, which is emergent through reoccurring interactions. This view is also adopted by Ring and Van de ven (1994); they interestingly argue that over time, psychological contracts that are informal compensate for formal contractual protections. As the dependence on trust develops, trust becomes essential, as a consequence, for ensuring the long-term viability of relationships (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Zaheer *et al.*, 1998).

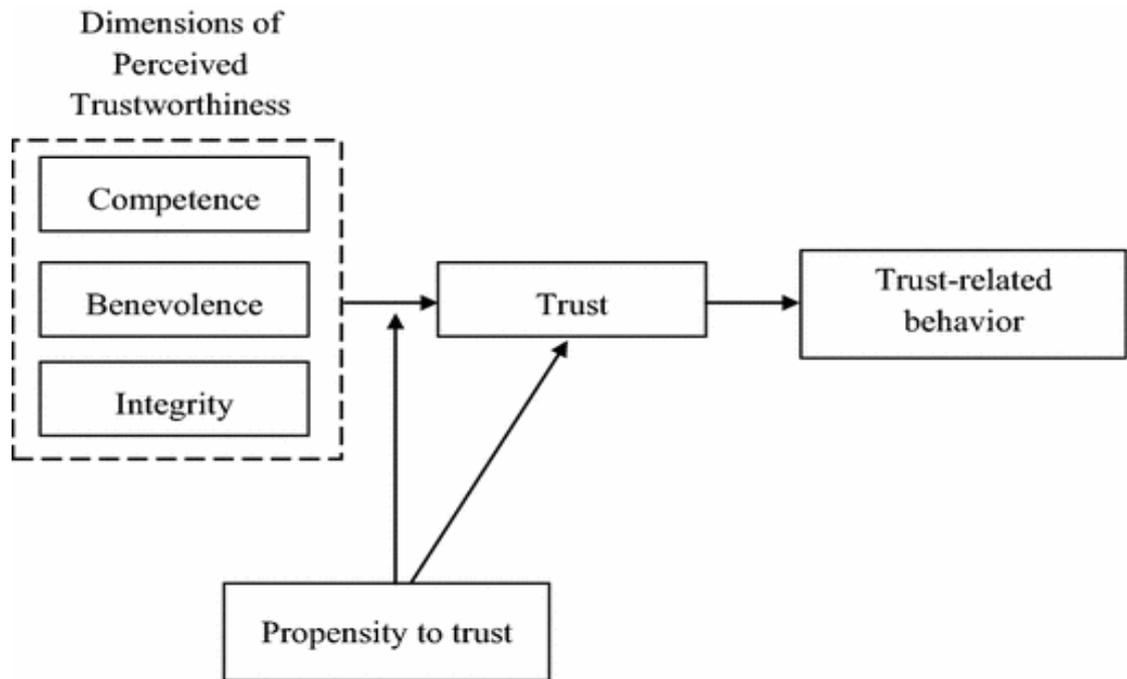


Fig 2: **Factors of perceived trustworthiness**

**Source:** Mayer et al. (1995) an integrative model of organizational trust.

The above model labelled *figure 2* describes trust before the formation of any form of relational exchange between the trustor and the trustee. In this regard, the trustor sources information from a third party about the trustee’s integrity and observation. The model also indicates that integrity is more vital in the early stage of the relationship because the information about the trustee’s benevolence and ability might be inaccessible in the first stage. As a result, the trustor will gain insight into the other aspects of the trustee as the relationship progresses.

The above explanation indicates that trust is created between supervisors and their employees through their actions of displaying (commitment, integrity, and benevolence) and their behaviour. These behaviours are reflected in the leader’s traits, behaviour, style, and skill, and they all are essential in the process of trust-building and in examining the trustworthy behaviour of a leader (Prime and Salib, 2014).

In support of the above claim, an integrative model of trust, which is mainly adopted and probably the most cited model, was introduced by Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (2006), where they considered the trustee and the trustor characteristics and taking risk in a trusting relationship. They suggest that the trust level between supervisors and employees and the level at which they perceive risk in a given situation might lead to risk-taking in the relationship. Accordingly, the model posits that trust can be elucidated before a relationship between the supervisor and employee has formed since a trustee can collect data on the credibility of the trustee from third-party sources. This means that honesty/sincerity/integrity is necessary to build trust at the outset of a relationship. The relationship is necessary to be built further to provide an employee with information concerning the trustee's benevolence (Nooteboom and Six, 2003).

#### **2.4 Trustworthiness and Leaders' trustworthy Behaviour**

Different scholars have developed several trust models in an organisation over time (Mayer et al., 1995; Whitener et al., 2008; Hope-Hailey et al., 2014). However, they all tend to have the characteristics that lead to the same outcome. The distinction between trust and trustworthiness is relevant since trustworthiness refers to the trustee's characteristics (Mayer et al., 1995), which tend to be a key element in the trust process (Chen et al., 2011). Trustworthiness is generally a business ethics issue: "To be ethical is to be trustworthy" (Dietz & Gillespie, 2011), which requires honesty, integrity, promise-keeping, and several factors. Trusting values typically apply to trustworthiness, although the aspects of trustworthiness are conceptualised by some researchers as elements of trust or facets of trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Mishra (1996) refers to the trustworthiness factor competency, openness, concern/benevolence, and reliability by multidimensionality. According to Möllering et al. (2004), there is no overall consensus on whether all four should be part of the trust definition. Dietz (2011) argues that trustworthiness is the foundation of confidence. According to Mayer et al. (2011), the immediate precursors of trust are ability, benevolence, and integrity.

There are certain qualities employees also watch out for in their supervisors. These attributes play a crucial role because they will determine if the supervisor will earn greater or lesser trust from the employee. According to Hope Hailey and Farndale (2010), while these characteristics are not unrelated, they may vary independently of the other. Based on the suggestion of Hope - Hailey (2012), these factors are the foundation of trustworthiness. However, this study argues that trustworthiness should be considered a continuum. This implies that a trustee is neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy. Each of these factors can vary along a continuum.

Mayer *et al.* (1995) distinguish trust from trustworthiness by analysing three critical characteristics of the trustee to provide insights into the fundamental construct of trust. Mayer *et al.* (1995) approached the study of trust by considering an integrated model that promotes the trustee's characteristics in exchange relationships. They recommend that they are deemed trustworthy if the trustees' ability, benevolence, and integrity are high. In their review, ability depends on the competence and attributes that facilitate the trustee's impact on the particular task. At the same time, they imply that benevolence is required to behave in a positive manner toward the trustor by acting in a way that is anticipated. On the other hand, integrity entails the perception that the trustee would comply with the collection of standards considered tolerable to the trustor. The three mentioned characteristics are identified as the antecedents to trust (Mayer *et al.*, 2005; Colquitt *et al.*, 2007), while Hope-Hailey *et al.* (2012) refer to them as the pillar of trust with the inclusion of predictability.

Several researchers have resounded the view of Hope Hailey *et al.* (2014) that when individuals in an organisation demonstrate qualities such as ability, integrity, empathy, competence, and benevolence, they might be seen as trustworthy. At the same time, many leadership and trust theorists have linked these qualities to trustworthiness. McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) attribute trustworthy behaviour to an individual trait. They claim that these traits are consistent with trust elements. While several scholars have proved the behaviour of the leader in the workplace to be a significant factor in the concept of trust and the forming of relationships, Dirks (2006) describes some theoretical frameworks that can be adopted in trust research.

*Attribution theory:* this theory, according to (Calder, 1977) is used in attempts to comprehend supervisors' underlying explanations of actions and their perceptions and how they judge their employees. In the study of trust, the development of trust can be linked to this theory or seen as an attributional process. This indicates that the trustworthiness of the supervisor is built on his perception of whether or not the behaviour of an individual is instigated by internal or situational factors (Dirks, 2006). This approach can also be equated to the character-based perspective if the untrustworthy behaviour of the leader is sensed to be caused by the lack of integrity, benevolence, and empathy instead of situational factors.

*Exchange theory:* when intending to understand how the past behaviours in the relationship are used to diagnose trustworthiness in future exchanges, the exchange theory becomes significant because primarily it focuses on social processes (Blau, 1964; Konovsky and Pugh, 1994). From every indication, the onus is placed on the leader to build and maintain trust (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Whitener *et al.*, 1998). This study, however, argues that building trust and maintaining relationships in the workplace is a two-way factor. Every organizational actor has a responsibility for building and maintaining trust. The exchange theory approach has substantial parallels with the relationship perspective of trust.

These theoretical perspectives and other theories related to the concept under study will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Based on the trust definitions of Mayer *et al.* (1995) and Rousseau *et al.* (1998), it alludes to the fact that employees expect that their supervisor will perform a particular deed. Lewis and Weigert (1985) noted that trustworthiness is one of the drivers of that expectation. They further stated that the trustworthiness of the leader inspires trust in the employees. As a result, it can be assumed that the principle of trustworthiness is fundamental to anticipating and predicting trust levels.

## **2.5 Leadership behaviour, employee's perceptions and how they shape the trust-based leadership**

Scholars have looked into trust to understand how different variables influence it. Trust is the foundation of a leader-employee solid relationship and can affect an employee's effectiveness, view of the organisation, and work satisfaction (Werbel & Henriques, 2009). The research is also interested in understanding the factors that give rise to trust between a leader and an employee since employee-employer trust can lead to a positive or negative outcome (Gibson & Petrosko, 2014).

The relationship between managers and employees is primarily influenced by trust. Scholars claim that team-based relationships within an organisation cannot develop in the workplace without a foundation of trust (Sousa-Lima, Michel and Caetano, 2013). The concept of workplace trust provides a slew of advantages inside a leader-member interaction that transcends to the entire organisation. As posited by Ahmadi et al. (2014), work engagement, commitment and performance effectiveness all improve when there is trust between the leader and the company.

According to Axelrod (1984), trust is critical in building collaboration and long-term partnerships based on constructive behaviour. Trust was conceived as the actor's anticipation of the other party's ability, benevolence, and integrity, particularly in a risky, uncertain, or unexpected change (Blomqvist & Stahle, 2000). According to Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis, and Winograd (2000), trust is based on individuals' positive perceptions about organisational roles, connections, experiences, and interdependencies among various members of intents and behaviours. Mosavi, Abedi, and Ghaedi (2013) expand their argument by dividing trust into two primary factors: the individual's personal experiences within the organisational context and the individual's experiences outside the organisation where they work. Here, trust is based on the perception of fairness, equity, and justice in the workplace and the fulfilment of pledges or duties.

Tzafrir (2005) presented his view that trust is reciprocal, so for supervisors to earn their subordinates' trust, they must first understand, trust, and treat those same subordinates with respect and fairness. However, as Malhotra and Murnighan (2002) argue, trust within the organisation stems from organisational trustworthiness rather than any particular situation

or event. Although Seok & Chiew (2013) focus on employers' trust in workers' ability, compassion, and honesty, this study examines these aspects as elements of an organisation's trustworthiness and how they improve and enable trust formation between leaders and subordinates.

Collaboration appears essential if one takes leadership to be the idea that followers would freely work to achieve the leader's goals. Since trust is thought to enhance collaboration, research into the actions that foster trust will give valuable insight into leadership. Sousa-Lima, Michel and Caetano (2013) feel that the capacity to build trust is the most crucial aspect of leadership. As a result, learning more about what fosters a trust-based relationship between leaders and employees is critical.

The discovery of established leader behaviours that contribute to trust has been the subject of much academic research. The fabric of leadership is naturally interwoven with trust and associated notions. In general, trust is defined by a sense of danger and willing vulnerability to the acts of others (Rehman, Qingren and Weiming, 2017). According to several studies, it can be observed that one of the most critical factors that lead to trust in a leader-member relationship is leadership actions and employee perception.

Perception is the process by which an employee organises and analyses their observations to provide meaning to their surroundings, and it substantially impacts their work behaviour (Suar, Tewari, and Chaturbedi, 2006). Employees' impressions of leadership practices may either help or hinder the development of trust between the leader and the employee (Yilmaz and Altinkurt, 2012). Salamon and Robinson (2008) coined the terms "felt trustworthiness" and "felt trust," which they defined as workers' perceptions of their bosses' confidence in them. Being supervised by an untrustworthy individual may be psychologically stressful, and this stress will likely influence one's job attitude (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002).

Sitkin, Hernandez, and Long (2007) investigated personal, relational, and contextual leadership behaviours as three groups of behaviours that they believed would build trust in a leader-member relationship. They identified five personal leadership behaviours: honesty, vision, expertise, creativity, and passion. They stated that concern, respect, and procedural fairness are three hallmarks of relational leadership, while coherence and coordination are the two characteristics of contextual leadership activities. Concern and

respect for followers on the leader's side are similar to Bradley's (1999) notion of servant leadership, which held that putting the needs and interests of followers ahead of the leader demonstrated authentic leadership. According to their findings, contextual factors are not relevant in and of themselves, and relational leadership conduct is the most important aspect in building trust in leaders. Personal leadership conduct was also important; these characteristics interacted with relational leadership behaviour.

To increase their subordinates' perception of trustworthiness, Gilley, Shelton, and Gilley (2011) argue that leaders must incorporate developmental leadership ideas and practices. The process of providing individuals with the information, skills, and opportunities they need to grow and become more successful is known as developmental leadership. According to McIntyre and Foti (2013), progressive leadership entails establishing a synergistic connection with employees, with the primary benefit of establishing a cooperative collaboration. This collaboration should be non-judgmental, free of fear, personal and professional, and built on two-way communication, trust, honesty, and engagement (Gilley, Shelton, & Gilley, 2011). Furthermore, developmental leadership allows managers to better serve their employees via various activities such as integrated communications, developmental evaluations, recognition and reward systems, and performance growth and development (McIntyre and Foti, 2013).

The idea of fair treatment, like every other variable, is far-reaching. The concept of fair treatment has long been considered a critical leadership trait (Dirks & Ferris, 2002; Sitkin et al., 2007). Empathy, compassion, and concern are values that underpin the idea of equal and fair treatment. Also, empathy, compassion, and concern often result in beneficent behaviours on the part of the leader, which has been linked to the development of trust in several studies (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Furthermore, perceived supervisor fairness has been seen to promote trust between leaders and employees. The degree to which one's management is seen as fair is defined as supervisor-focused fairness (Colquitt & Rodell, 2015). Fairness in the distribution of responsibility and rewards is critical in determining a leader's fairness (Seijts et al., 2015). Fairness, trust, and mutual respect are the foundations of a friendly employee relationship (Cross and Dundon, 2019). When subordinates believe their leaders to be fair and encouraging, employee misconduct is minimal (Everton Jolton & Mastrangelo, 2007). Employees who have been mistreated will have an unfavourable attitude toward

management. Fairness in an organisation is judged by how subordinates are treated and whether or not the co-workers are treated relatively (Seijts et al., 2015).

Mutual attention is essential for successfully creating trust between subordinate and their employees. Employees in the organisation want their leaders to be concerned about their needs and desires (Boerner, Eisenbeiss & Griesser, 2007).

Bass (1990) coined the word “consideration” to explain how leaders should be concerned about employee needs. In this context, consideration as a leader includes being friendly, participatory, welcoming, and interested in the employee’s welfare (Seltzer & Bass, 1990).

Previous studies have found that ethical behaviour is essential to building trust in leader-employee relationships; however, these studies employed different terms to describe ethical behaviour, such as integrity (Brower et al., 2000; Burke et al., 2007), honesty (Gilley, 2006), and credibility (Farling, Stone & Winston, 1999). When discussing trust, the issue of ethics is crucial since it may either function as a catalyst or an inhibitor of trust in a relationship. In the context of a leader and an employee, the employee’s and the leader’s alignment on ethical issues fosters a trustworthy relationship. However, if the employee perceives the supervisor as unethical, it might hinder the development of trust in such a situation.

When subordinates perceive their supervisors to be trustworthy (i.e. the supervisors exhibit behaviours that subordinates perceive to be trustworthy), the subordinates may interpret these behaviours as the supervisor being committed to them and, as a result, they may respond by trying to reciprocate these behaviours which will in turn foster trust between both parties. This may present itself in a variety of ways. On the one hand, the employee may start to appreciate some characteristics of the supervisor, such as the supervisor’s behaviour, personal traits, or achievements, and may feel happy to cooperate with the supervisor. However, the individual may or may not incorporate the supervisor’s qualities as his or her own.

On the other hand, because the supervisor’s attitudes and actions are compatible with the subordinate’s value systems, the subordinate may mentally absorb some of the supervisor’s behaviours. As a result, the subordinate views his/her values as identical to those of the supervisor. Thirdly, the subordinate may desire to commit himself/herself to the supervisor and preserve the supervisor’s interests.

## 2.6 Distrust

Trustworthiness consists of assertions and anticipations based on the shared trust of individuals. This is difficult to internalise since the process of trust in an individual organisation is multidimensional, and every individual in the organisation has expectations. Consequently, it is essential to uncover the most common trustworthy factors in the relationships and processes of social interaction between supervisors and their employees. In general, one of the reasons this study is focused on supervisor and employee relationship alludes to the fact that the behaviour and relationship of organizational actors has a ripple effect. If employees trust their supervisors, this could be interpreted that the leaders are credible from the employee's viewpoint. However, this generates concern and raises a question: if employees do not trust their supervisors, does it imply that the supervisors are untrustworthy due to distrust or low trust?

Distrust signifies a null relationship and denotes inappropriate behaviour within individuals. Hence, that behaviour is rather worrying than beneficial in the trust development process. To create a positive and encouraging environment in the organisation, supervisors must inspire their employees (Kramer and Cook, 2004, Keyton and Smith, 2009, Elsbash, Stigliani and Stroud, 2012). Tullberg (2008) points out that overestimating or underestimating employees' feelings affects the trust process. It is also a drawback to the organisation when the supervisor-subordinate relationship is centred on its followers' false mental impression of its leaders.

In previous sessions, a plethora of trust benefits was revealed on enhancing cooperation and reducing uncertainty. The viewpoint that social interactions are shaped by trust has been debated across different literatures (Gambetta, 1988; Kramer and Tyler, 1996; Lewicki and McAllister, 1998). Nevertheless, further attention is required to understanding the pervasive nature of distrust. The reasons for distrust are existent given that the incentives of trust in exchange relationships abound. The adverse effects of distrust in deterring positive relationship and cooperation outcomes have been significantly investigated (Robinson, 1996; Bottom *et al.*, 2002; Croson *et al.*, 2003; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009).

Distrust results from violating trust, and it rises based on the extent of the violation. Attention was drawn by Lewis and Weigert (1985) to corroborate that when there is a decline in trust, the likelihood of ending an existing relationship becomes apparent. Consequently, there has been an increase in the scholarly literature on distrust, which has led to the diverse conceptualisation of the construct. Distrust develops when perceived anticipations reflect a lack of benevolence, ability, integrity (and all other factors), which undercuts the relationship between organizational actors. The effect of distrust gradually decreases trust and cooperation (Tyler and Kramer, 1996; Lewicki, 2006).

By illustration, Bell et al. (2002) indicate that abuse of benevolence, ability, and honesty contribute to trust decline. In comparison, Gillespie and Dietz (2009) claim that the display of distrust leads to the dissolution of partnerships. Although trust has significant social and relationship components, negative attitudes and moral outrage against the transgressor are caused by the breach of trust (Bachman et al., 2015). The probable outcome of this breach of trust includes the social standard breakdown between the victims and the violator.

Distrust and trust are often seen as different but linked concepts (Hardin, 1993; Jukka et al., 2017). According to Lewicki et al. (1998), trust and mistrust are two distinct but related aspects. They describe mistrust in light of negative expectancies of someone else's behaviour based on prior knowledge. They refer to the propensity to assign nefarious intents and shield oneself from the consequences of such behaviour as negative expectations. Trust decreases when breaches are so severe that they totally destroy confidence (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996).

By way of illustration, there is always a relationship decline when either the supervisor or the employees perceive a violation of an agreement, either written or verbal, or when there is a consistent decline in a supervisor's integrity. They further describe distrust as the convinced negative anticipation of the supervisor's or subordinate's actions.

The seminal work of Deutsch (1973) describe distrust as the confidence a subordinate place in the supervisor's unwanted conduct which stems from the knowledge of his purposes. In simple terms, an expectation that a supervisor will not behave as hoped. Other scholars define distrust as the non-expectation of responsible and capable

behaviour from a supervisor (Barber, 1983), while Sitkin and Roth (1993) maintain that distrust comprises of unfulfilled expectation of a supervisor's behaviour

Distrust can emerge from a prior experience in which either the supervisor or subordinate abuses trust in a relationship. This can happen in situations where the supervisor does not meet up with their expectations or promises. In this sense, there is an increase in the level of distrust which is due to past experiences violations and the degree of the violation (Tomlinson and Lewicki, 2006). When trust is violated in the relationship, it affects both the supervisor and subordinate (Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2017). From the subordinate's perspective, when supervisors violate trust, it creates a negative perception of the supervisor and affects the relationship as a whole.

On the other hand, when there is an initial violation of trust, it increases the tendency for more violations. This means that distrust lacks the confidence, motivations and motives that sustain the willingness to trust (Lewicki *et al.*, 1998). Consequently, it is impossible to take for granted the basic norms of behaviour required in relationships. It has also been revealed in extant studies that when there are numerous and severe trust violations, it becomes difficult to repair when compared to a single act of trust violation (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2004). In the dearth of differing evidence, a high degree of trust is primarily when the supervisors and subordinates are in the early stage of the relationship (Robinson, 1996; McKnight *et al.*, 1998; Gillespie and Dietz, 2009). Concurrently, when distrust sets in at the early stage of a relationship between supervisors and their employees, it has a more damaging effect than the lack of trust that happens in the relationship later (Lount *et al.*, 2008; Kramer and Lewicki, 2010). As succinctly described by Lewicki and Bunker (1996), trust is fragile in the early stage of the relationship because there is no past interaction one can count on. This, however, results in a progressive loss of trust between the two parties and the resultant distrust is therefore reflected in the decreased willingness of the subordinate to contribute to the continuation of the relationship (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002).

Lewicki *et al.* (1998) point out that disruption of social norms is a possible outcome between supervisors and subordinates when a breach of trust occurs. Further, in their analysis, they assert that the concept of trust and distrust are independent but linked dimensions. Based on their insight, distrust is viewed in terms of negative expectations about the behaviour of other people (Hardin, 1993; Jukka *et al.*, 2017). Trust decreases when serious breaches invalidate the existing trust (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996). More often than not. Usually, distrust is seen as a vital relationship-transforming occurrence as trust is adjudged to promote cooperation within relationships. In this regard, the indication of distrust in this context signals that the alliance may not be preserved, leading to a downward spiral in trust below the initial level of trust (Kim *et al.*, 2004). When subordinates are reinforced by their belief that the risk of trust may be too high for them to undertake, it leaves them in a position not to trust their supervisor (Hardin, 1993; Levi, 1996). They struggle to become better off economically by failing to trust. As a Result, Lewicki and Wiethoff (2000) discovered that distrust occurs at two levels in supervisor and subordinate relationships. These two levels of trust are calculus-based distrust and identification-based distrust. The calculus-based distrust relates to the confident negative assumption of another's behaviour, which outweighs the cost of sustaining trust. In transactions of insufficient duration, this degree of distrust is prevalent and tends to occur in the early stages of the relationship. On the other hand, identification-based trust implies the confident negative perception of a partner's actions based on the perceived inconsistency of belief, different ambitions, and negative emotional attachment (Tomlinson and Lewicki, 2006). In this respect, supervisors and subordinates have little in common in that they characterise the relationship by conflicts that are irreconcilable and intractable.

Lewicki (2006) argues that within organisations, when subordinates have a perception that there has been a violation by their supervisor in the psychological contract of the workplace, this automatically allows distrust to set in. hence, leading to a reduced level of job performance and more likely, a reduced level of organizational behaviour. This claim builds on Simons and McLean-Parks' (2000) perception that supervisors who show low honesty in words and behaviour can impact the organisation's profitability.

A more thorough study of the view of distrust concerns problems of ability, benevolence, empathy, competence, predictability, and honesty. These dimensions reflect characteristics in the view of Mayer et al. (2005) in assessing the trustworthiness of actors in the relationship. Accordingly, cross-cultural research of Chinese and Finnish managers by Jukka et al. (2017) revealed traits of mistrust such as dishonesty, weak communication and renegeing on previous promises-imposed restrictions on subsequent interactions. The view of Lewicki and Bunker (1996) comes closer in a number of ways, as victims affected by distrust could follow either of the three outcomes when there is a perception of distrust; (1) ending the relationship; (2) renegotiating the relationship by fostering its growth; and (3) restore the relationship to its initial state.

Overall, distrust creates difficult circumstances that restrict cooperation and interaction in a relationship between supervisor and subordinate. As Gronroos (1994) shows, the basis of unfulfilled expectations or social responsibilities worsens the relationship as longer benefits result from the stability of relationships. Hence, the need to maintain relationships that are mutually beneficial. On the basis of this perspective, it is important to remember that if trust is regarded as the 'glue' that keeps relationships together (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2017), it is absolutely crucial to preserve and retain trust in order for relationships to flourish. Debatably, from a western viewpoint, the literature on mistrust may be insufficient to describe distrust in the sense of Nigerian public sector organisation. Therefore, due to the very contextual nature of this thesis, it is suggested that the holistic mechanism of trust and distrust should be uncovered with more qualitative examinations (Lin et al., 2015; Smets et al., 2015; Jukka et al., 2017). Hence, to explain the interactions between these two constructs, the empirical foundation of this thesis draws on these recommendations.

## **2.7 Repairing trust**

Trust repair approaches continue to be challenging, particularly as it pertains to relationships between a trustor and a trustee, in this thesis's case, between the supervisor and subordinate. While this study focuses on leader-subordinate relations,

the complexities of interpersonal trust repair reflect the diversity of actors, such as employees, suppliers, supervisors, clients, investors, regulators, government bodies and the public at large, representing 'trustees' of institutions and organisations. Because of varying levels of access, exposure, and thus insight into the organisation's conduct and organizational arrangement and functionality, these stakeholders have different interests, vulnerabilities, power, and expectations in relation to organisations and institutions (Pfarrer et al., 2008). They may develop trust in different ways.

Kramer and Lewicki (2010) noted that if the unfavourable conditions to maintain trust are not created, then the notion of simply repairing trust becomes irrelevant. Laying the bases of this session, trust repair focuses on a situation where the supervisor has taken advantage of an employee's susceptibility and attempts to mend the broken trust or relationship. Dirks et al. (2009) agree by describing trust repair as the process in which a trustee attempts to increase trust following a scenario in which a transgression (i.e., untrustworthy behaviour) is seen to have happened. This implies that restoring trust occurs when the actions of the supervisor or employees or both parties restore the relationship to its previous positive state, given the focus on repairing damaged perceptions. This means 'relationship repair happens when the transgression causes a positive state(s) to dissolve, or negative states to develop, as one or both parties see it, and the efforts of one or both sides to return the relationship substantively to a positive state. In essence, the main objective of trust reparation is to restore collaboration and, in particular, to reestablish the trustee's positive expectations from the other party and to restore the will to be vulnerable (Kramer and Lewicki, 2010; Desmet, Cremer & Van Dijk, 2011a, 2011b).

One of the most influential seminal works of Lewicki (2006) presents contributions to the repair of trust. He argued in his thesis that supervisors and subordinates often pursue actions to repair and restore trust when it has been violated. In such cases, when supervisors or the subordinate apologise and accept responsibility for their actions, in most cases, it is very effective compared to the parties involved continue to play the "blame game". When the apologies are made with honest intentions, quickly, sincerely with full acceptance of responsibility, backed up with positive

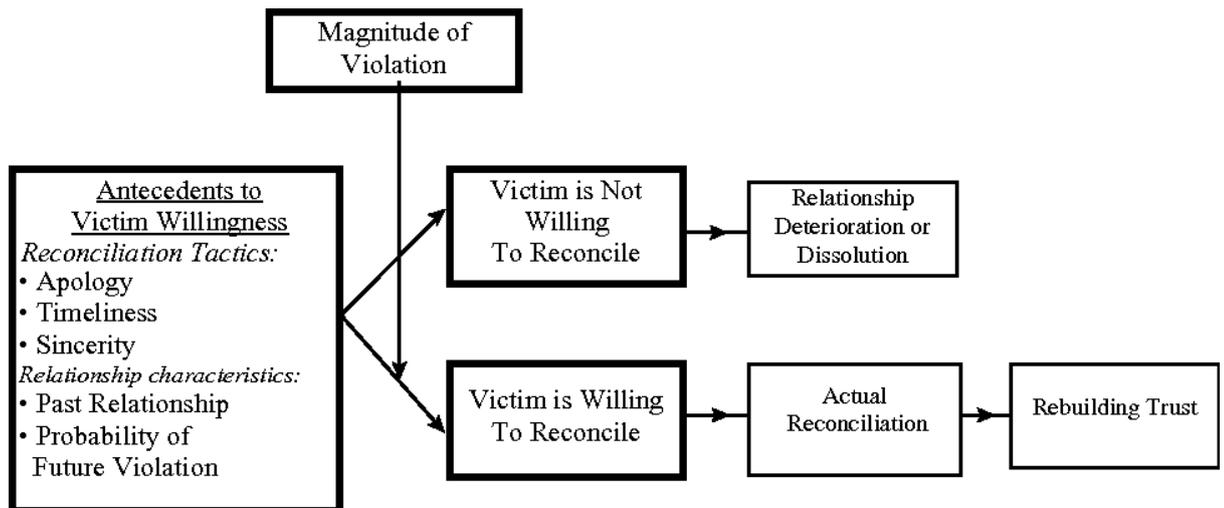
actions, they become more effective (Lewicki, 2006). However, the process of restoring trust might not be as easy as the initial trust-building process. It will now require an increased effort to restore trustworthiness, benevolence, honesty, efficiency, and reliability for all parties, and this can only take place over time. Therefore, as Lewicki (2006) points out that while trust rebuilding may be necessary for efficient conflict resolution to be successful, managing trust can be the most successful method to prevent the devastating consequences of broken relationships in the long run.

Acknowledging the potential for the repair of trust, further studies have argued that accepting apologies as responses to trust breaches may not be entirely adequate, as apologies are frequently viewed as cheap talk (Farrell and Gibbons, 1989; Dirks et al., 2009). They contend for the significance of substantive responses that involve elements that are tangible as more trustworthy responses to trust repair. By way of illustration, Sitkin and Roth (1993) indicate that implementing strategies such as monitoring can boost behavioural reliability, thereby restoring trust. The work of Bottom et al. (2002) also confirms that while the adoption of apologies can be effective to a certain level, substantive improvements might have more important effects on trust restoration.

In another trust repair conceptual framework developed by Gillespie and Dietz (2009), they classify the repair of trust into different stages: (a) the foremost is the immediate response stage which involves the violator acknowledging the mistake and showing regretfulness while making sure that the incident is thoroughly investigated and putting forward resources to avert reoccurrence. (b) following the immediate response stage is the diagnosis stage; in this stage, the violation is systematically identified, and modalities are put in place to prevent a future event of a similar occurrence. This needs to be timely and accurate. (3) the reforming intervention stage focuses on apologies by the trust violator and making necessary reparations as applicable. (4) evaluating the success and potential efficacy of the measures in deterring further breaches of trust.

While this study has argued that trust is essential in relationships, reconciliation and trust rebuilding are two sequential and fundamental processes required for trust repair (Bottom et al., 2002). Reconciliation is based on the attempts taken by both supervisor and subordinate to fix problems. Reconciliation is often seen as the expression of forgiveness which includes the conscious decision of the victim to set aside resentment and the desire for the violator to be punished (Tomlinson et al., 2004). Conversely, in the case of restoring trust, it also entails necessary steps to regain the strength of the relationship (Aquino et al., 2001). By way of illustration, in situations where there has been a violation of trust, the victims, the employees, may be able to continue their relationship by expressing the desire to open the door for reconciliation and restoration. The practical value of restoring trust lies in the ability to restore a relationship after a breach of trust.

In the conceptual model of Tomlinson et al. (2004), they pointed out the significant antecedents of the willingness of a victim's (subordinate) for the reconciliation of trust after it has been breached. Showing in Figure X below, they placed emphasis on the claim that where a violator is unwilling to reconcile, the relationship may be terminated. Hence, when the victim is willing to reconcile, it amplifies the possibility of rebuilding trust. Nevertheless, in reconciling broken trust relationships, they suggest three dominant strategies to be adopted by the violator; (1) apologies are seen as very critical in reconciling relationships after trust has been violated. It is considered a requirement because it conveys a feeling of acceptance and guilt on the violator's side. (2) The timeliness of the restorative effort of a violator is most effective after the trust violation may have happened; this signals that the violator is concerned and has an interest in the relationship by making fast amendments. (3) In restoring the relationship, sincerity conveys an honest sense of remorse for trust violation. Overall, this has a crucial influence on the ability of the survivor to restore the relationship.



**Figure 3: A model of trust reconciliation and rebuilding**

**Source: Adapted from Tomlinson *et al.* (2004)**

In their analysis, Bies and Tripp (1997) investigated the procedural variations of retaliation that occurs after the violation of trust. They report that most respondents preferred forgiveness rather than punishment in response to trust violations when interpreting a range of responses to trust violations from their research. Forgiveness is undeniably interesting as the victim tries to heal and restore trust rather than the perpetrator. One of the most theoretical insights of Lewicki and Bunker’s (1996) research on trust is perhaps how they reach a conclusion that in order for parties to engage in the repair of trust, they need to follow specific processes; (a) the parties involved in the reconciliation should be willing to invest their time and energy in the trust repair process; (b) ensure the investment is worthwhile for short and long-term gains from the relationship; (c) perceive that the benefit expected offset any possible substitutions. In this regard, they prefer or conceptualise four steps needed in the trust repair process for each party.

On the violator’s part, Lewicki and Bunker (1996) recommend that the violator need to engage in the following steps: (1) they need to acknowledge and be able to recognise that a violation has occurred; (2) they need to understand or ascertain the steps that led to the violation and what are the actions or inactions that made the violation happen; (3) they need to be an admittance of the destruction caused by the

violation and (4) be able to take responsibility for the violation. The victim's conduct reflects their second suggestion. Three fundamentally alternative courses of action were proposed, which the victim can adopt: (1) the victim may refuse the terms and conditions for repairing the relationship; (2) by demanding 'unreasonable' acts of reparation to be fulfilled by the violator, the victim can accept forgiveness; (3) the victim may in totality admit forgiveness and request that no further acts of redress are necessary. The study, however, suggests that the need to collect data to determine its validity is a significant limitation of their model.

Consequently, Since the repair of trust has been examined from a number of perspectives, scholars such as Lewicki and Brinsfield (2017) adopt a four-step cycle phase to trust repair (see Figure X); (A) the need for pre-existing trust level between the supervisor and subordinate; (B) an action that violates trust and the supervisor's recognition that trust has been breached; (C) the violator undertakes short term repair effort in response to the initiatives of the victim and; (4) further attempts are made to ensure a long-term repair of trust. On the other hand, they recommend the following methods to resolve the short-term trust restoration approach. (1) verbal repair that involves the use of words, reasons and explanations to address the breach; (2) usage of the apology to clarify the breach by incorporating emotional content of remorse and guarantee of behavioural change; (3) Using tangible compensations for the costs of infringements without requiring recourse to verbal statement and; (4) a denial of the breach of trust by the wrongdoer, which can be successful in situations where the credibility of the wrongdoer is in question.

Additionally, Kim et al. discuss the long-term strategies of trust repair, and this includes; (1) adopting a structural arrangement that oversees impending interactions such as policies and procedures; (2) reframing experiences so that the emotional view of the damage is minimised; (3) forgiveness, which indicates a desire to preserve the collaboration and rebuilding the relationship; (4) when the trustee remain silent, it is viewed as a technique for rebuilding trust because it allows the victim the chance to make amends. Therefore, even though the strength of this model resides in its simple nature, its lack of empirical research remains a big challenge.

Overall, each of these inputs contains different expectations of trust-repair ploys, and no one tactic is assigned to be superior to the other as such. In addition, this research repudiates the view that the nature of trust and Repairing of trust extends to all cultures (Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2017). This substantiates the position advocated by Dietz et al. (2010), indicating that culture affects the creation of trust, so there could be variations in delivery and understanding across cultures. As a result, the cultural background is influenced by variations in religion, ethnicity and family/kinship. Therefore, this study claims that the models mentioned above tend to disregard cultural differences. Empirical research is thus essential to authenticate the repair of trust models in cultural settings. Accordingly, this study supports this argument by empiricising a contextual approach to dynamics of trust-repair within the context of Nigeria.

## **2.8 Managing Employee Trust Perceptions**

Axelrod (1984) characterises trust as a vital element in fostering cooperation which can give rise to long-term relationships. Also, he describes trust as the actor's anticipation of the other party's ability, benevolence, and behaviour, particularly in situations of risk, uncertainties, or unexpected change (Blomqvist & Stahle, 2000). According to Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis, and Winograd (2000), trust is related to the positive expectations that individuals have for organisational positions, interactions, experiences, and the interdependencies of the many elements of intention and behaviours. Mosavi, Abedi, and Ghaedi (2013) extend their thesis by categorising trust into two key elements. The first is the individual's experience inside the organisation in which they work.

Here, the perception of fair treatment, fairness, and equity in the workplace and the fulfilment of commitments or responsibilities are all factors that contribute to trust. The second element is the management's confidence and capacity to undertake and achieve futuristic targets based on prior experiences with regard to previous objectives or goals.

Research identifies various organisational formal and informal control measures to manage employee trust perceptions. These measures include devices, systems, information-based routines, reward systems, procedures, and policies aimed at maintaining or changing employees' behaviour so that individuals' goals are consistent and in sync with the goals and objectives of the organisation (Merchant & Vander Stede, 2007). Therefore, the management of employee trust perceptions would result from manipulating and controlling how employees perceive their leaders' trustworthiness, focusing on components such as competence, integrity, and goodwill (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Managing the trust perceptions of employees would thus result from the control and manipulation of employee perceptions of a leader's trustworthiness, focusing on factors such as leaders' ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). As a result, in achieving employee trust, the leader would use policies, values, norms, strategies, and other means to influence employee perceptions of organisational trustworthiness through policies, values, norms, and strategies.

In his study, Tzafir (2005) contends that trust is reciprocal and that in order for leaders to gain trust from their employees, they first must recognise, trust, and treat their subordinates with fairness and respect. However, Malhotra and Murnighan (2002) argue that trust inside the organisation emanates from the leader's trustworthiness rather than any particular circumstance or condition. This reasoning is consistent with Mayer et al. (1995), who argue that trust is based on how ability, benevolence, and honesty are perceived. While Seok and Chiew (2013) explain this from the standpoint of employers and their faith in workers' skill, benevolence, and honesty, this research seeks to examine these elements as components of a trustworthy leader, particularly within the public sector, as well as their impact on improving and enabling employee or subordinate trust.

## **2.9 The lack of research on trust in an African/Nigerian context**

Most scholars contend that trust development is sequential over time from a low to a high degree (Mayer et al., 1995; Lewicki and Bunker, 1996). In several trust articles, researchers such as (Dirks and Ferrin, 2001; Mayer *et al.*, 2005; Burke *et al.*, 2007,

Hope-Hailey *et al.*, 2012) maintain that interpersonal trust has numerous noteworthy organizational benefits, in a similar vein, when there is no trust among organizational actors, it will probably hamper its development. From reviewed studies, there are indications that trust development or distrust is viewed as a relational context, i.e., establishing and developing in interaction and relationships between organizational actors (Mayer *et al.*, 1995), and especially in leader-subordinate relationships.

Of particular interest is a lack of research on the influences of supervisor's behaviour and relationship as it relates to interpersonal trust between supervisors and their employees in the Nigerian public sector organisation (Lyon, 2005; Jackson *et al.*, 2008; Amoako and Lyon, 2014; Amoako, 2019). Arguing along this line, a dearth of research addresses these two core aspects of trust-based leadership (behavioural and relational) in a Nigerian public sector organisation.

Supervisors relate to their employees using different criteria. For example, the perception of a supervisor in the ability of his employee to contribute to task positively and demonstrate it with a good outcome or increased performance, they appear to build a relationship with them and positively influence the employee work engagement, motivation, and work welfare (Hope Hailey and Gustaffan, 2014). This kind of relationship is described as role making process between the supervisor and the employee; this shows that leader adopts the use of interpersonal exchange to differentiate their leadership which they might have with their employees. Therefore, this indicates that employees perceive the leadership-making process differently. To a large extent, it also depends on the degree of responsibility, shared interaction and negotiations. Hailey, Gustafsson and Abbey (2014) observed that a leader needs to employ actions to create a trust climate in an organisation. These behaviours are outlined as trust in employees, shared identity, visibility and accessibility, supportive environment, and fairness (Hailey, Gustafsson and Abbey 2014). Generally, how it is possible to create a climate of trust based on mutual respect, honesty, and the right kind of leadership in an organisation or between leaders and employees remains an interesting and vast area where there is a lack of research in the African context and specifically in the Nigerian public sector.

Going further into this study, the trustor will be identified as the supervisors or leaders in the Nigerian public sector organisation. At the same time, the trustee will be recognised as employees or subordinates in the Nigerian public sector organisation. Hence, the empirical component of this thesis would attempt to examine factors that give rise to trust and the effect of a trusting relationship in a Nigerian public sector organisation.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the concept of trust by examining it as defined by several authors, manifested as cognitive and affective. It further examined trust are different levels (interpersonal, institutional and inter-organisation). This study adopted interpersonal trust because it aligns with the aims and objective of the study under focus. Furthermore, as discussed by scholars, factors that give rise to trust and its effects were discussed. The discussion on trustworthiness and leaders' trustworthy behaviours were guided by the model of Mayer et al. (1995) and Hope – Hailey et al. (2014). Difference gaps were also identified.

This study aimed to examine how employees value trust in their leaders and how leaders demonstrate trust in relating with their employees. Trust is often defined in interactions between leaders and their employees. According to researchers, the effectiveness of leadership fostered a relationship of trust among employees' perceptions of their leader, which led to positive results, including confidence, motivation, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, intention to remain, and work persistence.

When employees trust in their leader, it positively affects their work, and the employees remain committed. This, in turn, has a direct impact on the performance of the, which has implications for employee' trust in the organisation; if the organisation succeeds, the employee will commit to it and work effectively. The findings from the literature review reveal that the concept of trust-based leadership has been well investigated in developed countries. However, there remains a dearth

of research regarding this concept in developing countries. To foster a trusting relationship between leaders and employees, leaders need to study their employees to understand how to develop them and foster a trusting relationship through a series of exchanges. Leaders also need to understand the need to exhibit trusting behaviours to enhance trust. Therefore, there remains the need for research into the way in which trust can be effective in a different context.

The study of this dissertation focuses on trust as the bedrock of a long-term positive synergy between leaders and their employees with benefits extending to employee satisfaction and motivation. These discoveries piqued the researcher's interest, and he intended to develop a model that would result in trusting relationships. The findings of these individual research may reveal commonalities in the concept of trust in the workplace and in leader-employee relationships.

## **CHAPTER THREE – LITERATURE REVIEW (PART 2):**

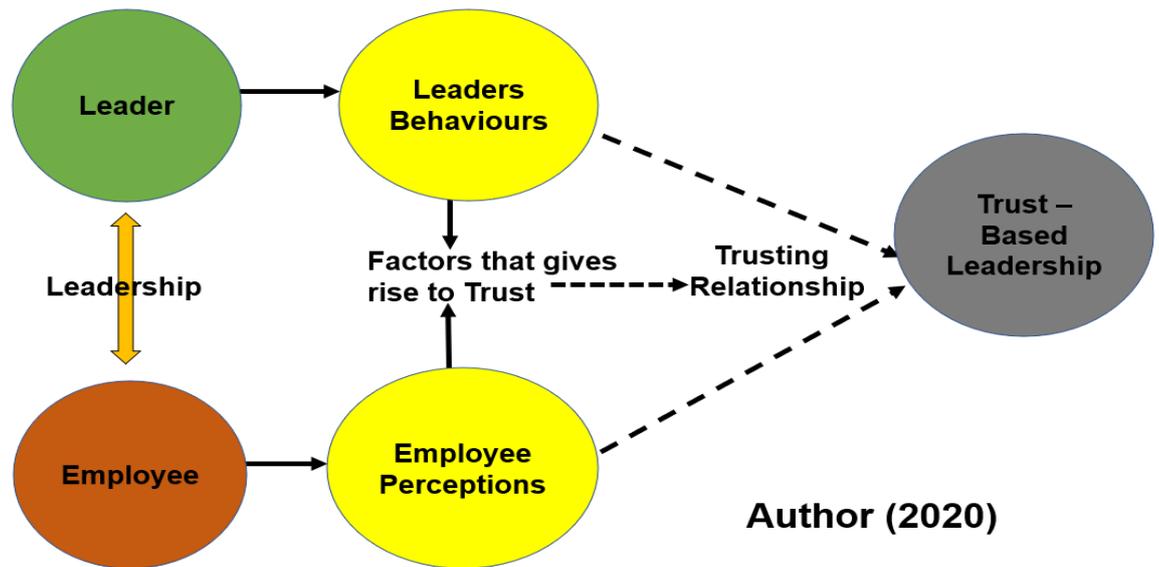
### **Conceptual framework**

#### **3.0**

#### *Introduction*

The work of Bass (2001) and Fink (2013) explains the importance of a research structure or framework that shows the progression of a natural phenomenon or concepts to be studied. It is linked to the researcher's conceptions, empirical study, and essential theories for advancing and systemising their expertise (Peshkin, 1993). It displays the researcher's description of how the research question will be investigated. The conceptual framework depicts an integrated approach to an issue under investigation (Tamene, 2016). Luse, Mennecke and Townsend's (2012) opinion shows that a conceptual framework can take a graphical or narrative form displaying the constructs to be studied and the presumed relationship between them.

Several scholars have sought to clear up the concept of a conceptual framework. In support of the above definitions, Imenda (2014) describe the term as the result of putting together many different concepts to explain and give a complete picture of the concepts being studied. This means that a conceptual framework summarises the findings from the literature sources that have been looked at about the research under study, setting out the research agenda for a better understanding of the research goals. Understanding is done by structuring the thoughts that give an investigation its focus and direction (Rallis & Rossman, 2012). The conceptual framework for this study has been represented in a diagram, and the concepts explained.



**Fig 4: Trust-based Model Conceptual Framework**

**Source: Authors Compilation (2020)**

### 3.1 Definition of Terms (leaders, leadership and employees)

A person is considered a leader if he or she is in charge of maintaining that goals are reached by strategic direction on how to attain those goals. A leader is totally responsible for the employees' guidance and support. Murphy and Murphy (2018) defined the terms' manager and leader as follows: The term manager refers to the person in charge of making administrative choices, whereas a leader has the ability to influence others and push them to reconsider their principles.

In furtherance to the above definition, Yukl (2013) explain that leadership can be viewed from different perspectives. Yukl explained that leadership can be viewed as a form of influence, social process or a relationship pattern rather than a specialised role. According to this viewpoint, different persons can perform various leadership tasks that influence what the group does, how it does it, and how people in the group interact with one another.

However, this study assumes leadership to Leadership is the process of persuading others, such as subordinates or followers, to understand and agree on what needs to be done and

how to do it, as well as the process of assisting individual and collective efforts to achieve common goals (Yukl, 2013).

In support of the above definitions, Bass (2019) asserts that the primary aim and value of a leader and leadership practice is to inspire followers to participate willingly to achieve a goal actively. Leaders can impact their employees' motivation, loyalty, and inventive risk-taking; they may also create a pleasant work environment for employees, which may minimise employee turnover. Successful leaders enable people to accomplish company goals, lowering attrition costs. Leaders who think positively help to create a happy workplace atmosphere. Having a trusted connection with workers is a powerful tool for a leader to be an influencer.

In this study, the concepts leader, manager, and boss are used interchangeably to describe people or persons who hold positions in which they are expected to lead but make no assumptions about their actual conduct or success.

The concept of employees can be defined as someone who has been engaged by a company to execute a specific task.

### **3.2 What is the effect of trust?**

The emergence of trust has been established as a significant concept of how leaders and employees relate in an organisation, and it further reflects significant evidence of trust's numerous and varied advantages to organisations and their members (Kramer, 1999). Countless studies have stated that trust can be hugely advantageous to the relationship between supervisors and employees in an organisation (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007). They indicated how trust could, directly and indirectly, boost organizational performance by fostering desirable work-related behaviours, attitudes, and a collaborative environment.

According to a growing number of researchers, trust is a crucial predictor of organisational performance (Sitkin, 2006; Barney and Hansen, 1994). Trust has been examined at many levels (individual, group, company, and inter-firm) and in several disciplines (organisation science, sociology, psychology) (Rousseau et al., 1998).

The accumulation of evidence of trust advantages within organisations has pushed these interests to the point of confluence. Such evidence supports the ideology that trust leads to more positive attitudes, increased cooperation, and better performance (Dirks and Ferrin, 2012; Jones and George, 1998; Mayer et al., 1995). The prevalent view is that trust encourages improved processes by creating environments conducive to results such as collaboration.

Trust contributes to favourable workplace attitudes (e.g., employee commitment and satisfaction), performance (e.g., group performance, individual performance, and business-unit performance and workplace behaviours (e.g., knowledge sharing and organizational citizenship behaviour). Trust fosters the formation of workgroups, encourages cooperative conduct, promotes network-based forms of organisation, minimizes disputes, lowers transaction costs, and promotes effective crisis response (Rousseau et al. 1998).

In Whitener et al. (1998) approaches to interpersonal and organisational trust, he/she mentioned that trust has three facets: initially, trust in some other individual illustrates a person's anticipation or trust that the exchange partner will behave benevolently; secondly, trust represents the desire to be vulnerable and the risk whether the other individual/counterparty will not uphold the expectations; and lastly, trust entails a certain degree of dependence, which implies that an individual is affected by the actions of another person. Employees will feel safer and more optimistic about their managers and peers in the workplace if they perceive their peers and leaders as trustworthy. On the other hand, low levels of trust can lead to a psychologically stressful situation, as leaders or peers may have control over crucial parts of one's employment (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). As a result, employee happiness should be influenced by trust directly and robustly.

The beneficial effects of trust have also been mainly explored on three levels (Kramer, 1999) within an organisational setting: 1. lowering transaction costs within organisations; 2. promoting genuine sociability among members of organisations, and 3. enabling proper respect to organisational authorities. Dirks and Ferrin (2001) noted in their review of the literature that trust research has focused on trust as a facilitator or moderator of other work attitudes, perceptions, and performance, or it has explored the direct, positive effects of trust on outcomes of interest – such as

communication, negotiation process, conflict management, performance and satisfaction. In such situations, trust fosters and increases the possibilities for collaboration, improved performance, and more favourable attitudes and views.

Sheppard and Sherman (1998) state that trust is essential for developing and maintaining productive partnerships. According to Fisher and Brown (1988), trust is a significant component of effective working partnerships. Employees are more comfortable in an environment that is first and foremost safe as a result of trust. This is significant for several reasons. When employees feel safe and secure, they are less likely to feel threatened. This implies that they are not scared of making errors, being innovative, and desiring to be empowered. As a result, their sense of contribution to the organisation grows, including their job satisfaction. Working in a safe atmosphere also implies that both leaders and followers are not hesitant to challenge each other, such as when the appropriateness of choices is questioned. As a result, a secure atmosphere built on mutual trust may increase decision-making quality and garner more cooperation from the organizational actors.

When employees develop a sense of belonging in the workplace, they become more productive (Prime and Salib, 2014). This, in turn, can enhance work outcomes by increasing job satisfaction and allowing them to take more responsibility for their work. This may lead to a sense of heightened responsibility for the team's or organisation's performance and enhanced citizenship behaviour.

The model provided by Mayer *et al.* (1995) indicates that there are two mechanisms by which trust affects leaders and their employees. These two theoretical perspectives are the behavioural-based perspective and the relational-based perspective. The behavioural viewpoint focuses on how the leader's behaviour affects the employee's vulnerability in a hierarchical relationship. In particular, because the decisions a leader makes have the ability to affect employee's promotion significantly, pay, work assignments and layoffs, it becomes necessary to have insight into the leader's trustworthiness. Drawing on this idea, the model provided by Mayer *et al.* (1995) indicates that before employees can be comfortable in engaging in behaviours that put them at risk (sensitive sharing of information), they want to see trustworthy behaviours such as integrity, capability, empathy and benevolence in their leader. An

example of this can be found in the work of Mayer and Gavin (1999). The duo suggests that when leaders do not earn the trust of their employees due to the lack of integrity or other factors of trustworthiness, the employees will focus their energy on “covering their backs” and this tends to detract from their work performance.

It is clear that trust in leaders leads to a variety of outcomes. In the trust in leadership research conducted by Dirks and Ferrin (2002), they found that one of the reasons why different scholars and experts put their interest in trust is due to how it significantly influences different outcomes between supervisors and employees in the organisation. However, the opinions of scholars differ (Golembiewski and McConkie, 1975; Williamson, 1993; Kramer, 1999). Resulting from the differing opinions, Dirks and Ferrin (2002) contend that while there is some consistent evidence that trust is essential in leader and employee relationship and that it contributes to attitude variables, a definite or conclusive finding could not be drawn for other references such as behavioural and performance outcome. Similar studies, such as the analysis of interpersonal and institutional trust conducted by Granovetta (1985), reveal that interpersonal trust is essential in organisational transactions where the parties involved do not depend on the present institutional arrangement. Other studies also reflect this (Raiser *et al.*, 2001; Puffer *et al.*, 2010; Welter, 2012), where organisational actors draw on the interpersonal trust established on strong mutual ties.

Regarding the above, the significance of trust in relationships relies on the existence of three elements; vulnerability, uncertainty, and expectations (Rousseau *et al.*, 1998; Lane, 1998; Heimer, 2001). Additional evidence from the study of trust indicates that trust is essential in organisations and person-to-person relationships.

According to Gilley, Anderson, and Gilley (2008), trust cannot be developed when supervisors create hostile or frightening work environments. Employees engage in self-defeating and dysfunctional conduct due to a hostile work environment (Gordon *et al.*, 2014). According to Restubog, Scott, and Zagenczyk (2011), retaliation and intimidation are common in hostile and fear-based work environments. Employees experience discontent, rage, and resentment in such circumstances. He also believes that

aggressive and harmful work cultures make building trust difficult for supervisors and subordinates. According to Gilley and Hoekstra (2003), work settings devoid of antagonism and fear allow managers and workers to interact, collaborate, and take risks. Employees are pushed and encouraged to solve complicated issues in these conditions, fostering creativity (Gordon et al., 2014).

In summary, this chapter defines the concept of leaders, leadership and employees. To understand the factors that give rise to trust, employees analyse the behaviours of their leaders and draw inferences. These inferences determine how subordinates will relate with their supervisors, leading to the factors that give rise to trust. Based on this inference, if positive, a trusting relationship is formed. Trust-based leadership can be assumed to be existing based on employees' perception of their leader's behaviour and employee perception.

## **CHAPTER FOUR – LITERATURE REVIEW (PART 3): THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY**

### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

Over the past century, the subject of leadership has been investigated from several perspectives, birthing a diverse range of practical and conceptual approaches to the leadership subject. Organisational psychologists have increasingly investigated the concept of leadership as one of the critical factors that increases job outcomes (Sanna & Parks, 1997). The research work of Yukl and Gardner (2020) has emphasised the approach by which leaders can change organisations. In organisational terms, leadership can be seen as a relationship that exists between leaders and other employees (Harrison, 2017). Hence, leaders are capable of directing their followers to embrace novel and contemporary goals and values, and vice-versa (Gardner, 2007). According to Bass and Stogdill (1981), the handbook on leadership asserts that leadership inspires and motivates employees to create change that helps its organisational goals. It can be assumed that for these organisational goals to be attained, leaders and employees in organisations need to develop means of interactions and trusting relationships. Hence, to be perceived as an effective leader, employees (subordinates) need to be viewed as undifferentiated members of the group or exceptional individuals different from other group members (Seers et al., 2003). For the purpose of this study, this empirical investigation will adopt the social exchange theory (SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY). However, this study will succinctly discuss the leadership-member theory (LMX) and examine the relationship between trust, SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY and LMX.

### **4.1 Early development of social exchange theory**

Social exchange theory is one of the most influential conceptual frameworks for understanding organisational behaviour and a dominant theoretical framework for understanding the employee-organisation relationship. A common, although not

exclusive, focus of social exchange theory is to understand relationships, underpinning mechanisms and associated outcomes. The social exchange theory has been of significant conceptual and theoretical standpoint on the subject topic of social psychology; for instance, scholars such as Malinowski (1922); Homans, (1958, 1961, 1974); Emerson (1972) and Blau (1964) explain that social exchange theory constitutes a basis for the understanding the interrelationship that exists between a leader and its followers. This theory has been beneficial in human and social interactions, especially in understanding trust-based leadership for a number of reasons. The concept further affirms that individual interrelations are created through a cost-benefit analysis and a medium of comparing choices (Deluga, 1994).

Social exchange theory was initially developed by Blau (1964) and later by Gulati (1995) and Cook and Cheshire (2013). This theory argues that individuals engage in the social exchange because of the input of limited resources from other parties (Das & Teng 2002: 441). As stated by Blau (1964), According to Social Exchange Theory, individual behaviour in an organisation is the outcome of cost-benefit calculations as they try to connect with society and the environment. If an individual such as employees believes that they can get more from behaviour than they lose by engaging in it, they will engage in the behaviour. These rewards and benefits from one another are not externally contracted, and it is the other person's choice to reciprocate. This act is voluntary, and personal interest bears the risk of rejection and inability to reciprocate its friendly relationship. Thus, social exchange demands trusting others for payback. The work of Bachmann (2001) emphasised there is risk in trust in all social reality; individuals are then faced with a choice whether to ignore or accept. However, when one of the actors performs and discharges their obligations, they validate and prove trustworthy, and a close association begins (Blau, 1964).

Consequently, the social exchange becomes an ongoing mutual approach in which each person's action is contingent on beneficial reactions from others. In addition, Blau (1964) argues that an equal amount of mutual trust follows the development of two-way exchange". Put differently, self-centred actors require trust to obtain and reciprocate the exchange of essential resources while mutual sharing becomes ongoing. Social exchange theory is beneficial in analysing a person's social behaviour relative to the exchange of resources. The concept of social exchange

theory has been widely studied, and considering the extensiveness of this theory, it acts as a cover for diverse theories like reciprocity, mutual exchange, self-interested actors, and trust. It remains a significant challenge for scholars who intend to adopt social exchange theory to divide several concepts into three big groups. (1) conditions that result in the formation of social exchange, (2) components of social exchange (3) management of social exchange.

Firstly, one of the principal arguments of social exchange theory posits that no self-sufficient individual and actors in social exchange have to interface with mutual resources (Das & Teng 2002). Therefore, the requirement of resources is the core purpose for the engagement of actors in any exchange relationship. Additionally, the theory of rationality reciprocity, obligation, long-term relations, interconnection, and trust are components of social exchange. Correspondingly, social exchange theory assumes that actors have personal interests and motivation to return or pay back from others. Also, there is an ongoing mutual exchange of required resources. Lastly, the theory of trust is valuable in the management of social exchange., Bachmann (2001) argues that the actor places trust on the premises that the prospective trustee will act in the way he chooses to while the prevailing actor chooses his potential behaviour suggesting that other actors will reject unacceptable behaviour.

Additionally, the social exchange theory functions on the principles that employees are rational and engaged in cost and benefit computations in social exchange; this assumption indicates that the social exchange theory principally considers the concept of decision-making in trust-based leadership. At the core of social exchange theory are principles of equity and reciprocity. Homans (1961) asserts that employees/subordinates will trust their leaders more when they understand the benefits they are receiving, benefits from a relationship commiserate to what they are putting into the relationship. From this social exchange viewpoint, employees behaviour may be considered the motivation to seek rewards and avoid costs in social situations. For instance, receiving rewards from a leader might motivate other employees to behave in the same way. Hence, social exchanges under trust-based leadership, which takes the patterns of rewards, often remain stable, which leads to organisational citizenship behaviour and organisational commitment.

Furthermore, the social exchange theory is one of the major theoretical paradigms for explaining workplace behaviour and performance (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Over the past decades, organisational scholars have considered the social exchange principle suitable to explore the rationale behind motivation and employee performance and behaviour. Specifically, one of the central assumptions of the social exchange theory is that relationships at the workplace result in trust and commitment over time (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The social exchange theory is also premised on the assumption that subordinates (employees) in an organisation, depending on the support received from their leader, will display commitment to their responsibility and organisation (Organ, 1990). Therefore, employees who consider an advanced level of workplace support might probably feel the need to reciprocate the gesture. The support received from the leaders could also lead to outcomes such as commitment, job satisfaction and positive work-related behaviour (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Furtherance to the perceived organisational support, Aselage & Eisenberger (2003) explained that in exchanges, social relationships become more potent when the leader-followers are willing to offer resources beneficial to one another. While employees of every organisation might value trust-based leadership and favourable treatment, leaders/managers seek job commitment and loyalty (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007). Nevertheless, the question concerning the first initiator of these exchanges remains. Empirical investigation suggests that organisations are mostly the first initiators. Arguably, it is helpful to the formation of high-quality exchange relationships (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Countless research studies provide evidence for this order of reciprocation. Additionally, Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) have emphasised that these exchanges are helpful in explaining the favourable leadership outcomes that ensure when the workforce responds to perceived organisational support.

The role of exchange process in organisations remains an area researchers continue to explore (Rousseau, 1990; Rousseau and Parks, 1993). Social exchange theory is a concept that underpins much of the research in this field. In a description given by Blau (1964), it was asserted that unspecified obligations precede social interactions;

when one person offers another a favour, there is an expectation of a future return, though when that return will occur and in what form is often unknown (Gouldner, 1960). Employees prefer to view social exchange connections at work in the long term, with the pattern of reciprocity over time defining the perceived balance in exchanges (Blau, 1964; Rousseau, 1989). In recent years, two forms of social exchanges have been examined. According to Blau (1964), these forms of exchanges are perceived organisation support and the leader-member exchange theory. Perceived organisational support (POS; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986) refers to interactions between employees and their subordinates, while the leader-member exchange (LMX) refers to interactions between an employee and his or her boss (supervisor); Graen & Scandura, 1987. Despite their conceptual parallels, scholars have yet to merge the Perceived organisational support and leader-member exchange literature. As a result, it is unclear whether these two theories are separate or their different effects on employee attitudes and behaviours.

#### **4.2 Leader-member exchange theory from the standpoint of trust**

Indeed, the term leadership is considered one of the significant determinants useful in building employees' ethical behaviours and dissuading employees' unethical and destructive behaviours (Rosing, Frese, and Bausch 2011; Brown, Treviño, and Harrison 2005). The leader-members theory centred on the unique association of a leader-follower (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995). The leader-member exchange theory is centred on a dyadic and extraordinary relationship between a follower and the leader. This approach is a situation where the leader and their followers are negotiating and building their relationships. This factor distinguishes it from other leadership methods (Erdogan & Bauer 2010).

In line with organisational leadership, the leader-member exchange theory has been developed into a beneficial technique for investigating the association between organisational outcomes and leadership. First proposed by Dansereau, Cashman, & Graen (1973,) leader-member exchange theory focuses on the dyadic relationship between leaders and their subordinates. Dyadic relationships and organisational roles are initiated and bargained over time through a sequence of exchanges between

leaders and employees (Bauer & Green 1996). Additionally, the dyadic relationship between a leader-employees can be considered a multifaceted component that evolves as a resultant effect of work/role development of the followers (Bhal et al., 2009). The role development process entails exchanges that enable the member of the dyad to pay back different categories of items like the resources and even information (Graen and Uhi-bein, 1995).

Similar to the social exchange theory, the leader-member exchange theory has developed out of social exchange (Blau, 1964), reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960 ) work-role (Katz & Kahn, 1978). These two theories tend to adopt the same features (Byrne, 1971); like social exchange theory, reciprocity is vital in aiding the leader-member exchange theory relationships. In the leader-member exchange theory, reciprocity usually adjusts social systems; it is evident in every inter-personal relationship and refers to all human cultures (Gouldner, 1960). Followers likely return exchanges they obtain from their leaders by surpassing their contribution beyond their employment contract (Lapierre & Hackett, 2007).

Based on the above analysis, it can be assumed that social exchange is a significant concept in Leadership-member exchange theory and social exchange theory. The social exchange depicts a dyadic association between two individuals, and it is practicable in an organisational context based on the completion of the task assigned. Further to the above, Gerstner and Day (1997) found that the followers stretch themselves to accomplish job outcomes expected by their leaders in social exchange. This could be due to the level of exchanges over time. In both leader-member exchange theory and social exchange theory, the social exchange involves the creation of an obligation on the side of members of the organisation to reciprocate their leader's trust through organisational citizenship behaviours and job performance or increasing their Job commitment (Gerstner & Day, 1997).

Several empirical studies have investigated the relationship between trust and leadership exchange theory. Trust is a unidimensional process because it distinguishes the highest-quality exchanges by level of trust and low-quality exchanges by a low amount of trust (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). One of the reasons

for examining trust could be that the perception of trust in leader-member exchange theory is evolving (Dulebohn et al., 2008). Because, in reality, trust develops as relevant parties engage (Mayer et al., 1995). The study of dyadic leadership has been widely known as the leader-member exchange. Theoretically, this concept is different from other leadership theories, which generalise the leader's behaviour to its followers instead of exploring a single leader-subordinates relationship. The term 'dyadic leadership' is hinged on the premise that all public and private sector leaders distinguish between followers as the relationship initiator, compared to the social exchange theory that suggests the firm is the first trust initiator (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 2002). Hence the leader-member exchange theory is directly related to individual/interpersonal trust (Brower et al., 2000).

Furthermore, Liden et al. (1993) asserted that the characteristics of the relationship between the leader and a follower predict the future of a 'dyad' regarding the behavioural pattern varying from follower low- or high-quality exchange with the leader. The high-quality exchange considers a pleasant working association, trust, loyalty, and support, offering rapid job promotion among the followers. However, the lower-quality exchanges are sometimes depicted by very routine-based leader behaviour perceived by the followers (Deluga, 1994; Liden & Graen, 1980).

In leadership exchange theory, organisational achievements depend on the leader's ability to lead the firm and its subordinates (followers) to achieve better workplace outcomes. Various scholars have agreed this is a prerequisite for trust and can be considered the right leadership development approach. The leader-member exchange theory might be necessary for organisational effectiveness and trust-based leadership in the Nigerian public sector, where there is a leadership crisis (Imhonopi, 2013). The view of leaders that consider their subordinates as trustworthy is complementary with the followers' perception of their trustworthiness of the leaders. Therefore, trustworthy behaviours are significant and core in building employee trust in their leaders. The leader-member exchange theory has been depicted as interrelated to positive job satisfaction, positive work attitudes, high job commitment, and very low turnover (Uhl-Bien, 2006). However, Brower et al. (2000) emphasised that a model of trustworthiness (Mayer et al., 1995) in the dyadic context entails that all parties

involved should respond with reciprocity (leaders and followers trust themselves correspondingly).

Various scholars have differing opinions on the leader-member exchange theory relating to trust and reciprocity. Mayer et al. (1995) contend that trust does not need to be mutual. Referencing the empirical studies of Brower et al. (2000), they assert that, in theory, leaders might likely trust their followers even though the followers necessarily do not trust them. In comparison, the leader-member exchange theory is in accordance with the act of reciprocity. Referencing the empirical studies of Brower et al. (2000), they assert that, in theory, leaders might likely trust their followers even though the followers necessarily do not trust them. It claims to neglect how these high-quality exchanges are created. Also, the leader-member exchange theory has been objected on the ground that some employees are treated specially by the leader in the workplace while other employees are not. The leader-member exchange theory explains the relationship that exists between a follower and his/her leaders. Therefore, the objective of this empirical study aims to understand how the perception of leaders and employees fosters trust in the workplace.

### **4.3 SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY AND TRUST**

Over recent years, a plethora of research has investigated how to influence employee trust in organisations; (Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2013). This stems from the fact that trust is a significant component of every organisation. Trust in several organisations is assumed to be determined by organisational and interpersonal variables (Dirks and Ferrin, 2003; Mayer et al., 1995; Chan, 1997). Additionally, Colquitt et al. (2001) and Korsgaard et al. (1995) state that one core driver of organisational trust is the fairness by which the actors of the organisations address them. Trust is a significant component in all social relationships. However, it is challenging to build (Blau, 1964). He emphasised that 'the first challenge is to prove oneself trustworthy'. This means that one of the core principles of social exchange theory is that exchanges facilitate trust among organisational actors.

In addition, the research on behavioural leadership has been extensively investigated the behaviour of leaders and employees. Leadership studies (Einarsen et al., 2007; Larsson and Vingbery, 2010; Yukl, 2012) have demonstrated that dyadic relationships between followers and supervisors differ. Moreover, the classification of leadership and employees is mainly dependent on their mutual social interaction (Yukl, 2010). The social exchange theory is anchored on the economic model of human behaviour, so that reciprocal method between individuals is motivated by value for each other and generates benefits than costs to the organisation. These negotiations integrate psychological rewards for two parties involved, like status, commitment and approval of others (Yukl, 2010). Social interaction within individuals is built on reciprocity and interdependency with and within the social exchange of people. Individuals' past behaviour and experiences in their relationships with other people evoke actions and feelings when they meet new people in the organisation (Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003). Thus social exchange with the likelihood of mutual dependence is based on trust;

Several theories of trust (Mayer et al., 1995; Whitener et al., 1998; Hope – Hailey et al., 2014) are rooted in the social exchange theory. These theories affirm that trust is linked to the continual exchange of support and benefits among two private individuals. In line with social exchange theory, the process of trust is built on motivational techniques in originating trustworthy behaviour. As Whitener et al. (1998) emphasised that a social relationship depends on interactions within an organisational context between individuals and hence involves external factors with economic benefits, such as social support, and information sharing, while on the flip side, an economic relationship is hinged on the most basic interaction between parties. According to the social exchange theory, trustworthiness is challenging for the other party to demonstrate without expectations. Trust is the backbone of interpersonal and inter-organisational connections, the fundamental premise of social exchange (Dyer & Chu, 2011).

The social exchange theory and the leader-member exchange theory apply to this study. This study applied the social exchange theory to examine the potential trust relation between leaders and their subordinates in the Nigerian Public sector. This theoretical framework will explore the cost and benefits of social exchange theory in

relation to trust and establish various outcomes. This study emphasised that the social exchange theory asserts that every social interaction is a manifestation of exchanges that occur between employees and their supervisor, which influences positive behaviours, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and favourable work attitudes. As a result, interpersonal trust is vital to the sustainability of the performance of the public sector. Trust heightens cooperation and exchanges of resources between employees and supervisors. Notably, within the concept of social exchange theory, when a public servant in Nigeria perceive their employers as trustworthy, this will create a motivating and enabling environment.

In sum, social exchanges between leaders and their employees are founded on reciprocity with and within the social exchange of people. When people meet new persons in the company, their past conduct and interactions with others will elicit reactions and feelings (Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2002).

## **CHAPTER FIVE – LITERATURE REVIEW (PART FOUR): NIGERIA**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter examines trust in the context of a developing economy and clarifies why Nigeria is the suitable setting for this research.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of context in shaping the role and importance of trust. The multifaceted nature of the concept of trust has prompted studies and hypotheses about how trust is formed sustained and the effects it has on persons, organisations, and groups (Mattes and Moreno, 2018).

In various areas and nations, the dynamics of trust (in terms of how it is formed, maintained, and its consequences) are not the same (Godefroidt, Langer, and Meuleman, 2017). According to Allen and Simmels (1990), it was pointed out that trust is a product of and also a creator of the societal structure which exists at any given moment; it is, therefore, essential to look into the dynamics of trust as it pertains to different regions and nations. If the dynamics of trust and trust-based leadership vary significantly between areas and nations, it is critical to conduct studies in specific sectors and settings.

This chapter opens with a discussion on trust in developing economies and why there has been such a resurgence of interest in this field. Nigeria serves as the setting for this thesis; thus, the country's geographical, political, and socio-economic landscapes are studied. The public sector in Nigeria is the subject of this thesis; thus, the structure of that sector is described.

### **5.1 Trust-Based Leadership in a Developing Economy**

In both developed and developing economies, trust dynamics in organisations have been a dominant image (Knack and Zak, 2003). The interest in trust that has resulted could be partly attributed to the link between trust and organisational growth or performance in nations. Studies have demonstrated that trust between workers and leaders can lead to enhanced performance within and between organisations in a nation (Longshore and Bass 1987; Mayer et al., 1995; Hope Hailey et al., 2014)). Trust is also viewed as an engine of socio-economic growth, enhanced organisational performance, and social adjustment in emerging nations; thus it plays an essential role in this type of economy (Cui, 2017).

Any discussion on trust in emerging economies will be more informative if empirical evidence is used to back it up. This thesis focuses on a country striving to transform from an emerging to an advanced economy. Developing countries vary from developed countries in terms of gross national product, poverty level, literacy, income, and other growth criteria.

Without a definition of what constitutes a developing economy, the influence of trust and trust-based leadership on organisations in developing nations cannot be completely recognised. According to the World Bank Development indicators (2014), a developing economy is one with a low or intermediate level of income. A low level of income is defined as a gross national income per capita of US\$1,005, while a middle level is defined as a gross national income per capita of US\$1,005 to US\$12,275. As a result, in contrast to industrialised economies, the majority of people in emerging economies have less money and inadequate public infrastructure. In emerging economies, trust has been demonstrated to bring a wide range of advantages through effects in the form of industrial structure flexibility, growing business scales, and increased social strength. Trust makes up the informal aspect of society's corporate structure, which forms the basis for social order, organisational growth, political and economic development (Yıldırım and Gökalp, 2016).

According to an increasing number of experts, trust is a critical determinant of organisational effectiveness (Sitkin and Roth, 2006; Barney and Hansen, 1994). Individual, group, corporate, and inter-firm trust have been studied at various levels in developing and developed countries. The growing body of research demonstrating the benefits of trust in societies has brought these interests together. Such findings reinforce the view that trust promotes good attitudes, enhanced cooperation, and improved performance (Dirks and Ferrin, 2003; Jones and George, 1998; Mayer et al., 1995). The prevailing opinion is that trust promotes better processes by establishing conditions that favour outcomes such as teamwork, partnership and collaboration.

However, due to the low trust climate, developing countries may not be able to benefit from the dynamics of trust. Scholars such as Fukuyama (1995) have studied the norms and standards of relational conduct to gain a better understanding of the workings of trust in various environments.

High-trust and low-trust settings are recognised by Fukuyama, with high-trust environments defined by high institutional trust and low-trust environments characterised by low institutional trust. Low-trust circumstances are defined by weak and insufficient institutional frameworks, such as the legal structure prevalent in developing economies. In this sense, the industrialised world provides a strong institutionalised foundation for trust, but emerging nations with low levels of trust will need to establish other ways to foster trust.

Nigeria, being a developing economy, represents an ideal framework for this study, which is further examined in the next section.

## **5.2 Trust-based Leadership – Nigerian context**

Due to interactions becoming increasingly crucial in team-oriented systems where employees are now responsible for independent decision-making (Silva, 2016), trust among employees and trust between manager and employee has emerged as a significant concept in many Nigerian organisations. Mutual trust is a significant aspect of determining organisational performance in Nigeria and other African countries (Silva, 2016). As a result, both scholars and practitioners are interested in learning more about the critical role of trust in leadership in organisational interactions, how it may be enhanced, and the elements that impact the leader-follower trust connection.

Some academics opine that the most prevalent difficulties influencing organisational performance in Nigerian businesses and other institutions are bad employee attitudes, inefficiency, and inefficient leadership (George & Olumide, 2011). This second school of thought argues that trust-based relationships and trust dynamics between employees and managers are critical to organisational success in Nigeria (Enwereuzor, Adeyemi & Onyishi, 2020).

According to research conducted in Nigeria, organisations with a high degree of trust are more successful than those with a low level of trust (Bello, 2012). In Nigeria, high levels of organisational trust have been linked to more adaptable organisational forms and structures, strategic partnerships, and responsive virtual teams. Higher sales and profitability decreased employee turnover, and better cooperative conduct among

employees have all been linked to trust-based leadership in Nigeria (Prentis & Igoni, 2016).

The impact of organisational trust on employee performance in selected service firms in FCT-Abuja was investigated by Omale (2016). His findings revealed that organisational processes should be formed based on trust rather than power, resulting in increased commitment, job satisfaction, performance, and creativity among individuals and businesses.

Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa, and Nwankwere (2011) investigated the impact of trust in leadership on the performance of selected banks in Imo State, Nigeria. Intrapersonal Trust between superiors and subordinates was found to boost firm innovation. The research of Ugwu, Ike, Onyishi, and Alma (2014) also found a relationship between organisational trust and employee performance. The study employed a survey research methodology using a questionnaire to collect data from 715 workers from seven commercial banks and four pharmaceutical businesses in Enugu State, Nigeria. Psychological empowerment and employee performance were linked to good trust relationships in organisations.

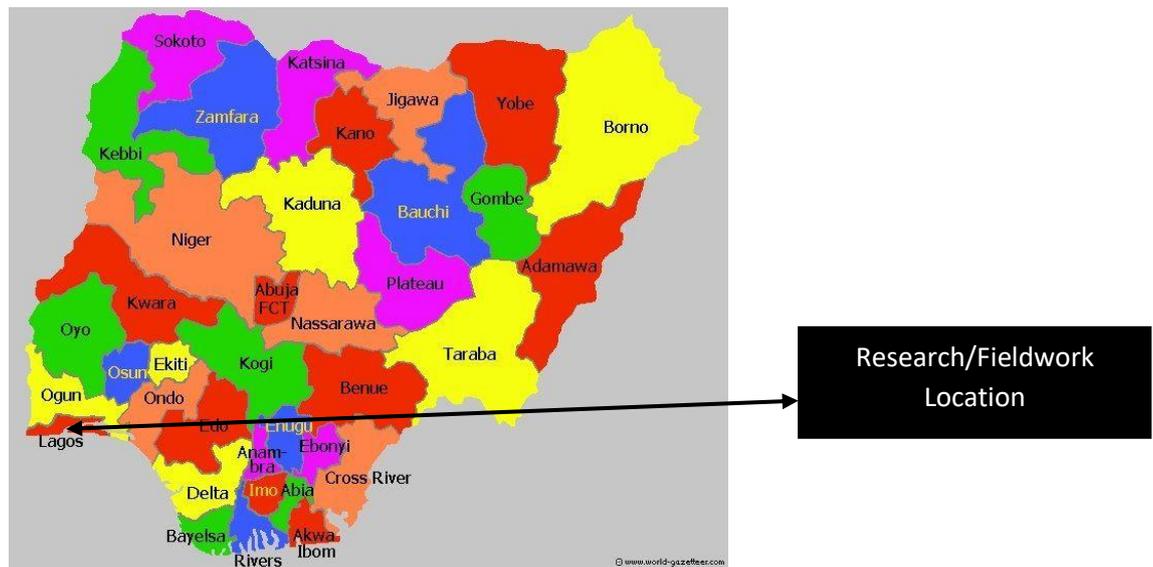
However, research on trust-based leadership in the Nigerian context reveals that a lack of trust in an organisation among employees and between firms and their employees can result in expensive self-protective conduct (Prentis & Igoni, 2016). The Relationship between Organizational Trust and Employee Turnover Intentions among Nurses in Selected Government-Owned Hospitals in Edo State and found that a lack of employee involvement in critical decisions that affect their job as a result of distrust could lead to their early exit from an organisation as well as the inhibition of the innovative abilities of these employees (Ikon & Itua, 2019).

### **5.3 Nigeria**

It is essential to provide an overview of Nigeria's geographical and political landscape to understand the context in which this study was conducted.

**Source:** Punch Newspaper (2013)

**Fig 5:** Map showing research location



### 5.3.1 Geography

Nigeria is a country in Sub-Saharan Africa and is located in the western part of the continent. It is 923,768 square kilometres in land size. Nigeria spreads into the Gulf of Guinea, with Atlantic Ocean on the south and Republic of Niger on the north. Benin on the west, and Cameroon on the east. Figure 3 shows a map depicting the location of Nigeria and its states:

Nigeria has approximately 250 ethnic groups, mostly Hausas, Igbos, and Yorubas (CIA World Fact Book, 2015). These ethnic groups converse in a variety of languages. Despite the ethnic variety, English is the official language of communication. According to the World Bank data (2019), Nigeria has about 201 million people making Nigeria the most populated country in West Africa.

### 5.4 The Nigerian Public Sector

Popa (2017) describes the public sector as governments and any publicly financed or controlled agencies and other entities that offer public goods or services. The public sector was primarily considered the pivot driving socio-economic growth when most African countries gained independence in the late 1950s and 1960s. (Ayee, 2005).

Hughes (2003) defines the public sector as general government, public non-financial corporations, and quasi-corporate enterprises. The public sector is the sector of the economy responsible for delivering a variety of public services and fundamental social amenities. This segment of the economy is governed by national, state or local governments and delivers a variety of public services to the country's citizens. This sector covers infrastructure, waste management, water management, health care, security services, and homeless housing in most of Nigeria. The Nigerian Public Sector may be traced back to the colonial period when Governor-General Fredrick Lugard established a unified service (Tokunboh, 1990). The Europeans controlled the colonial public service, and the traditional rulers were co-opted at the lower levels of the colonial political system to lend legitimacy to the colonial regime. The indirect rule system prospered because of the traditional elite's engagement in local government, particularly in the Western and Northern areas, where traditional authorities held spiritual and political power (Tokunboh, 1990).

The Nigerian public sector was birthed as a product of colonialism, having been formed as a British colonialist instrument in the late nineteenth century (Inyang, 2008). Following Tokunboh (1990), the public sector as we know it started when the British colonial authority began the railway transit project from Iddo in Lagos city in 1898. Coal mining, electricity, and maritime ports were the following public enterprises to emerge. These corporations were created primarily to serve as administrative organs for the colonial government's trading and economic activity.

Since the colonial era, the civil service has been an indispensable tool of governance in Nigeria, particularly in the areas of formulation of government policies and programs, planning and implementation of government policies and programs on matters of providing social services, preparation of annual budgets and development plans, revenue collection in the form of income taxes, fines, and other fees as well as other quasi-judicial responsibilities such as preserving government records and properties, information distribution, public enlightenment etc. (Oladipo, 2007). The Nigerian public sector consists of a variety of institutions for the making and execution of decisions with regard to diverse interests (Haque, 2001). The realisation and representation of public interests and their distinctive public features is the primary role of the public sector in Nigeria. The public sector varies by nation, the military, police,

public transit and road maintenance, public education, health care, and employees who work directly for the government, such as elected lawmakers, are part of most nations' public sector. This service benefits society rather than simply the person who utilises the service (Hood, 2000).

Although the Nigerian public sector has offered services to Nigerian residents in many capacities, multiple paradoxes have marred its performance (Adeyemo and Salami, 2008). According to Imhonopi and Urim (2013), it has become the embodiment of everything that is corrupt, mediocre, and fraudulent.

Through numerous reforms designed by successive administrations, both under the military and democratic dispensations, policymakers have attempted to address complaints about non-performance and inefficiencies in the Nigerian public sector. The most challenging aspect is the government's incapacity to implement policy through public officials properly. Again, most of the reforms made only lasted a short time before failing to achieve their intended goal (Imhonopi and Urim, 2013).

The public sector in Nigeria is organised primarily around ministries, with a minister appointed by the president leads, and must include at least one representative from each of Nigeria's 36 states. The Senate of Nigeria then confirms the president's nominations. There are 36 ministries in which a federal minister, in some circumstances, may be responsible for more than one ministry (for example, Environment and Housing may be merged), and one or more ministers of state may aid a minister. In addition, each ministry has a Permanent Secretary, who is a senior civil official.

The Nigeria public sector is a replica of the British Parliamentary Civil Service System, and this was passed to Nigeria during her independence in 1960. Although Nigeria has moved to a presidential system, the structure of the public sector still extensively replicates the origin of its colonial masters (Slim Dali 2015). The civil services in Nigeria are structured into federal, state and local government tiers. This research exclusively relates to the local government tiers.

Nigeria is endowed with material and human resources that are vital for nation-building and development. The Nigerian public sector has played a crucial role in the economy of Nigeria. The public sector's objective is to act as a catalyst for quality

and cost-effective service delivery to its citizens. This can only be achieved by the delivery/provision of services that can ensure and enhance welfare and security and welfare provided by the government. However, the Nigerian public sector is a multicultural society and faces several leadership crises at the national and organisational levels. Past research studies (Osakede et al., 2015, Imhonopi and Ugochukwu, 2013, Bankole & Olaniyi, 2014) affirm that corruption and leadership problems have been a significant challenge affecting sustainable development in the Nigerian public sector. However, several studies have asserted that distrust in the government and top-level managers is another perception of corruption. This has impeded sustainable development and good governance (Madueke, 2008; Lawal et al., 2012). The significance of trust in leadership is very core to the development of the nation. Basically, the Nigerian public sector employees are willing to be committed to their duties and responsibilities in their respective parastatals; however, various components for an organisational trust that produces an enabling environment for which the employees are committed is missing in the Nigerian Public sector. Hence, employee commitment to the organisations is downward, whereas citizens are at the receiving end of the attitude.

#### **5.4.1 Challenges in the Nigerian Public Sector**

The public sector's operations are critical to Nigeria's economic growth. As a result, it is critical to understand the obstacles that the public sector in this nation faces. Otoghile, Igbafe and Agbontaen (2014) claim this challenge has led to corruption, consistent crisis, insecurity, poverty and an increase in the level of unemployment. Odisu (2016) posits that Nigerians are increasingly losing hope and confidence in the nation's leadership due to corruption in the public sector. Currently, Nigeria ranks as one of the most corrupt countries in the world (Ogbonnaya 2018). This act of bad leadership in Nigeria has affected the public sector, which plays a significant role in the country's national development (Omisore 2014). The level of corruption in the Nigerian public sector, misappropriation of funds and embezzlement have led to a continuous default on the terms and conditions stated in their employee's contract (Omisore 2014). This default ranges from late or no wage payment, an uncondusive work environment, and a lack of provision of work equipment. Thus, it has become challenging to work since the trust employees placed in the organisation and the leaders have been affected, leading to employee demotivation (Lgbaekemen, Abbah

and Geidam 2014). As this research investigates further into understanding trust-based leadership in a Nigeria public sector organisation.

#### **5.4.1.1 Contextual Problems**

Vague mandates and promised positions define the Nigerian Civil Service (the country's mainstay of the public sector), which may often be traced back to political ties rather than competence, qualification or performance. These factors have resulted in an influx of inexperienced and unmotivated civil workers, resulting in inefficient delivery of services to the public. (Osemeke, 2011).

An over-expanded expenditure profile, high debt service burden, persistent deficits financed by internal and external borrowing, the collapse of traditional control instruments resulting in corruption and embezzlement, ghost-worker occurrences, and poor program and project costing contributed to a weakened public sector over the years (Aduke, 2007). Also, the system has accrued pension arrears; certain states and federal agencies are also accruing wage arrears and obligations owed to contractors and suppliers.

Low profitability and efficiency and inefficient accounting and reporting systems are traits of public enterprises in Nigeria. Lewis (2009) attributes these characteristics to a lack of transparency and inefficient management as a result of bureaucracy and political involvement in the public sector.

#### **5.4.1.2 Infrastructural Facilities**

Infrastructure is a term that refers to a resource or system which has been utilised for societal development. Telecommunications, electricity, transportation, government, and other utilities are examples of such systems (Frischmann, 2009). The poor status of Nigeria's infrastructure has made it difficult for public officials to carry out their official duties in their different institutions.

Infrastructure facilities such as power, transportation, security, technological access, and adequate office space are critical to the efficient operation of a country's public sector and are positively connected to the country's overall economic well-being (Okpara, 2011). However, in many emerging economies, such as Nigeria, essential infrastructure facilities are either absent or in poor condition. Poor infrastructure has

been demonstrated in studies to have a detrimental impact on a country's economic growth and development (Mambula, 2002).

In Nigeria, a lack of adequate infrastructure has a detrimental impact on the public sector. In Nigeria, electrical power is unreliable, and most government offices rely on generators, which may be costly. The poor status of office spaces in the Nigerian public sector and the inconsistent power supply are concerns. In the public sector or any organisation, proper office conditions are critical to the organisation's efficient and timely operation. However, the poor quality of the offices hurts workers' ability to complete their tasks on time, as some do not even have offices to sit in to complete their tasks.

#### **5.4.1.3 Political Instability**

Nigeria's political climate is unstable. Changes in government, particularly military coups and civilian administration transitions, almost always result in policy changes. Furthermore, terrorist organisations like Boko Haram, herders, and other abduction rings pose significant security risks. Additionally, specific government regulations are altered to favour friends and allies. The seamless operation of Nigeria's public sector is not possible in such a climate.

#### **5.4.1.4 Corruption**

Corruption has reached unparalleled levels in the public sector. The World Bank defines corruption as the use of public office for personal benefit through rent-seeking activities- when a public official receives, solicits, or extorts a bribe. In Nigeria, corruption is most likely a prevalent means of obtaining money. Corruption takes various forms, and it has played a significant role in the poverty and suffering of a significant portion of the Nigerian populace (Dike, 2014). Public officials have traded rationality for immorality because they want to be corrupt. Stealing, vandalism, and pilferage of office objects and assets, manipulation of numbers, bribery, diversion of public resources, gratification, and nepotism are all examples of the act of corruption.

Corruption has infiltrated the Nigerian public sector to the point that most officials in critical positions use their positions to profit themselves fraudulently. Despite concerns about low pay, it is an open secret that many public workers live beyond

their means. Without the complete acquiescence of public officials, no political office bearer can successfully engage in corrupt acts. In today's Nigeria, public service is seen as a way for the country's various ethnic groups to share the national cake. As a result, there is an insatiable desire for governmental structure fragmentation, i.e. (units, ministers, division of significant departments. (Ezeani, 2005).

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, we looked at trust in the context of Nigeria. The Nigerian economy is doing well, but the difficulties faced by the country's public sector include political instability, insufficient infrastructure, and corruption in the public sector. As a result, there is a pervasive lack of public accountability in the Nigerian government, which jeopardises public services and economic growth. Consequently, study into this sector is required to obtain more profound knowledge of the problems it encounters, how the dynamics of trust function in this sector, and how various challenges may be handled. As stated earlier, one of the leading reasons for investigating trust-based leadership is to understand the factors that give rise to trust and the effect of a trusting relationship in a Nigerian public sector organisation. This study was conducted among employees and leaders in a Nigerian public sector organisation

## **Research Methodology**

### **Chapter Six**

## **6.0 INTRODUCTION**

In previous chapters, by critically reviewing the literature from the field of trust and leadership, the knowledge and understanding of these concepts have been deepened.

The literature review reveals that there remains an inadequate understanding of the theoretical and conceptual perspective of the study focus. In view of this, this research aimed to overcome the constraints and establish an understanding of the challenges that leaders and employees face, and the factors required to enhance trust between them. In addition, this study addresses the research questions below:

*Research questions*

- Research question one: *What are the perceptions of leaders and employees about what gives rise to trust in a Nigerian public health sector organisation?*
- Research question two: *What are the effects of a trusting relationship in a Nigerian public health sector organisation?*

This chapter addresses the methodology that informed this study. A key methodological challenge, drawing on the phenomena' complexity, was to highlight the main theoretical problems during my fieldwork. Furthermore, this chapter details the procedures used during the data collection phase. The methodology utilised will be explained further in order to illustrate its applicability to gaining new knowledge regarding the topic of developing trusting relationships between leaders and employees.

This research focused on learning about the factors that give rise to trust between an employee and a leader from the employee's point of view by adopting case study research. The organic experiences of twenty employees from various departments within the case study organisation and positions who matched the inclusion requirements inspired the development of a process to aid leaders in developing a trusting connection with their employees.

Themes emerged from the data through commonalities (Gentles et al., 2015) and rich, detailed descriptions (Braun and Clarke, 2014) of leadership behaviours perceived to foster trust with employees. This study went beyond identifying components of trust in a leader-employee interaction by developing an empirical process to accomplish that goal.

Before moving on to more practical approaches and strategies, including ethical considerations, the epistemological and theoretical basis of the research will be examined. The connections between each stratum will be examined, demonstrating how each contributes to the formation of a coherent whole. The framework developed by Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) is used to situate the thesis within a broader theoretical context. However, they do not make explicit use of ontology inside this framework. Ontology is described as the study of being, with a focus on the theory of existence (Thomasson 2014; King, Horrocks, and Brooks 2019), and is concerned with the types of entities that comprise reality (Hofweber 2016). Ontological and epistemological difficulties are frequently intertwined, which can lead to a muddled depiction (King and Horrocks 2010).

Furthermore, ontology and epistemology assumptions appear to be a central argument among philosophers. One of the basic premises in the ontological assumption deals with the essential nature of the phenomena being studied (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Blumberg et al., 2014; King and Horrocks, 2012; Saunders et al., 2016; Remler and Ryzin, 2021)). This premise involves the essence and way of investigating the social world. Burrell and Morgan (2005) note that researchers must address fundamental ontological questions about the existence of reality, such as if reality is a construct of researchers' perception or whether reality is something already formed in the universe. While epistemology may be thought of as a theory of knowledge – what it is and how it is attained – Brinkmann (2012) contends that knowledge is more than just a representation of something as it is; it is an activity that people engage in on a daily basis. As a result, he contends, knowing is placed in cultural, social, and historical contexts. However, because knowledge is constructed in our social reality, epistemology is inextricably linked to ontology. The research methodologies must have an ontological component in addition to the theoretical framework of chapter 2, which is based on the concept of trust.

## **6.1 The Research Epistemology**

As the philosophical theory of knowledge, epistemology inquiries into the nature of our knowledge, provides a framework for determining what constitutes knowledge

(King and Horrocks and Brooks, 2019), and considers how we can portray such knowledge (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020). In other terms, it questions what knowledge is and how it is obtained (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2018). Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005, p. 13) define epistemologies within their analytical layers. They assert that epistemology is concerned with assumptions on what constitutes valid and relevant knowledge and how to convey it to others (Burrell and Morgan, 2005; Saunders et al., 2016). In other researchers' work, epistemology is recognised as the theory of knowledge and is concerned with the root of knowledge, nature, form, and how knowledge can be acquired (Fidalgo-Blanco et al., 2015; Mayan 2016). When considering epistemology in research, the researcher needs to understand questions such as how can knowledge be acquired? Or does knowledge have to be personally experienced? What is the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the researcher and the would-be known? (Scotland, 2012). These questions are essential because they help position the researcher in the research context; by this, the researcher can discover what else is new, given what is known. A researcher must understand their epistemology for the reason that it impacts the discovery of knowledge in the social context that it will be studied.

Objective epistemology (objectivism) takes the position of natural science. It posits that only observable and measurable phenomena constitute actual knowledge (O'Gorman and Macintosh, 2014; Robson and McCartan, 2016). Objectivism is an epistemological viewpoint in which objects in the world have meaning that is unaffected by the biases or values of individuals, researchers, or research processes. The assumption that there is an objective world waiting to be discovered is critical to such inquiry (King, Horrocks and Brooks, 2019). On the other hand, A constructionist epistemology emphasises the social construction of knowledge (Silverman, 2013). Rather than viewing objects' meaning as independent of human interpretations, we manufacture meaning through our interpretations and representations, frequently through language (King and Horrocks, 2010). This project employs a constructionist epistemological stance.

## **6.2 Constructionism**

The viewpoint of an objectivist debates that the world is objective and has a meaning that is inherent. Since laws and certainties may be established, the inherent meaning

of things and processes in the world has been revealed via inquiry. Constructionism opposes the notion that the world has an inherent purpose and that there is an objective reality waiting to be discovered (Gubrium et al., 2012). As a result, knowledge and meaning are likely to be constructed differently depending on their contexts; the perspectives and positions of the organisations or individuals involved. Thus, each object or process might have multiple meanings, all of which are valid. Constructionism holds that knowledge and meaning are formed from experiences and that this process is active rather than inert (Savin-Baden and Major 2013). In terms of research, constructionism challenges the assumption that data exist as entities waiting to be uncovered through inquiry (as viewed by an objectivist epistemology). Constructionism argues that knowledge is created in and through interactions with objects, people, and surroundings (Brinkmann, 2017). Constructionism argues that social phenomena are generated by the perceptions and acts of the social actors who are concerned by their existence. In formal terms, constructionism is characterised as an ontology that maintains that social phenomena and their meanings are constantly accomplished by social actors (Bryman, 2016).

Blaikie and Priest (2019) explain that the premise of ontology focuses on the nature of reality or what constitutes reality. Likewise, Reed (2009) postulates that ontology or ontological assumptions are an array of beliefs a researcher assumes about the nature of the phenomena under investigation. Collis and Hussey (2013) and Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) also assert that ontological assumptions focus on the nature of reality or set of assumptions a researcher makes towards the nature of the phenomena or object under investigation. In business and management research, this phenomenon or object includes organisations, individual experiences, management, and artefacts (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016). Ontological perspectives may be described as realist or relativist (Kings and Horrocks 2010). The beliefs of Crotty (1998) suggest that realism ontology focuses on extramental reality because social entities are real entities of the natural world that exist independent of the researchers (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016). As a result, a realist argues that only one reality exists, and everyone views reality from the same viewpoint (Collis and Hussey, 2013).

On the other hand, relativism argues the stances of realism as it focuses on the existence of multiple realities. Guba and Lincoln (1994) accentuate that reality is subjective, and individuals perceive it differently. Relativist ontological views assume reality is mediated by our senses meaning the world without consciousness is meaningless. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), reality emerges when consciousness engages with a meaningful object. However, the construction of reality depends on individual perception.

Simply put, individuals construct reality. The defence for embracing relativist ontology for this study aligns with Saunders et al. (2016) assertion, which states that researchers construct reality within their minds; thus, there is no one reality. Instead, the reality is relative according to how individuals experience it at a given time and place. Relativism is often identified with constructionism epistemology. Going by the assertion of Saunders et al. (2016) and Denzin and Lincoln (2018), the relativist ontological position is suitable for the study under research. As such, King and Horrock (2019) state that a constructivist epistemology would align naturally with a relativist ontology

Since the concept under study entails both leadership and trust, it could be considerably more challenging to achieve. As a result, understanding the concept will require a method that dives into and expresses the meanings that underpin trust-based leadership. Using the relativist perspective, a researcher might investigate the social and environmental context in which trusting activities are produced. Despite the fact that relativism is commonly accepted as an appropriate philosophy for understanding people, the validity of conclusions based on this method is still a point of controversy (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). This study acknowledges the limitations of human subjective perspectives; the findings are not intended to provide objective evidence of reality but rather a socially constructed representation of it (Hammersley, 2002). The study looks into how employees and leaders build their worlds based on their social relationships with their staff. Multiple viewpoints are possible because of the relativist perspective.

The importance of researcher reflexivity in the research approach will be emphasised. I will argue that this has been an essential element of generating rich data while also acknowledging the researcher-participant relationship. As a result, the ontological

and epistemological perspectives are consistent with my research position. My reflexivity is crucial because it has an impact on the concept of social constructionism, which is a progression of constructionism.

### **6.2.1 Social Constructionism**

Social constructionism is an epistemology that embraces that human construct meaning through their interactions with each other. Individuals make sense of shared knowledge and reality through discourse and negotiation with one another (Savin-Baden and Major 2013). Vygotsky and Bruner's work is incorporated into social constructionism. Vygotsky was an outspoken opponent of biological reductionism as a means of explaining phenomena that are complicated. This theoretical approach aims to explain societal issues using biological principles. As a result, any causal autonomy is denied (Scott 2014); they are determined biologically. The most interesting and complicated processes, according to Vygotsky, emerge through social interactions (Ageyev 2016). He rejected the assumption that knowledge was merely information in favour of a view of knowledge as the development or creation of concepts (Yandell 2013). The idea that knowledge is something that can be made, rather than something that already exists and is only waiting to be discovered, is prevalent today. Vygotsky believed that others have a significant role in helping an individual to build meaning and knowledge (Andrews 2012). Bruner (2006), on the other hand, stated that 'interpretive reconstruction of relevant circumstances' constituted Vygotsky's paradigm for making sense of the world (p.194). According to Bruner, meanings are produced in the mind, but their importance is derived from the cultural environment in which they are positioned (Bruner, 2009). Thus, Bruner believes that learning and thinking are constantly contextualised within a cultural context and that the reality we attribute to the worlds in which we live and work is 'created, not discovered' (Bruner 1996; p.19). The bases of employing a social constructionist perspective for this research are to understand and explore how individuals construct meaning and employ methods that entailed conversation and negotiation between the researcher and the participants (Savin-Baden and Major 2013). This also suggests that the researcher's role in data collecting, and subsequent analysis must become more transparent. Additionally, the analysis incorporates the researcher's interaction with the participants as an active component of the data.

Thus, the findings are not presented objectively and independently but as a result of the subjective construction (Lock and Strong, 2010) which is a significant and distinctive result of the researcher(s) and participant interactions (Losantos et al., 2016).

An epistemology based on social constructionist principles holds that knowledge is 'actively formed and co-constructed. It is produced due to social construction (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). Because human meaning and understanding have their origins in social interaction, social constructionism is concerned with how meaning and understanding change through time, in different circumstances, and with different people (Lock and Strong, 2010). As a result, social constructionism urges us to question the unproblematically held belief that observations of the world yield objective knowledge (Burr 2003).

### **6.3 The underlying research theories**

According to Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005), they assert that theories are assumptions and claims that can be adapted to interpret and describe processes and ideas within the context of qualitative research. Among the importance of theories is their usefulness in supporting understanding the means through which research engages with new ideas and processes to make meaning of phenomena of interest (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2005). Parallel to the two fundamental epistemologies of research defined above, two connected theoretical research viewpoints can be identified: positivism and interpretivism. This research endeavours to establish a theoretical foundation for interpretivism.

### **6.4 Interpretivism**

The objectivist epistemology, to a large extent, positively aligns with positivism (Kings and Horrocks, 2010), and it is based on the belief that there is a meaningful reality that functions independently of human experience and that this can only be known by empirical observation; reality exists to be discovered (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2005). The positivist philosophy replicates the position of a natural scientist who would likely use existing theory to develop a set of hypotheses to generate a research strategy for data collection. A positivist's focus concept argues that the social world exists independently, while its properties should be measured

objectively rather than reflections (Crotty, 1998; Saunders et al., 2016; Easterby-Smith, 2018). From the ontological perspective of a positivist, it assumes that reality exists independently, and therefore the researcher's job is to remove possible causes using experiments. This can be measured accurately through a predetermined hypothesis check. According to the positivist perspective, the research process begins by identifying causes and effects and testing to determine whether such causalities can be generalised. Therefore, the reason most positivist studies usually overlook other aspects of a phenomenon by identifying a single explanation (Blumberg et al., 2014).

Thus, interpretivism (aligned much more with a constructionist epistemology), which emerged as a criticism of the positivist philosophy, stresses a richer interpretation of social context. This subsumes scholars' opinions who have been sceptical of applying experimental research to the study of the social world (Bryman, Bell, and Harley, 2018; Bryman, 2016). Unlike the positivists, three fundamental concepts underpin interpretivist studies; (1) the social context is subjectively constructed and given meaning; (2) the investigator is part of what is observed; (3) interests are motivated by the research sample (Potrac and Nelson, 2014). Interpretivism shares the view that it is essential to explain aspects of the social world through a detailed account of particular social experiences or settings (Kings and Horrocks, 2012). The researcher can thus reveal the perspectives and understanding of individuals from unique vantage points, which means that the researcher can focus on the distinctiveness of the interviewees. By adopting the stance of the interpretivist, Bryman (2016) suggest that the researcher can uncover surprising findings which might be external to the context under investigation. Interpretivist researchers aim to provide interpretations of the social world. These interpretations often mirror their beliefs and motives. This aligns with Blumberg et al. (2014) opinion, which states that the researcher's perception is socially constructed. A similar conclusion is reached by Lincoln and Guba (2000), where they believed that reality is interpreted through multiple perceptual constructions conveyed by individuals across cultures.

Based on the above position that reality is constructed socially, this study adopts an interpretivist approach to understand how employees and leaders make sense of their

social environment. The strategy revolves around a deep understanding that most of the world in which leaders and employees work is socially constructed (Weick, 1979; Gehman et al., 2018). This recognition, therefore, requires an approach that captures the meanings from the experiences of leaders and employees. Interestingly, it is assumed that most research on leadership and employee depends on data obtained using a logical positivist approach (Cunliffe, 2011). According to them, interpretivist research on trust and leadership is very uncommon, and as a result, it presents a limitation to the field concerned with trust and leadership. From their perspective, they propose overcoming this deficiency by exploring social phenomena using an interpretivist approach.

In researching various Nigerian leaders' and employees' experiences concerning trust and leadership, the interpretivist method is conscientiously time-consuming but rich in understanding. Fundamentally, as I sought to understand the diverse perspectives of how leaders and employees view the factors that give rise to trust and the effect of a trusting relationship, the interpretivist approach helped me avoid the trap of positivism generalisation, predictions and casual explanations as a contribution. Instead, it helped uncover the socially constructed perceptions and new understandings as a contribution. It further ensured that the results from the fieldwork were rich in practice and experience. Coviello and Jones (2004) advised that by uncovering the different constructions of leaders and employees of the case study organisation, a social phenomenon of this nature will benefit from an interpretivist approach.

Although qualitative approaches are "usually predicated upon theoretical viewpoints anchored in interpretivism" (King and Horrocks 2010, p.11), various distinct strands within this broader theoretical perspective fall under the umbrella of interpretivism. Hermeneutics and phenomenology are two examples. There is an overall theoretical foundation for interpretivism known as constructionism/social-constructionism, and this study is primarily concerned with the phenomenological branch of that philosophy (interpretivism).

## 6.5 Phenomenology

Husserl, Heidegger, and Hegel all contributed to the development of Phenomenology. A more in-depth look at how people perceive the world was more important to Husserl than pursuing purely objective scientific procedures (Savin-Baden 2013, Boer and Fontana 2012). Based on this idea, phenomenological tend to describe how individuals perceive the world. It examines how they articulate the meaning of their lived experiences with a concept or phenomenon (Cresswell 2013) to identify what is shared across diverse encounters with that phenomenon. Thus, a phenomenological approach explores how individuals perceive and comprehend the world, how they respond to certain circumstances, and the related feelings and emotions. Phenomenology is the study of how contexts are generated as a result of action and interaction, as well as how circumstances facilitate action and interaction. As phenomenology progressed, it became less concerned with generic human consciousness and more concerned with how a specific group of people experiences a specific set of circumstances at a particular time. Husserl (1936) referred to the concept of the 'lifeworld' as 'a shared world of meanings, in which humans live and experience significant phenomena' (Husserl 1936; cited in Brinkmann 2017, p.580). The research participant's daily life is the centre of this lifeworld. The goal of this type of research is to gain access to that environment to characterise it and then explain it. To put it simply, phenomenology is an approach to research that places learning in context of our everyday lives and how we interact with the world.

Savin-Balden (2013) mentioned some primary principles of a purely phenomenological approach, including phenomenological reduction, description, and the search for essence. Phenomenological reduction entails the researcher putting aside assumptions and prior information in order to gain a fresh perspective on the phenomenon without the influence of prior interpretation (King and Horrocks, 2010). The use of language in description entails gathering information and communicating it to others. The search for essence: what makes something that it is, through examination of a phenomenon in various circumstances. This enables the researcher to develop a description of pervasive traits.

## 6.6 Research Approach

A significant research characteristic is the consideration of two different approaches to logic: deduction and induction. Both methods pose concerns about the design of the research project chosen. They inform the researcher's research strategy and the appropriate preferences required for thorough research (Saunders et al., 2016; Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Deductive reasoning requires developing a theory-testing method to investigate whether the theory is applicable to instances. This happens when such assumptions are derived logically from a set of premises so that the conclusions derived follow from the previous assumption (Harrison, 2002; Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010). In essence, it is a form of reasoning which professes to be conclusive. This indicates that conclusions that are likely would inevitably follow from the given reasons (Blumberg, 2014). Deductive reasoning is linked with quantitative studies, which necessitates the use of experiments. Such experiments are subjected to thorough testing by adopting a series of propositions.

However, in contrast to deductive reasoning is inductive reasoning. This form of reasoning requires moving from empirical observations of the natural world to building theories of what has been observed (Gill and Johnson, 1997; Hyde, 2000). The principle that follows implies that the inductive approach is the product of empirical findings. These empirical results are implemented in a loop that feeds back into the theory (Bryman and Bell, 2015). It includes how the data are collected and the theory development due to the analysed data. It means that no theoretical or conceptual basis can be established before it. Therefore, an inductive researcher favours an approach involving extracting inference from observations. The inductive method is suitable for smaller sample studies, unlike the deductive rationale, which requires a larger sample size.

In outlining the distinction between the two approaches, Yin (2011) argues the differences between inductive and deductive reasoning by arguing that while inductive reasoning results in the emergence of concepts, deductive reasoning allows for a description of the relevant data that needs to be collected. In support of the above, Lincoln and Guba (2000) state that most qualitative research adopts an inductive approach, whereas the deductive approach has a positivist leaning and is

related to quantitative methods. Consistent with this view is the opinion of Saunders et al. (2016), where they critiqued the logic of the deductive method. They note that the deductive method allows for a cause-and-effect relationship between specific variables but lacks a clear understanding of how the human world is interpreted. On the other hand, they argue that the concept of inductive enquiry relies on the process of integrating data and examining the context in which the events occur. Thus, the researcher can develop various views of phenomena through a range of qualitative approaches.

In recent years, the abductive approach to reasoning has become significant among qualitative researchers (Walton, 2014). The abductive approach's emergence serves as a response to the shortcoming of the inductive and deductive approaches. For instance, Bryman and Bell (2015) contend that a flaw associated with deductive reasoning is its over-reliance on theory testing's strict logic; due to the lack of lucidity about choosing the theory to be evaluated. The inductive approach to qualitative inquiry, on the other hand, is also seen as prolonged and time-consuming. An abductive strategy, in effect, integrates the deductive and inductive approaches to reasoning (Suddaby, 2006; Saunders et al., 2016). Concerning the social experiences of the participants, the abductive approach has strong links to inductive reasoning.

Several scholars (Paul 1993; Lipscomb 2012; Walton 2014) have argued across extant studies that respondents' perspectives are preferably related through abductive reasoning rather than inductive reasoning. Bryman (2016) reminds us that with abductive reasoning, researchers base their interpretation of the social world on theoretical knowledge of the contexts and participants involved. It requires choosing the best interpretation of data (Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013), as new discoveries are revealed in a logical and methodological manner (Reichert, 2007; Briant and Charmaz, 2007). This remains important in order to ensure that the researcher is open to possibilities of new data findings instead of confirming pre-understandings (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2007; Bell, Bryman, and Harley, 2015). As a result, abduction is, therefore, generally inductive but richer in its dependency on the explanation of respondents' social perspectives. This study's justification is overwhelmingly abductive, as I aim to obtain detailed and sufficiently rich data.

Furthermore, the relative unfamiliarity of theorists with the phenomenon of trust, leadership, and context allows for a richer understanding through the lens of fifteen employees and five supervisors. This, in turn, maybe due to a lack of understanding of the Nigerian context. The strength of this thesis lies in its approach to uncovering deep insights and new knowledge. Reichertz (2004, 2007, 2013, 2019) asserts that abductive reasoning allows for a cognitive logic of discovery. Clearly, because abduction consists of the discovery and data interpretation for which there is no adequate explanation, the argument favouring an abductive approach will allow for deep insights into the trust and leadership phenomenon.

## **6.7 Research Method**

The core of this thesis focuses on discovering the unknown about trust and leadership in the context of the Nigerian public health setting. Hence, resulting from the lack of existing knowledge on trust-based leadership in the Nigerian public sector, discussing the method employed becomes essential. With this in mind, several studies have highlighted the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research (see Kings and Horrocks, 2010; Creswell, 2014; Bryman and Bell, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016; Easterby-Smith et al., 2018; Bryman, 2016). It should be stated the neither the qualitative nor quantitative is more significant than the other. Blumberg et al. (2014) point out that scholars frequently show a clear preference for either form of analysis, but this preference is rooted in their philosophical positions. A researcher's underlying conceptual presumption is crucial to any methodological decision. Ackroyd and Hughes (1992) assert that the choices of methods are questions of philosophical beliefs. They push their point by arguing that humans cannot be compared to objects in the physical sciences and, as a result, cannot be quantified. This notion's implication shows that the actions of humans are linked with the understanding of meanings that are interpretivist in nature rather than cause and effect.

Quantitative methods are based on meanings derived from numbers; this includes measuring and accurately capturing the social world in numerical terms. This involves the collection of results in standardised data through the use of statistics and diagrams. Quantitative methods aim to generalise the population as knowledge is

produced by reliable measurement methods (Curren and Inkpen, 2002). Interestingly, Kings and Horrocks (2012) argue that qualitative researchers can also adopt measurement use. However, the objective is not to rely on numbers as the unit of analysis. Further study into the work of Bryman and Bell (2015) and Saunders et al. (2016) establish that qualitative research incorporates an inductive approach where data is used to develop the theory, whereas quantitative research incorporates a deductive approach.

In addition, the use of quantitative studies poses a significant challenge to the concept under study because it measures concepts numerically. Mollering (2006) further magnifies this drawback, illustrating the complexity of measuring an abstract concept such as trust. In this regard, he communicates his stance by contending that quantitative approaches do not provide an understanding of trust. At the same time, he endorses the importance of qualitative research to access the actors' trust experiences more accurately. In line with this assumption, it would be difficult to predict the actual manifestation of trust because adopting a quantitative study might lack sufficient validity. This assumption does not disprove that survey and experiments have contributed to the growth of trust research, but in the case of the concept under study and the philosophical assumption that guides this research, reliance on quantitative data might limit the contextual explanation of trust this research aims to explore. A distinction between both methods of research is provided in the table below.

**Table 2:** *Summary of distinction between research methods*

<i>Qualitative Methods</i>	<i>Quantitative method</i>
Collection of data in non-standardised data Involving the classification into categories.	Collection of results in numerical and standardised data
Based on meanings and expressed in words	Based on meanings derived from numbers

Analysis is conducted using conceptualisation.	The analysis is conducted through statistics and diagrams
Point of view of participants.	Point of view of the researcher.
It is process-based.	It is static.
It provides contextual understandings.	It leads to generalisation.
Characterised by rich and in-depth data	Characterised by hard data

Thus, the qualitative study emphasises the constructed nature of reality and the researcher's relationship with what is studied (Lincoln and Denzin, 2003). Qualitative studies emphasise the wealth of investigating key results by highlighting the value-laden nature of the inquiry. It follows that it seeks to question how it creates and gives meaning to social experience. Qualitative studies typically employ the interpretivist philosophies because they seek to understand the socially constructed phenomenon being studied (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016). As a result, Blumberg et al. (2014) remind us that qualitative studies yield previously unexpected findings because they allow for the emergence of new concepts previously undocumented in the literature. Qualitative studies, therefore, provide richer insights and access to sensitive information. Yin (2011) supports this claim by pinpointing five qualitative research features; (1) qualitative research can be used to study the meaning of individuals in real-world situations; (2) it is useful in representing the views and perspectives of participants in a given study; (3) qualitative research tends to cover the contextual conditions in which participants find themselves; (4) provides insights into emerging concepts that provide an explanation for social behaviour; and (5) qualitative studies employ multiple sources of evidence instead of focusing on a particular source of evidence.

In relation to the research on trust, qualitative methods are especially essential for understanding the trust-building process. It is important to note that with the depth of information required for a qualitative study, understanding trust in the Nigerian

context recognises that the trust construct can be applied and developed in various ways. In this regard, the decision of adopting the qualitative study for this research is to capture the contextual richness of trust-based leadership from the perspective of the leaders and employees.

As I progressed in my fieldwork, I discovered that one of the significant strengths of qualitative research is its capacity to shed light on human experience (Stake, 1995; Ayres et al., 2003). I also realised that qualitative studies are particularly important to shed light on the process of trust. This has allowed the emergence of concepts that have not been previously identified in literature. I was also motivated to convey this study's uniqueness, as non-qualitative researchers usually do not assume that qualitative studies are sufficiently rigorous to demonstrate scientific advancement. It was, therefore, necessary for me to be immersed in the social world of the respondents. In addition, I was intrigued by the rich empirical data collected through the high level of involvement methods offered by a qualitative study. I was privileged, for example, to be present at some moments when some of my research participants made trusting decisions. This supported the depth of insights that conventional quantitative methods would not have provided. It is also recognised that quantitative study is a disadvantage to this study as it seldom captures the full spectrum of trust.

## **6.8 Research Strategy**

The required research question for investigating the context of trust-based leadership in the Nigerian public sector organisation has been discussed in the earlier part of chapter one. According to Robson and McCartan (2016), a research strategy is a plan detailing how the identified research question in a study will be answered. Thus, the research strategy provides the methodological connection between research philosophy, the following collection of data and analysis methods (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). According to Saunders et al. (2016), eight research strategies can be

adopted in research design: experimental strategy or survey strategy, which are entirely linked to quantitative research design; which is linked with quantitative, qualitative or mixed-method; in addition, ethnography, action research, grounded theory and narrative inquiry are connected to qualitative research design. As a result of the vast range of qualitative strategies, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) postulate that deciding among qualitative research design approaches tends to generate huge uncertainty. Following the philosophical belief and research paradigm embedded in this study, the procedure adopted for this research is the case study strategy. The choice of undertaking any study when allocating the research strategy is to contribute to knowledge.

Consequently, as contributions are aimed at addressing research issues, it is therefore appropriate that such issues should ascertain strategy options. In particular, the strategy employed in research refers to the methodological link between the study's philosophy and the choice of data collection methods (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). It refers to the plan of how the researcher intends to respond to the research questions. In the face of this, qualitative studies possess research strategies that are linked to philosophies. Therefore, my chosen research strategy is steered by my research question, my philosophical link and access to prospective respondents. The research questions, which were based on an exploratory approach, provided insights aimed at assessing research phenomena. A case study strategy may well be the most effective strategic choice to address this study's research question. During my fieldwork, retaining holistic and meaningful real-life events was my primary interest (Yin, 2014), especially related to the local interpretations of trust-based leadership within the Nigerian context.

## 6.9 Case studies

The reputation of case study research has grown as a useful strategy in investigating and understanding complex issues in a realistic setting (Yin, 2017). In place of this, it has been used across the discipline to address a wide range of research questions. Case study research has experienced extensive expansion due to the application of various methodological approaches (Yin 2017). Several scholars, Eisenhardt (1989), Collis and Hussey (2013), Robson and McCartan (2016), Welch and Piekkari (2017), Yin (2017), have affirmed the usefulness of case study research in investigating a phenomenon that is contemporary in-depth and has a real-life context. Collis and Hussey (2013) explain that the case study allows a researcher to explore complicated issues.

Furthermore, they pointed out that adopting a case study method in research enables the researcher to scrutinise the data within a particular context (Yin, 2017). As classified by Yin (2017), this research strategy mainly adopts the use of open-ended questions, interviews, and observation. This study will assume a multiple case study. This helped the researcher develop a new theory in understanding trust-based leadership in a Nigerian local government. Through this approach, the researcher gained rich and in-depth knowledge of the recent occurrence and leader-employee perception of factors that give rise to trust by answering the 'how' and 'why' questions (Welch and Piekkari, 2017; Yin, 2017).

Scholars such as (Stake 1995; Stewart and Gapp 2014; Welch and Piekkari 2017; Yin 2017), hold different views about case study research. Stewart (2014) differentiates methods as procedures and techniques and views methodology as the researchers' lens to decide about the study. Stewart and Gapp (2014) assume that it is misleading to refer to the case study as a methodology or a single method (Boblin et al., 2013). Also, the use of a mixed-method is encouraged by case study advocates (Stewart and Gapp, 2014; Yin, 2017). The terminology employed in case study research as a methodology or method has brought more confusion in the field of research. Across literature, different scholars have identified case study as a methodology and a method, research design, research strategy and a form of enquiry (Stake, 1995; Brown, 2008; Piekkari 2017; Stewart and Gapp, 2014; Yin, 2017; Bell, Bryman and Harley 2018). Scholars have interchangeably used these terms without

offering much clarification. Yin (2017) views case study as a method. While Yin (2017) emphasised the procedure case study adopted, the scholar did not use the term methodology or strategy. Bryman (2016) and Creswell and Creswell (2017) argues a case study as a qualitative design (research design), while other scholars describe case study as an approach (Simons 2009; Stewart and Gapp 2014). This terminology's interchanging use to qualify case study research has generated separation in definition between methodology and method and case study application in research endeavours (Creswell 2014). However, this study agrees with Bell, Bryman and Harley (2018), which regards case study as a research strategy.

However, prominent scholars of case study research (Bryman 2016; Yin 2014; Ceswell, 2014, Piekkari, 2017) suggest that in order to provide a clear distinction between the different terms used in case study research, it depends on how the researcher defines their adopted philosophical underpinning and to clarify the method chosen in line with their philosophical assumption and their preferred approach. Understanding one philosophical stance of case study research and the different approaches can explain the differences and increase knowledge increment on how to apply these principles and practice (Gerring, 2008). The case study research was conceptualised by (Yin 2017) as a form of social science. The definition of a case study by Yin as a form of empirical inquiry positions him as a Post-positivist. Post-positivist believe that science should be adopted as the means to understand reality.

The researcher assumes that it needs to be created intersubjectively through meanings and knowledge that are socially and experimentally developed to understand reality. Piekarri (2017) and Yin (2017) assert that using processes that help interpret, sort, and manage information becomes essential when there is much information. They further stress that it utilises research discoveries to convey clarity and result applicability. Approaching case study research from the viewpoint of Merriam (2009) displays a pragmatic approach to constructivist investigation. Merriam (2009) further asserts that quantitative and qualitative methods can be adopted in case study research; nonetheless, the technique a researcher employs to utilise when generating inductive reasoning and interpretation in qualitative case study takes priority rather than hypothesis testing. Cases selected are dependent on research purpose and questions. The purpose is to provide a detailed holistic description that enlightens a

researchers understanding of the phenomena. In qualitative case study research, there should not be prioritisation of a particular method for data collection or analysis, but it is needed to adopt a vigorous procedure to frame the research process.

Furthermore, a case study strategy was needed for an exploratory and abductive approach to understanding trust relationships within this thesis framework. Drawing on this study's exploratory nature, the cases were aimed at contrasting leader and employee experiences and indicators that give rise to trust and the effects of trusting relationships. The cases were public servants working in the case study organisation. The representation preference considered five leaders and fifteen employees from five different departments in the case study organisation. In addition, this choice aimed to be representatives who have worked with the case study organisation for many years. Cases are of particular interest to researchers due to their uniqueness and commonality (Stake, 1995). The adoption of within-case analysis and cross-case search for patterns is of particular note. These were used to define the unique processes of particular cases and also the similarities of all cases. Generally, a within-case study includes presenting a detailed overview of each case. This was essential in developing insights into specific cases (Gersick, 1988; Pettigrew, 1988). This helped me to cope with the massive amount of data in the early stages of the study. In particular, the core concept was to become familiar with each case by allowing themes to emerge (Eisenhardt, 1989). Thus, before starting cross-case comparisons, I developed a richer familiarity with each case.

In addition to the within-case analysis, I searched for cross-case patterns by analysing the within-department similarities and inter-department similarities. The apparent discovery of both similarities and inconsistencies culminated in a more nuanced interpretation of previously unknown categories (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988).

Nevertheless, Yin (2017) retells that one mistaken belief of the case study strategy is the lack of severity. This concern has to do with the notion that the researcher may possibly not follow a systematic process. This stance emphasises the notion that the researcher may have the predisposition to allow an equivocal bias to impact the direction of the research findings. In demonstrating this research's complexities, I implemented multiple data collection methods such as interviews and observation that ensured that structured or systematic procedures were implemented.

Furthermore, through a reflexive approach, I made practical efforts to report all evidence reasonably during various analysis stages to avoid bias. A second issue with case studies is that the basis for scientific generalisations is lacking (Yin, 2014). The purpose of this study is to expand theories and not to make statistical generalisations. Besides, Yin (2014) also cautions that a common criticism about case studies is that they consume time and contain a large number of documents. Indeed, due to this complaint, the contents have been simplified and modified for review purposes to ensure readability. While the misconception around the case study method remains, case study provides richer insight in comparison to other approaches. Primarily, case studies can examine contemporary events that cannot be manipulated because they provide two vital evidence during the investigative process of events. Firstly, case studies involve direct observations and participant interviews; secondly, it possesses the unique aspect of dealing with evidence through illuminating a set of decisions (Yin and Davis, 2007). Since the purpose of this thesis is to explore trust-based leadership in a Nigerian public sector organisation, it is fitting to strategically follow a case study approach to explore new and unexplored topics. This is particularly important because it encourages the discovery of results that do not appear in the literature.

### **6.9.1 Single case vs Multiple case study**

In case study research, a single case study research design comprises diverse and influential social science research procedures. Single case study research is flexible, efficient and has advanced the course of the qualitative method of research. Several scholars have criticised the single case study (Yin 2017); it has been criticised for the incapability of providing conclusions that can be generalised (Yin 2017). Additionally, the sample size adopted, either small or large, cannot transform single or multiple cases into a macroscopic study. However, based on the number of cases (sectors) this research seeks to investigate, a multiple case study was adopted for this study. Assuming a multiple case study will allow the researcher to gain knowledge of the differences and the similarities between the cases (Yin 2017).

Furthermore, the researcher can examine the data collected within and across situations (Stake, 1995). Adopting a multiple case study could bring clarity in research when auguring different results for common reasons or argue similar results. When using a multiple case study in research, the researcher needs to be mindful of some factors: it can be expensive and time-consuming to implement. However, these factors do not invalidate its use since a single case study also has its disadvantages (Yin 2017).

### **6.9.2 Federal Medical Centre Ebute Metta structure**

Ebute-Metta Federal Medical Centre was founded in 1964. It began as the Nigerian Railway Corporation's Department of Health Services. It was specifically designed to meet the health requirements of NRC (Nigerian Railway Corporation) employees and their families. The hospital was annexed to the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) during the Nigerian Civil War, where injured troops were treated.

The Nigerian Railway Hospital was upgraded to a Federal Medical Centre on May 26, 2004. On January 31, 2005, the institution was officially handed over to the Federal Ministry of Health as a tertiary healthcare institution and named Federal Medical Centre, Ebute-Metta, Lagos. The Federal Medical Centre Ebute-Metta is organised similarly to any other federal medical institution in Nigeria. The FMC reports to the federal ministry of health since it is directly under the federal minister of health. It is led by a chief medical director (CMD). The CMD reports to the Board of Directors, who manages the hospital's overall operations and reports to the Federal Ministry of Health.

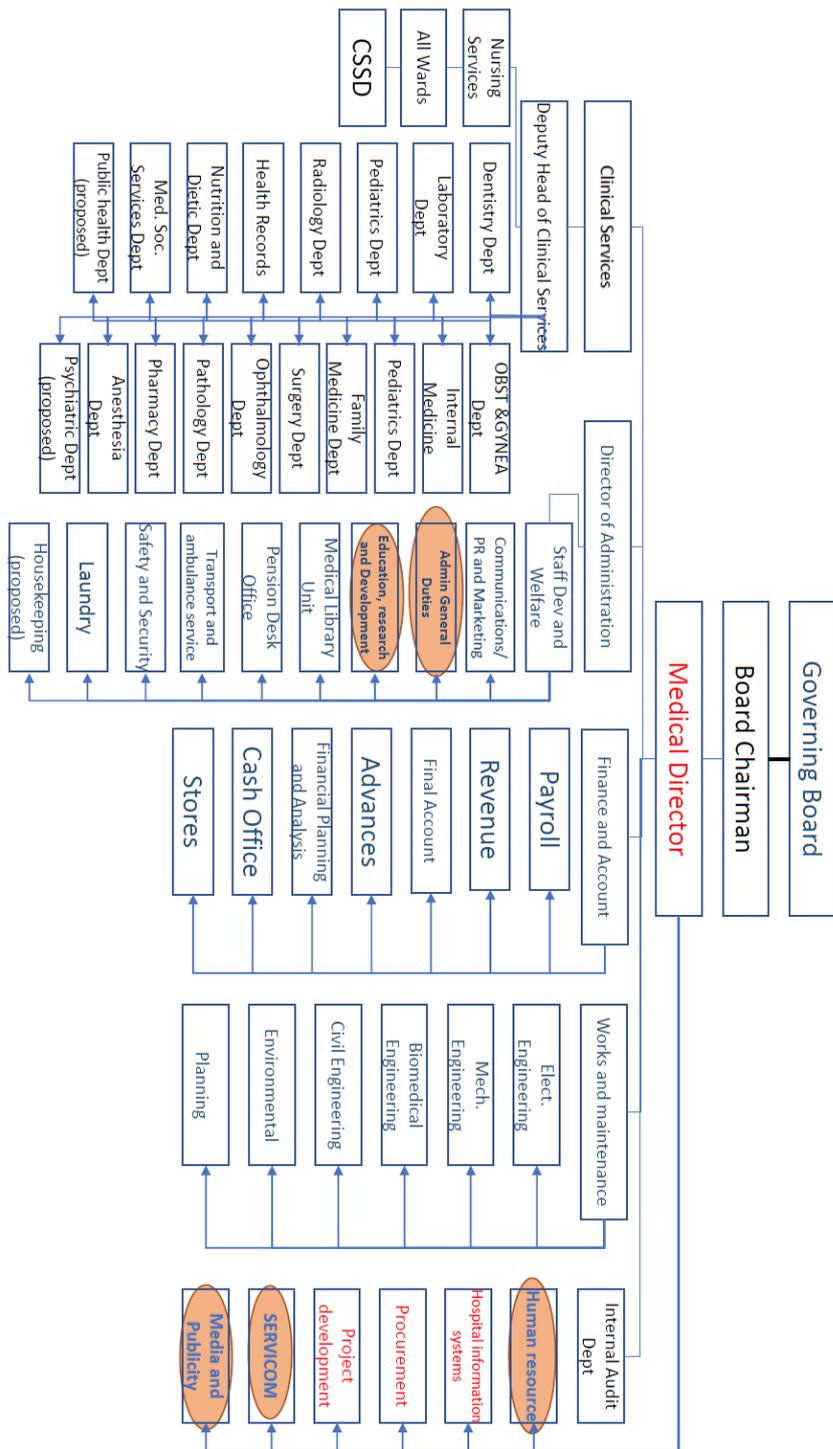
The hospital's daily operations are divided between the clinical and non-clinical divisions. The clinical department consists of nursing services, pharmacy, medical therapy, physiotherapy, and radiography. The Heads of Departments (HODs) oversee the departments that fall under the clinical departments. These HODs are in charge of organising the operations of workers in their respective departments and reporting to the Director of clinical services, training, and research, who is the overall head of the hospital's clinical arm.

The hospital's non-clinical arm is in charge of activities not directly linked to patient care. The non-clinical arm includes the department of Works, administrative

departments, procurement, finance department, liaison office, and the internal audit department—the departments of work include the electrical unit, the mechanical unit, and the environmental unit. The administrative department consists of the legal unit, corporate affairs unit, and board secretariat. This section is responsible for all administrative functions at the hospital and reports to the Director of Administration.

In addition, the Finance department is in charge of all budgetary duties for the company. This comprises all revenue and expenses incurred by the hospital. They are responsible for authorising all expenditures and keeping accurate records of all income generated by the hospital. The hospital also has an audit department in charge of auditing the hospital's finances and inventory, and a liaison office is responsible for communicating with the public and media on the hospital's behalf.

The healthcare system in Nigeria is in a deteriorated state and it affects the health of individuals (Olusegun, Oluwasayo & Olawoyim, 2014). This is clear from the affairs of the Federal Medical Centre in Ebutte Metta. Several claims of bad service and corruption in the hospital have surfaced throughout the years. The personnel are alleged to perform their duties haphazardly and without any motivation. This might be owing to the fundamental difficulties that afflict Nigeria's public sector, such as corruption, bureaucracy, and a lack of sufficient infrastructure. This problem might also be the consequence of trust dynamics between the hospital's leaders and employees, which piqued the researcher's curiosity in looking into the institution.



**Fig 6:** Organogram of Federal Medical Centre Ebutte Metta

**Source:** Website

## 6.10 Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot study prior to the main study to reduce design weakness and instrumentation (Blumberg, 2014). The aim of testing a pilot study was to appraise the question validity and data reliability to be collected (Saunders et al., 2016). Pre-interviews were conducted with four selected participants who were eligible for the study and work in a different public sector organisation. This involved selected local government employees who had a vast understanding of the Nigerian public sector's operationalisation—the pre-interviews allowed for a more focused on specific areas necessitating additional clarifications. More interestingly, the pilot study allowed the respondents to build rapport and establish effective communication methods (Janesick, 1994). It is important to stress that I could discover insights that were not initially visible at the outset.

Consequently, the pilot study in several ways was significant. Firstly, preliminary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, which were essential to refining the interview questions. Furthermore, I realised that before the start of the interviews, and not at the very end, personal information questions should be asked about each respondent. Secondly, the option of selecting leaders and employees from different departments enhanced the variation of findings, including validity. This stems from the advice of Marshall and Rossman (2016) that, in accordance with research questions and the theoretical context, a purposeful sampling frame should be adopted.

Interestingly, the interviews allowed themes to be clarified. In this vein, the input from the respondents showed that the interview questions were understandable.

Other decisions made during the pilot study included the development of the study protocol. For example, they ensured that the participants were fully informed of their participation, the consent forms were subsequently redesigned, and the form was provided for their consent based on their free will. This was not only about signing the consent document but making sure the participants were freely capable of giving informed consent. Additional results from the pilot study offered new insights into the length of interviews that would be performed in the main study. Working in the field needs considerable time and attention to different respondents' behaviour. It is important because, as the principal researcher, I have to change schedules and make

the required adjustments with regard to interviews and observations during the main study. The time spent in the pilot study, therefore, significantly enriched elements of this study.

### **6.11 Unit of Analysis**

The analysis unit relates to the fundamental challenge of determining a case (Ragin and Becker, 1992; Yin, 2014). Research questions are crucial to the identification of the relevant information to be obtained in this case. I was able to select the required unit of analysis by correctly determining the research questions. Within this thesis, the case study organisation's leaders and employees form this analysis's core unit. I acknowledge that the overlap between trust and leadership concepts remains vague and may create grounds for debate.

Put succinctly, supervisors and their subordinates are tasked with the Nigerian public sector organisation's every day running and operations. In this study, 20 public servants from different departments were labelled as cases 1 – 20 from the primary unit of analysis. The selected public servants included leaders and employees from 5 different departments within the case study organisation. Their responsibilities vary. However, they were suitable for this study resulting from their experiences. The rich data needed for this study can be retrieved from this level in the case study organisation as the supervisor and employees relate with each other on an everyday basis that relates to trust. This study's empirical foundations require obtaining an accurate picture of real trust experiences by examining the trusting relationships between the organisational actors. It will also allow for a deeper understanding of trust and leadership from the perspective of leaders and employees in a Nigerian public sector organisation. Typically, information gathered from the supervisors and employees was appropriate because they are tasked with most of the organisation's responsibility; they relate and interact with each other daily.

As a result, I sought to encourage 'true' actors to disclose their interpretations and experiences of trust, drawing on semi-structured interviews with supervisors and their employees. Surprisingly, the focus on supervisors/employees continues to be enlightening, as I sought to illustrate the wealth and implications of the empirical

findings. Thus, I investigated the supervisor's and employees' perceptions of factors that give rise to trust and how it affects their relationship. This includes questions about interpersonal trust and how other types of interactions positively and negatively affect their relationships. Overall, I believe my rapport with the respondents reflected their understanding of trust, as they eagerly shared their practices and experiences.

## **6.12 Sampling**

Based on the advice of Patton (1990), I recognise that a significant sampling guideline suggests that the power and logic behind the recruitment of informants are that the sample has to be rich in detail. Therefore, in order to obtain the best possible interpretation of the phenomenon, samples must be determined according to the requirements of the research (Janesick, 1994). With this in mind, the intention is to ensure that participants represent the same expertise and experience. As a result, the sample size depended on the study's objectives and questions. The public sector was chosen for this study because it determines a country's growth and involves much decision-making, placing them in a trust position.

Since the targeted population was a predefined group of employees, purposeful sampling was employed in this design (Trochim & Donnelly, 2006; Creswell, 2013). This is significant because the study is field-oriented and is not concerned with statistical generalizability (Guest et al., 2006). It also provides an information-rich case study that revealed theoretical insight and explored my research question. The choice of selecting purposive sampling fits well within this study's scope, as the reasoning behind my case selection approach was based on the research questions and objectives. Purposive sampling has a high risk of bias because it relies on the researcher's knowledge of the studied population. In this case, I have followed a purposeful and theoretical sampling technique where sample choices have been deliberately selected for the needs of the emerging theory (Marshall and Rossman, 1999).

Since this was a case study, the sample size was determined based on the number of employees in the chosen department and the saturation of the findings related to the factors that give rise to trust between supervisors and employees (Strauss and Corbin,

2015). For this investigation, the respondents consisted of public servants from different departments at different levels in their career and had at a time experienced trust in their leader based on the daily interactions they have had with their supervisors. A diverse base of participants with expertise and experience contributed their viewpoint based on their position and interactions in the case study organisation, their experiences, and their exposure to different leadership styles.

The researcher conducted interviews and recruited participants until the data reached a stage where no new ideas emerged. According to O'Reilly and Parker (2013), the minimum participant size in qualitative research should be eight participants to achieve rich data. However, when trying to achieve maximum variation, Guest et al. (2006) recommend twelve to twenty participants. Following their numerical guidance, I ensured that every respondent was representative of different departments, and 20 respondents were selected for this study. Several researchers (Marshall et al., 2013; Adler, 2012; Kvale, 2015; Becker, 2012; Sobal, 2004; Brunce and Johnson, 2006) argued for different numbers of interview participants depending on the settings (Saunders and Townsend, 2016).

Furthermore, I made every effort to avoid any kind of bias. In this case, I considered important factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, position in the organisation, and years of working experience. This was reflected in the depth and breadth of information gathered for this report. I was able to gain access to a range of supervisors and employees with the aid of key informants who were selected for their specific expertise and role. The primary informants' positions and status in the case study organisation influenced their functions as gatekeepers.

### **6.12.1 Sampling strategy**

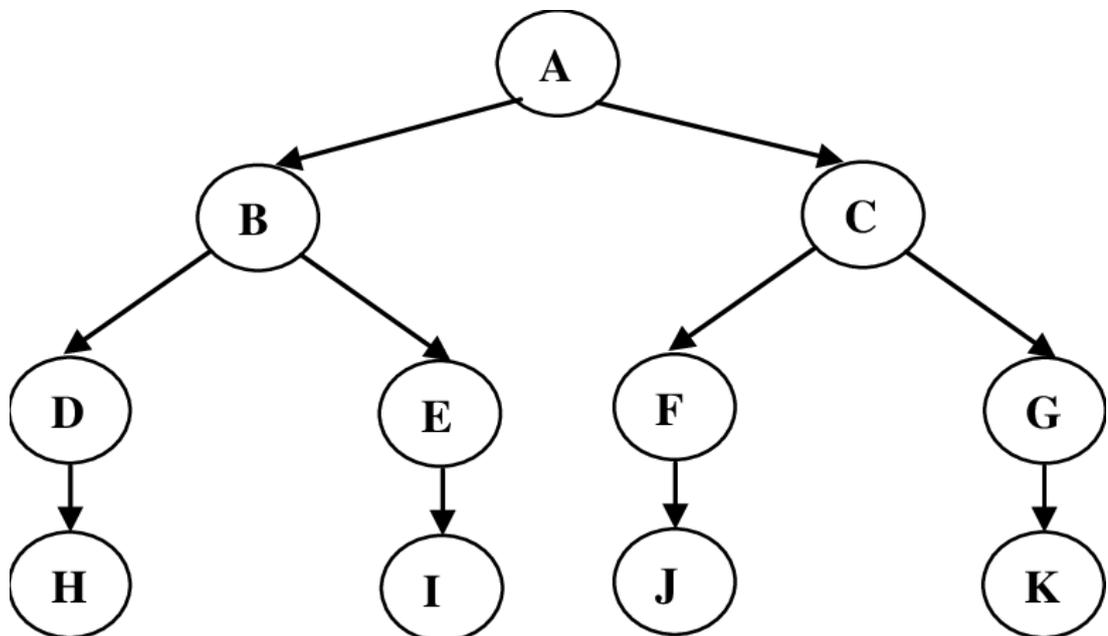
Sampling is a method of selecting a sample from a population for a specific study goal. A sampling strategy is necessary due to the difficulty in investigating an entire population of the case study organisation under research while examining a social problem (Gentles et al., 2015). It is both expensive, time-consuming, complicated, and financially unviable. As a result, selecting an acceptable representative sample from the population of the case study organisation is essential. There are generally two sampling techniques: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The term “probability sampling” refers to the fact that every item in the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. By adopting this technique, the researcher can select a sample from the sampling frame after first constructing a sampling frame (Taherdoost, 2016). Probability or random sampling has the least amount of bias, but it may be the most expensive sample in terms of time and money.

On the other hand, non-probability sampling as a sampling technique allows the researcher to choose samples based on the researcher’s subjective judgment rather than a random selection used in probability sampling techniques (Gentles et al., 2015). Unlike probability sampling, non-probability sampling is a sampling strategy in which not all population individuals have an equal chance of participating in the research (Vehovar, Toepoel, and Steinmetz, 2016). It is a less restrictive approach. Since non-probability does not require a complete survey, it involves a quick, convenient, and economical approach to collecting data (Raina, 2015).

According to Raina (2015), non-probability sampling procedures are a more acceptable and practical option for researchers deploying surveys in the real world. Although statisticians embrace probability sampling because it provides data in the form of numbers, non-probability sampling can give comparable, if not equal, quality results if employed correctly (Raina, 2015). Non-probability sampling is faster and less expensive than probability sampling since the researcher knows the sample size. Respondents respond faster than people picked at random because they are motivated to participate (Acharya et al., 2013).

There are different types of non-probability sampling. The convenience sampling strategy is used when samples are chosen from the population only because they are easily accessible to the researcher. The researcher chooses these samples simply because they are easier to recruit, and they do not examine whether or not they reflect the overall population (Emerson, 2015). On the other hand, quota sampling is among the most adopted non-probability sampling methods. In this case, sampling continues until each subgroup has a determined set number (quotas). Quota sampling is a technique for meeting sample size goals for subpopulations (Acharya et al., 2013).

A snowball sampling approach was used in this research. This strategy was chosen since it aids the researcher in locating a sample quickly, as this sampling method also saves time and money. In snowball sampling, the researcher identifies a small number of primary data sources that are acceptable for the study and utilises them to uncover related variables. This sampling technique functions similar to a referral or networking program. Once the researcher has found eligible participants, he requests their support in finding comparable participants so that a sufficiently large sample may be formed.



**Fig 7: Image of Snowballing Method**

**Source: Website**

### **6.13 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

This study's inclusion criteria consisted of supervisors and employees who have up to five-year experience in the organisation and experienced trust in their leader. It was imperative for the respondents to have felt trust toward a supervisor in order to reflect on such lived occurrences.

The exclusion criteria include individuals who were external to the case study organisation, and those who have not had up to five years of experience were not included in the interview. The researcher was of the opinion that their limited exposure to various leader-employee interactions did not provide them with a diverse range of experiences. Finally, candidates who had not had a positive encounter with a leader were disqualified. These candidates lacked the constructive interactions that contribute to a trusting relationship between the supervisor and the employee. This study applied a qualitative study guideline to the procedures used in this research. This study aimed to go further than the knowledge of individual respondent perceptions on their leader's trust and discover common themes formed by all participants that merged the points of weakness, strengths, and missing factors.

#### **6.13.1 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity is the assessment of how a researcher's views, experiences, and identities, among other things, may influence the research. This is especially significant when interviews are viewed as co-construction activities since it "places the researcher as a participant and also as a contributor in the overall process of data generation" (King and Horrocks 2010; p.134). As a result, neutrality is deemed impossible. In this study, the role of the researcher is recognised as a participant and an observer. Therefore, it was critical for the researcher to evaluate how his history, particularly as a worker in the public sector, would affect data collection and analysis (to ensure the research's credibility). This was treated seriously in this project. The researcher's intentional non-power position (i.e., not serving as the course lead) was made apparent in every interview. Through the interviews, the interviewer was aware of the potential hazards of leading discussions and made every effort to explore any topic of interest, not only those that appeared to be relevant to the ultimate goal of the study. In the analysis of data and the presenting of findings, reflexivity is equally essential. The same considerations were applied because the research was not

designed to prove a point but rather to investigate phenomena. Reflexivity is an essential method that simultaneously identifies and brings up for evaluation the underlying ideas and beliefs that form and inspire the study (King and Horrocks 2010).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that a researcher should keep a field notebook during research. This will enable he or she may to understand and describe their behaviour within the research environment. The researcher kept such a notebook for this study, recording daily schedules and the rationale for the methods used. Personal thoughts and ideas were also recorded in the journal to aid in the detection of any bias that may have influenced the data collection and analysis.

I travelled by road for over two hours due to the city's busy nature. I met with my guide/gatekeeper, who was already waiting for my arrival. My gatekeeper, who is very familiar with the case study organisation, is a public servant who works in the same public sector organisation. The gatekeeper is very familiar with every department in the organisation; he is an active and well-known actor in the case study organisation. We formally worked together in a charity organisation in Lagos when I started my career, building up young individuals from low-income earning areas and taking them off the streets.

Regarding my fieldwork, on arriving at the case study organisation, my contact immediately advised that we meet with the director of administration. It was quite a challenge meeting him due to his busy schedule. After waiting for over four hours, I met with the administrative director, introduced myself to him. He confirmed approving my research on the premises and further pledged his support. Also seated in his office at the time were all departmental heads. I briefed them on the purpose of my visit and showed them my access letter.

The director asked how I intended to go through the interview, I explained to the administrator that I would be conducting interviews for the supervisor and staff in five different departments, and the interviews would last four weeks. The administrator mentioned that four weeks is too much time to conduct interviews due

to the staff's busy nature. I then suggested three weeks; again, he declined and responded that he could only allow me access to the facility for two weeks. I then negotiated for three weeks. He advised that I start the process, and we can review it after two weeks. I had no choice but to accept the offer. He assigned a staff member to monitor my activities and ensure all departments involved in the research grant me access to their supervisor and staff. I was asked about the confidentiality of staff and data. I informed the administrator that all interviews would be recorded and assured that only my supervisors and I would have access to the recording; names would not be mentioned. The recorded interviews will not be used for any political agenda. The administrator gave me his card and asked that I call him if the need arises. Due to the reduction in the days I originally planned to carry out these interviews, I had to conduct two to three interviews per day. I ensured that the respondents supported all answers with detailed examples. I intended for each interview to last around 40 to 45 minutes; however, the administrator advised that due to the busy nature of the staff, each interview should last 20 to 25 minutes to enable staff and supervisors to return to their respective duties. Again, as a result, I had to reshuffle the questions to ensure that the essential questions were asked first. The most extended interview lasted 40 minutes, while the shortest lasted 29 minutes. They all promised to return to their offices and address their staff for a smooth process. Knowing the organisation and how they operate, my contact advised me to inform him before going into any department. He stated that once they are in their department, they can decide to act according to their authority and use their discretion. I faced several difficulties as a researcher studying in a different country due to the context where this research was conducted. Some of the staff thought that the government sent me to spy on their organisation's activities. I continued to reassure them that the interview was strictly for research purposes. This response alleviated the fears of some of the respondents while other respondents were not convinced. These concerns, to an extent, placed a limit on the responses of some respondents. I showed them my university identification card to assure them that I am a researcher from the said university. The staffs working with the department of administration refuse to be interviewed. They claimed that the department head was not around and did not instruct them to attend any activity aside from their official duties. I put a call through to their department's administrator; he immediately instructed them over the phone to grant me the

interviews, to which they obliged. The environment was noisy, and some staff were unwilling to leave their office for the interview to be conducted in a more serene environment. Some of the interviews were disturbed by the sound of the doors opening, staff wanting to pass on information to the interviewee, staff trying to dissuade other staff from interrupting ongoing interviews. At intervals, I had to pause the recording and stop ongoing interviews. The head of media and publication refused to grant me interviews. He was concerned about the information being leaked to media houses. I assured him of complete anonymity. He later asked that I drop the interview questions with him and return the next day to pick up the answers. He then called the head of administration to confirm my research's authenticity, which the administrator confirmed, but he was still not convinced. He asked if I could conduct the interviews without recording, which I explained, was not possible. After several discussions, he asked that his assistant represent him and chose five staff members for the interview.

Being attached to my gatekeeper had immense benefits; this made me access the departments easily. According to the overall perception that emerged, my friendship with the gatekeeper laid the groundwork for how I was positively viewed. In other not to stand out as an outsider, I related with the respondents using a mix of different languages and pidgin English. This gave them more confidence to relate with and answer the interview questions in detail. Although I remained mindful of the sensitivity of the case study organisation environs, there were multiple cases of superiority clashes. This was the case in the media and publication department. The cooperation I earned from interview participants was concentrated on their trust in the gatekeeper, the rapport I developed with them, and most departments were astonished that I could communicate and understand different languages. At first, the audio recorder made them uncomfortable as they considered me to either be a spy or a journalist. However, I was able to convince them by assuring them of total anonymity. After days of continuously visiting the premises, the respondents and subsequent interviews became more relaxed. I often joined them for lunch and had informal conversations with some public servants in the case study organisation.

On occasions where I could not conduct my interviews due to respondents having too many assignments or interviewees not being in the mood to answer questions, I sat in the office to observe their activities. Most importantly, the relationship between the staff and their supervisor, how trust emerges in their interactions and everyday activities. It was pronounced that some staffs were closer to their supervisor than others. I class the type of staff as ingroup and out group staff. During this time, I experienced periods where the leader's showed integrity, empathy, benevolence, and communication, which were embedded in how they interacted with their subordinates. The open-door policy in the departments and how leaders and workers sat in the same room were interesting observations. This act gave employees the confidence to interact with their leader without fear.

Through my interviews, I understand that trust in the case study organisation is a daily activity because decisions are made daily in the case study organisation. I will be discussing the findings from my fieldwork in the following chapter. It was interesting to uncover how trust could emerge from employees of the same tribe who speak the same language.

According to Cohen (1992), researchers need to take the lens back on their own experiences by presenting an interpretive reality for their readership. In summary, the study's reflexivity is essential and allows for a range of interpretations on my part. Furthermore, the rich insights gained from my interviews and cases resulted from developing trust and rapport with the respondents. After returning from the field, the various actors' interactions and constructed narratives provided me with a deeper understanding of trust in the case study organisation. The following session will discuss the data collection technique employed in this study.

#### **6.14 Data Collection Techniques**

Following that, previous sections addressed the selection of main activities carried out during the course of this research; this section goes a step further by describing the methods of data collection used. By keeping an open mind about what needs to be known, I aimed to illuminate the trust and leadership concept by answering the overarching research questions that drive this study. As a result of this stance, I ensured that the data collection and development techniques I used were responsive

to the phenomenon under investigation (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992). This allowed for the emergence of rich and valid results from the data to a large extent.

While there are numerous data collection techniques, this thesis focuses primarily on approaches that place fewer constraints on the phenomenon under study. Based on this, I follow from the advice of Yin (2014), who states that when performing a case study, the most common data collection strategies are documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical objects. However, after giving these six main techniques some thought, I have decided to use a highly complementary mix of semi-structured interviews and direct observation as multiple sources of evidence for this study. Interestingly, one of the major benefits of using multiple sources of evidence is creating converging lines of inquiry, which means that future conclusions are reliable and compelling. In what follows, I will attempt to provide a brief description of how the methods were employed.

#### **6.14.1. *Semi-structured interviews***

Interviews are the most commonly used qualitative research tool and a valuable source of case study information. Its appeal stems from its adaptability, as I was guided by a fluid set of conversations and well-defined lines of inquiry (Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Yin, 2014). The interviews allowed me to dig deeper into the subject by exposing new trust dimensions through the respondents' lenses. I realised that knowing the interview instruments and the possible bias that could corrupt the generated data quality is critical to the validity and reliability of quality data. As a result, I raised unbiased questions in the interview and ensured that the inquiry lines described in the case study protocol were followed. I designed my interview guide to provide a list of reasonably clear questions that provided the interviewees with ample leeway for feedback using face-to-face semi-structured interviews. This interview method provided opportunities for open-ended questions about trust and leadership issues to be asked. As a result, since respondents were free to explain their experiences, questions that were not included in the guide were posed during the conversations.

The interview process was split into several stages. The first stage involved developing rapport and building an encouraging relationship. This stage entailed

using soft talk to ease the establishment of trust and maintain the respondents' interest. The second step included establishing the interview's "behavioural norms." This step refers to the norms that control the respondent-interviewer relationship (Benney and Hughes, 1956). From the onset, the individual interviewee understood the voluntary essence of participating in the interviews, and permission was obtained for the interview. Furthermore, prior to starting the interviews, guarantees of confidentiality were given (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992).

Obtaining the consent of the interviewees is a crucial aspect of the interview process. In this case, I sought to include enough details about myself and the reason for the interview. I offered to clarify the logic and systematic use of the interview data for the study purpose before each interview. Specific general information questions about the respondents helped begin the interview process—the specifics of the organisation, their job roles, nature of operation, and years of experience. I also adopted a critical incident technique for a more conventional interview process as part of my semi-structured interviews. Critical incident entailed interviewing respondents about significant incidents and experiences, which allowed me to gain more understanding of the importance of those events to the respondents (Flanagan, 1954; Bryman and Bell, 2015). More importantly, I was able to gain access to the respondents' experience by urging them to recollect instances of trust in their interactions. Through this, I captured the concepts of trust-based leadership and the effects of trusting relationships.

The interview schedule was divided into three phases to investigate an understanding of the following: (1) factors that give rise to trust, (2) perceptions of trust (3) effect of trusting relationships. According to Mollering (2006) and Smith (1995), a typical difficulty of interviews is not recognising reflexivity. As a result of being attentive to the dynamics of the interview situation, I recognised reflexivity. I was cautious not to ask suggestive or close questions that expressed my own opinions in this vein.

In total, 20 public servants in the case study organisation were interviewed across four significant departments in the summer of 2019. In the interviews, I aimed to ensure that all the respondents related their understanding and experiences of trust in

relation to their social world. The interviews, which were held at various departments, lasted between 29 and 40 minutes. The interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed for review. Interviews were conducted in offices, cafeterias, and sometimes in the vehicles of some of the respondents. In particular, I paid attention to trust interpretations according to different tribes' meanings. The analysis richness also gave room for an interpretation of how individuals in the case study organisation perceive their leaders, how they give rise to trust, and how it affects their relationships. The analysis was also beneficial because it gave the opportunity to see a picture of trust that reflected the commonalities and differences across the five departments.

#### **6.14.2 *Direct Observational Technique***

The observational technique is dependent on the level of the researcher's participation. Gold (1958) describes four different approaches in which a researcher may observe data. This technique includes the observer as a participant, the participant as an observer, the complete participant, and the complete or direct observer. I assumed a direct observer's position to improve my subjects' direct insights and understanding for this study's purposes. The ease with which a researcher can gain access to social settings is a significant strength of the direct observational approach. In a similar vein, the concept of non-interventionism is the distinguishing feature of the direct observers. This concept is especially valid because direct observation has the potential for an unobtrusive interaction and can be done discreetly (Adler and Adler, 1994).

As Johnson (1975) points out, observations include the cultural knowledge that serves as the foundation for knowledge and theory. This allows for the possibility of gaining insights into new realities. Since case studies should occur in the context of the case (Yin, 2014), I allowed for direct observations. Such observations were significant in my fieldwork because they enabled me to gather first-hand impressions of meanings and experiences. This was useful because I was able to perceive the key actors' actions and reactions.

For this study's purpose, the direct observations were held at different departments where my interviews were conducted. I followed the flow of events as the leaders and employees interacted and carried out their activities typically. Furthermore, as an observer, I detached myself from the process. I enjoyed the benefit of being submerged into the phenomenological complexity of trust while I was in the field. For example, I creatively interpreted the leader's and employee's dependence on past experiences and evidence of reliability or trustworthiness (Zand, 1972; Zucker, 1986). One main criticism among others levelled at observation technique is that it lacks validity because an observer is vulnerable to the bias of subjective perception of events (Denzin, 1989; Alder and Alder, 1994). This could be the case since often, there are not enough quotes to validate or enrich a situation's interpretation. Thus, by using reflexivity to draw the readers into the social world of the organisational actors, I could mitigate this bias in my data presentation. The second criticism contends that the observer could be exposed to activities without the ability to explain them. To alleviate this concern, I view the observation as a valuable source of data because it allowed for bracketing, which entailed cross-checking data against information gathered during the interviews. Issues that needed further clarity were sometimes addressed with key respondents and, in a few cases, my research contact. In my opinion, my position as an observer played a significant role in the data collection, interpretation, and presentation. As a result, I was able to gain insight into the social world for the leaders and employees of the case study organisation through observation.

### **6.14.3 OBSERVATION REPORT**

A case study is a detailed observation of one person, group, or event. In terms of scope, a case study extensively investigates a phenomenon in a real-life context (Yin, 2018). The use of case studies in qualitative research is one of the most prevalent as case studies have applications in many sectors, including psychology, medicine, education, anthropology, political science, and social work. Using a case study supported the researcher in understanding the phenomenon in-depth (De Freitas and O'Hara, 2020).

This study uses this method to examine interactions, behaviours and body language between supervisors and their subordinates at the Federal Medical Centre in Ebuta Meta,

Nigeria. This allowed the researcher to thoroughly examine the trust-based leadership relationship between these organisational actors in a real-life setting, allowing the researcher to get an in-depth look at the organisation, its supervisors, and its staff members, as well as the organisation's inner workings and interactions.

The researcher discovered good interaction between superiors and subordinates at the FMC Ebute Metta and that the leaders maintained an open-door policy, which meant that there was always open-door access to the subordinates throughout working hours. Across all departments, four significant actions were notable.

- 1) The leaders had an open-door policy.
- 2) Staff were interacting freely. Most of them were subordinate from the same tribe.
- 3) The supervisor occasionally left his office to work with the staff in the general area.
- 4) The supervisor showed concern for their well-being by asking after their family and health.

The researcher saw that the workers were welcome to enter the superior's office anytime and have dialogues with the supervisor during office hours without hesitation or fear.

The supervisors' open-door approach facilitated good leader-member communication in the organisation. Employees do not feel alone at work since they know there is always someone to help them when they need it. They become attached to the leadership and are constantly loyal to the organisation in this manner. This reflects the organisation's degree of trust.

In addition, the researcher observed interaction amongst staff members. The interactions between the staff were impressive. The researcher observed members of the staff conversing in Yoruba and other local dialects. One noteworthy discovery was that there appears to be more rapport and closeness between people speaking the same local dialect in subordinate-to-subordinate and leader-subordinate interactions. This demonstrates more significant trust-based interaction in the office between persons of the same culture and tribe. This also suggests that people from the same cultural background are more likely to build trust-based relationships in an organisation.

Furthermore, the researcher noticed that supervisors come out of their offices and interact with their subordinates during break times. The supervisor converses and engages in extensive discussions with various staff members. Some of these discussions

were about personal concerns, work projects, or updates on tasks that the subordinate is handling.

During the field observation, the supervisor occasionally came out of his office and walked around engaging with employees, asking them about their personal lives, families, and their responsibilities for the day. One fascinating discovery was that the supervisor was familiar with the names of some of the employee's family members. This exchange demonstrates a level of trust-based relationship in the organisation since the employees are allowed to discuss matters of different scopes and confidential information with the supervisor. This interaction is impressive because it makes the employee feel that the boss cares about them and can keep certain information about them confidential. This creates a sense of value for the supervisor and devotion in the workplace, which builds leader-member trust in the organisation.

### **6.15 Data Analysis**

This section offers a concise explanation of the analytical process used in the research while addressing the key research questions that shape this study. The argument is that it becomes expedient to understand how leaders and employees interpret trust and their relationships from a specific perspective (King and Horrocks, 2018). The recruitment of 20 respondents was a choice made to contrast perceptions and experiences as they relate to their specific environment. This study's unit of analysis was focused on leaders/employees because they are charged with key decision-making choices. Data was collected in the summer of 2019 using semi-structured interviews to understand how the inferences are drawn from leaders and employee interactions give rise to trust, how have they experienced trust in their leader, and what effect it has on their relationship (Schramm, 1971; Yin, 2014). The interviews were conducted at different locations such as offices, cafeterias, and respondent cars because they proved convenient for the interviews. The consideration for limiting bias was minimised through observation of their daily activities and informal discussions. To collect information from the respondents, I employed the use of an audio recorder, which I later transcribed into text, while the documented fieldnote was also converted into expanded narratives.

### **6.15.1 Data Analysis Strategy**

Regarding choosing a data analysis strategy, I aimed to choose one that would treat evidence equally, rule out alternate interpretations, and deliver convincing conclusions (Yin, 2014). Having this in mind, I considered a thematic analysis to be most suitable because it provides a well-defined methodology that is useful in pinpointing significant themes within a set of data without being limited to a specific epistemological stance (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis recognises, analyses, and reports trends in data and interprets different aspects of the research topic (Braun and Clarke, 2008). I wanted to provide a rich thematic analysis of my data set to ensure that the constructed themes, its development, and the relationship between them accurately represented my data set as a whole. With this in mind, I searched the data for issues of potential interest and trends of significance. This requires regular iteration between the entire set of data, coded data extracts, and the analysed data. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase review, I immersed myself in the data to become familiar with the material's breadth and depth. This necessitated reading the data several times and checking for patterns and meanings.

To begin, I acknowledged that transcription is a requirement for analysing the overall data set. While transcribing ensures familiarity with data by translating documented information into text (Langdrige, 2004; Kings and Horrocks, 2010), it can be time-consuming. The procedure included determining the best environments for quiet and privacy to listen to the verbal recordings. In terms of equipment, an audio-recording Sony device was used to produce an excellent recording quality. After that, the audio files were moved to my computer for transcription. Although I employed the use of an audio recording device, this was also supported with documentary notes where non-verbal behaviours were recorded. The aim was to ensure that no omission of expressions and intense emotions could communicate significant meaning. These notes were then imported into NVivo software to aid in the coding process. Since this study had a relatively large number of 20 respondents, it necessitated a significant time and resources expenditure. To ensure that the capturing of actual but salient narratives, the recordings were transcribed verbatim. By way of illustration, I ensured words that interviewees mispronounced were transcribed as pronounced. As a result, the researcher made considerable effort to ensure the transcription was 'cleaned up'

of slang, errors in grammar, or misuse of words or concepts. Additionally, in cases where incorrect pronunciations caused difficulty understanding the text, I inputted the correct words in square brackets.

Consistent with the above, I recognised and captured the use of filler words in the process of transcription. For example, the respondents used words such as ehen, um, yeah, hunh, oh, ah. All these words were transcribed. All the interviews with the respondent were conducted in English. However, Responses were in English, Yoruba, and pidgin English. For the sake of confidentiality and privacy, all transcriptions were saved in a secure file in accordance with ethical considerations (Saunders et al., 2016). After acquiring the data, I adopted the QSR-NVivo (version 11) software package for data coding. Prior to commencing the fieldwork, I attended training workshops to develop my NVivo software application skills. As a result, the NVivo 11 program was needed to facilitate the coding process and manage the entire data corpus.

As a result, from the data, I commenced the production of initial codes. It entails identifying data features that revealed meaningful interpretations for the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clark, 2006). The research question and the theoretical framework are in mind (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Braun and Clark, 2006; Saunders et al., 2016). I went through the entire data set step by step, identifying exciting aspects of the data that formed the basis of repetitive patterns (themes). Following the initial coding, I derived a long list of codes that needed sorting into different themes. Essentially, I began analysing my data by thinking about how the various codes could be merged to form an overarching theme. I ended up with a list of candidate themes and sub-themes, and I began to understand the individual themes.

Following that, I proceeded to refine the themes. This was done to ensure that data within the themes existed meaningfully, with the aim of demonstrating the richness of the phenomena under study. As a result, they provided distinct distinguishing features between them. Interestingly, this required two stages of theme refinement. The first level reviewed all the collected themes to reveal a consistent pattern.

In contrast, the second level assessed the validity of the individual themes in relation to the set of data. It ensured that additional themes missing in earlier stages of the coding process were re-coded. Through this process, I was able to reveal the themes that emerged with the set of data. These themes included: (1) employee perceptions of trust (2) leaders' perception of trust (3) range of factors that relates to trustworthiness: such as loyalty, empathy, character, integrity (4) the effect of a trusting relationship and breakdown in a relationship (5) how the behaviour and character of the organisation actors lead to trust (6) trust repairs. As I was able to identify the relationship between the themes, I summarised the emergent themes. The penultimate stage necessitated the naming and defining of themes. Thus, there is a sub-theme, a typical description of the main theme, and typical quotes within each theme. In the final phases, I aimed at providing a final write-up of the thematic analysis. These stages provided data extracts that determined the prevalence of themes by using vivid examples to capture my narrative's essence (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Summarily, the interview explanations provided analytical context to my definition of trust. Much of the transcribed data, later coded for further study, showed the richness of trust through the actors' experiences. I recognise that this study may have benefited from a longitudinal investigation. Nevertheless, I am sure that my ability to obtain a rich picture of real trust happenstances by recognising the factors that give rise to trust, the effects of a trusting relationship, and taking into account my interactions' reflexivity highlights the study's important contributions.

Following Eisenhardt's (1989) suggestion, evidence from each of the cases was contrasted with the conceptual framework to identify new insights and ensure a close relationship to the data. In analysing the case study data, I also employed Yin's (2014) cross-case synthesis technique. The method is particularly pertinent when applied to the analysis of multiple cases, as the findings were found to be more robust. In this vein, the method enabled the analysis of each case while allowing the cases to be analysed as part of a single case. Nevertheless, using quotes displayed in a tabular form, I reported findings from the interviews and observations to develop my narratives. These quotes drew on the responses from the leaders and employees of the case study organisation for this study; effort was also made to make sure that the leader's and employee's experiences were not misplaced in context in which they were made.

Table 3: Thematic analysis phases.

	Phases	Description details
1.	Acquainting myself with the data	Transcription of data and re-reading of the data
2.	Initial codes generation	Coding data that are interesting and gathering the data that are relevant to the code
3.	Searching the themes	Collating codes into themes
4.	Review of themes	Cross-checking the themes to make sure they fit the coded extracts.
5.	Definition and naming of themes	Analysing the themes and story generation to describe the themes. To this point, names should be assigned to themes
6.	Producing the report	Providing reports which show the extracts, sources, and theme description.

### **Researcher – Design Guiding Interview Questions**

As previously mentioned in the methodology chapter, this study adopted a semi-structured one-to-one interview. The researcher provided an initial open-ended question that provided additional probing questions only after the respondents had fully expressed their response to each question. Based on the insight shared by the participants, it was pertinent for the researcher to decide if he was to ask a preconstructed open-ended question or if he should instantly frame a probing question to continue delving further into the shared thought of the participants (Glaser & Strauss, 1970; Creswell, 2014). The participants were guided through open-ended questions to think and express their feelings and recollections concerning their perceptions of the construct encompassing trust-based leadership. However, the open-ended questions did not limit the discussion of the respondents. The thirteen open-ended guiding interview questions used in this interview guide were as follows:

1. Can you tell me what you do here and what your job involves? (How long have you worked with your supervisor)?
2. How do you describe the working relationship between you and your supervisor? (Can you give an example of how this relationship affects your work)?
3. How will you describe your supervisor? (If given the role of a supervisor, what will you do differently)?
4. How will you describe your supervisors' actions towards you at work? (Does his/her action impact how you do your job)?
5. Can you give me an example where you have done something and received praise or appreciation from your supervisor? (How did it impact your work)?
6. Have you handled any project in your department without supervision (what was the outcome)? (What was your supervisors' reaction)? (How did you feel afterwards)?
7. Do you trust your supervisor? (What are your reasons for the chosen answer)?
8. On a scale of 1 – 10, where one is (my supervisor does not trust me), and ten represents (my supervisor trust me absolutely), how will you rate your supervisor? (Why the chosen number)?
9. What can make you lose trust in your supervisor?
10. What leadership qualities will you say your supervisor possesses? (Can you give an example of when he/she has exhibited this quality)?
11. What are the leadership qualities your leader needs to keep developing?
12. How will these qualities increase your trust in your supervisor?
13. Is there anything else I have not asked you that would help me understand how to gain trust?

### **6.17 Ethical Consideration**

Given that this study involved humans' participation satisfying York St. John University's ethics advisory board's ethical guidelines became pertinent. Nevertheless, I employed the use of four ethical principles: non—maleficence and beneficence, confidentiality and anonymity, justice, and autonomy. The concepts of non-maleficence and beneficence will be explored together since they are closely related. Non-maleficence entails preventing some kind of harm to participants, while

beneficence entails balancing the research's benefits against the possible risks. The concern for non-maleficence ensured that the research was free of any risks of causing harm. This means that the selected participants' integrity and interests were safeguarded against any kind of mental, physical, psychological, or cultural harm. As a result, I made every effort to ensure that all participants were not subjected to any sort of unacceptable harm by taking part in this study. Maximising the study's benefits put an obligation on me to advance information that will benefit both the participants and society as a whole. As a result, I advanced the beneficence theory by ensuring that the case study organisation leaders and employees interviewed for this study benefited from recognising and reflecting on trust mechanisms involved in their daily activities. As a result, most participants could devote more time to the interview process than was required, and other respondents showed an interest in engaging in future interviews.

Concerning autonomy, this necessitates that the selected participants be fully briefed about the study's scope and implications. Meaning that participants' autonomy can only be defined after full disclosure of the proposed research design has been communicated to them (Blumberg et al., 2010; Kings and Horrocks, 2014). Following this principle's tenets, I sought the participants' consent after presenting adequate information about the details and consequences of participation. In this vein, the participants willingly participated in the study without any sort of pressure or coercion (Saunders et al., 2016). As a result, I received verbal and written consents from the participating case study organisation leader/employee (a copy of the consent letter is included in the appendix. Formal invitation letters were also sent to respondents to explain the nature of the research process as they were reminded of their right to withdraw at any time or decline from the study if necessary (see appendix x for a copy of the letter of invitation).

The principle of justice means that all research participants should be treated equally and fairly. My ethical application, in particular, involved a detailed overview of plans to address specific obligations to vulnerable participants. As a result, I ensured that all participants were asked similar questions during the interview, resulting in a fair distribution of this study's benefits and burdens. As a result, no participant received

preferential treatment, and prejudice was reduced by equal consideration to the five departments in the case study organisation. Hence, the study process was considered fair and transparent.

As a consequence, the ethical consideration ensured that all participants' confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. In order to accomplish this, the information gathered about the participants was anonymised and kept confidential. As a result, all participants were not identified in disclosing subsequent findings, as stated in the consent and participant information forms. Furthermore, the following information was conveyed to the participants, which were made explicit in the ethical application: (1) details of how the sourced data will be stored; (2) how the data will be secured; (3) individuals who will have access to the data; and (4) anonymisation procedures. Furthermore, this analysis did not include events that could lead to the easy identification of key participants.

#### **6.18 Criteria for establishing quality in qualitative research**

Research methods should be evaluated not just with respect to the objective and context of the study but also in terms of the study's overall quality (Bush, 2002). To guarantee that findings are trusted and believed, quantitative or qualitative research demands rigour (Merriam, 1995). In so doing, the scholarly community's faith in the results' validity and reliability can be restored. Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed criteria for assessing qualitative research. Credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability are examples of these criteria. This model was implemented in order to ensure methodical validity. The sub-section below details how the criteria of credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability were constituted in the research.

Recently, the significance of qualitative research has been called into question, owing to the lack of a clearly specified set of criteria for judging it (Hammersley, 2002, 2007; Biesta, 2007). The assumptions that underpin this critique imply that qualitative research can be of questionable quality. I made sure to address this thesis's quality within the framework of this thesis by leveraging on a collection of criteriology: internal validity, external validity, construct validity, and reliability (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2011; Miles et al., 2014).

Validity entails researching and learning about the phenomena under investigation (Leininger, 1985; Cypress, 2017). In terms of construct validity, I followed Yin's (2009) advice and drew on several sources of evidence during the collection of data. As a result, I fostered convergent lines of inquiry using a complementary combination of semi-structured interviews and direct observation as multiple sources of evidence. Interestingly, using numerous sources of evidence meant that potential findings were reliable and compelling. In addition, I attempted to have key informants review draft reports of my findings. In terms of internal validity, a pilot study was carried out to assess the question's validity and the data reliability to be obtained (Saunders et al., 2016). Seven pre-interviews were completed with selected participants, allowing for a focus on specific areas that needed clarification.

Interestingly, the pilot study allowed for the development of rapport-building skills with respondents as well as the establishment of effective communication methods (Janesick, 1994). It is essential to emphasise that from the start, I was able to discover insights that were not initially evident and preserve raw data from audio recordings, field notes, and documentations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In addition, I performed within-case to ensure that the results were consistent with the identified concepts. The external validity describes the domain to which this study's results can be generalised (Yin, 2009). A significant contribution of this research in this study is that it examined trust-based leadership in a Nigerian public sector. Although there are similarities in the findings of trust in the case study organisation and other developed countries, the result cannot be generalised. Hence, generalisations from studies outside of this context should be treated with caution. As a result, many valuable lessons from the empirical results will have to be applied with caution within the case study organisation. With this in mind, I was able to identify the boundaries and scope of this study by comparing and contrasting results from multiple case studies.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that reliable research is focused on credible evidence. As a consequence, the credibility of this study was based on my ability and effort. I devised and implemented a case study procedure that served as the thesis's

guide in this vein. The protocol was especially important because it included a set of procedures and general rules that guided me through the data collection process.

Consequently, on the advice of Cypress (2017), I drew on a set of criteria suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). These include credibility, dependability, and confirmability requirements. In terms of credibility, I made sure that the participants' interactions were accurately and truthfully depicted. This necessitated a deep level of involvement, as well as close observation, in order to comprehend the phenomenon's context. I was able to establish trust and rapport with my respondents due to this, and peer debriefing was performed via online meetings with my supervisory team.

Credibility is all about demonstrating that a truthful image of the subject under consideration is conveyed (Shenton, 2004). "It examines if the researcher has built trust in the result integrity for the subjects or informants and the circumstances that the research was conducted" (Krefting, 1991, p. 215). It is referred to as the "truth value" by Lincoln and Guba (1985), and it is arguably the essential parameter for evaluating qualitative research (Krefting, 1991).

According to Shenton (2004), using well-established methodologies improves the credibility of the research. The technique of data gathering in this study was a semi-structured interview approach. Researchers have previously utilised semi-structured interviews to investigate trust and leadership; thus, the study method and analysis have been employed in earlier research, bolstering the trustworthiness of research findings. Triangulation is a fundamental method for establishing credibility in research (Creswell, 2009). To confirm emergent conclusions, triangulation entails employing multiple investigators, various data sources, or different methodologies (Merriam, 1995). "...personal perspectives and experiences may be validated against others, and eventually an adequate perspective of the attitudes, wants, or behaviours of individuals under examination can be created based on the input of a diversity of individuals" (Shenton, 2004, p. 66). The study design incorporated triangulation as a result. Instead of relying just on information from workers (as prior studies have done), the viewpoint of their managers (concerning their workers trust qualities) also was taken into account.

A deeper understanding of trust-based leadership was achieved by addressing this version of reality from several perspectives (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2011). Member checking is a crucial element in boosting credibility (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It entails putting the researcher's facts, observations, and findings to the test with the respondents on a regular basis (Krefting, 1991). This is referred to as "respondent validation" (Bryman and Bell, 2011). As a result, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were distributed to respondents in order to confirm that the data were accurate. When the study's goal is to observe a phenomenon through the lens of the participants, the respondents' voices must be heard (Bryman and Bell, 2011). "Qualitative research is credible when it offers such detailed depiction or interpretation of human experience such that individuals who also have that experience would instantly recognise the descriptions" (Krefting, 1991, p. 216).

The study's participants were not compelled to participate. Only those who were willing to participate in the study were chosen. This was required to encourage workers and their leaders to be transparent and improve the reliability of the data presented. During interviews, the researcher's independence was also emphasised (Shenton, 2004). This was crucial, especially for workers who may be hesitant to talk openly about their bosses. The respondents were made to understand that they could choose not to continue with the study at any time if they felt uneasy, ensuring that the study's ethical standards were followed.

In qualitative research, peer debriefing is a well-known method for building credibility (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1995; Shenton, 2004). It entails gaining an external viewpoint to improve the correctness of the findings (Creswell, 2009). This was especially important given the study's decision to use a semi-structured interview technique as the primary data gathering method. The credibility of a study can also be hampered by respondents' bias, especially when respondents purposefully omit critical information or produce responses that they believe sounds favourable to the researcher (Krefting, 1991). The issue of bias was addressed in this study by engaging each interviewee for an extended period of time (Flick, 2018). During the interview, probing approaches and iterative questioning (Shenton, 2004) were employed to extract comprehensive data, and questions were

rephrased to encourage candid responses from respondents. The researcher also highlighted his past interviewing experience.

The evaluation of the impact of the researcher's experience, expertise, perceptions, and goals on a study is referred to as reflexivity (Krefting, 1991). It refers to researchers admitting that it is unrealistic for their activities to have no impact on the study's outcome (Horsburgh, 2003).

Dependability is connected with reliability. As a result, an inter-rater was used to review the transcribed data and validate identified themes. This ensured that there was some level of consensus in relation to the themes' findings. In terms of confirmability, this was achieved by maintaining a reflexive journal by note taking and regular introspections. I was able to minimise researcher bias via reflexivity by being mindful of any preconceptions or assumptions that I could introduce into the study. The guarantee that the research process is rational, verifiable, and recorded is dependability (Wigren, 2007). This is referred to as an auditing strategy by Lincoln and Guba (1985), whereby the research processes are documented. The reliability of this study was improved by keeping a complete record of all stages of the research procedure. The interview transcripts, fieldwork notes, and personal notebooks were all considered raw data. Personal documents and process notes about the study's methodological approach were also recorded (Flick, 2018).

The data were subjected to a code/re-code procedure (Krefting, 1991). During the descriptive coding phase, coding and re-coding were done every two weeks to ensure consistent results. Member checking was helpful in this aspect since it increased reliability. The participants were provided with the interview transcripts to check that the information recorded was correct.

Peers served as auditors, ensuring that the research procedures were followed to the letter. They double-checked and verified that the procedure was followed correctly. Despite the enormous amount of data, coworkers took their time evaluating the research process. The goal was to offer a detailed account of trust-based leadership rather than to assure replicability (because heterogeneity is expected in qualitative research) (Krefting, 1991). Because the focus of this study was on the dynamics of trust, respondents' experiences were expected to vary. Furthermore, bracketing was used to distinguish biases and assumptions to better understand the participants' experiences (Cypress, 2017). As a result, some of the data gathered was interpreted

and discussed with key participants to ensure that it accurately reflected their narratives and experiences. Overall, the insights provided in this section define the collection of criteria used to determine this study's quality.

“Confirmability is concerned with making sure that, even though total objectivity seems to be unattainable in qualitative research, it can be shown that the researcher acted in good faith; in other words, it should be obvious the researcher did not allow personal beliefs or theoretical predilections influence the research,” (Bell et al., 2018). As a result, steps were made to guarantee that the research findings were based on the participants’ experiences and thoughts rather than the researcher’s (Shenton, 2004). Researchers have advocated using an audit trail as an effective method for guaranteeing confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Seale, 1999; Shenton, 2004). In order to ensure confirmability, explanations of the data collection process and the step-by-step decisions taken during the research are essential. The data gathered and the criteria utilised to choose participants for the study were transparent. The results of the interviews and the suggestions based on data and literature have been plainly expressed (Shenton, 2004). In the guise of PhD supervisors, external auditors contributed significantly to the confirmability of the study’s conclusions.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), one of the essential aspects of confirmability is how open researchers about their own bias. This study addressed the technique of choice, the justification for using a qualitative approach (in the form of semi-structured interviews instead of other techniques), and the selected design’s limits. This is necessary to give a comprehensive exposition to consumers of this dissertation and improve the research’s confirmability. Another essential technique for boosting confirmability is flexibility (Krefting, 1991). As previously stated, the researcher admits his involvement in influencing data throughout the investigation and, as a result, kept a field diary.

The term “transferability” refers to how closely the investigated scenario resembles other circumstances in which one’s interest lie (Schofield, 2002). This is referred to as “fittingness” (Lincoln and Guba (1985). The goal of this study was to provide a

comprehensive account of trust-based leadership in the public sector of a developing country, which may or may not apply to another environment. As a result, generalisability was not a priority. Regardless, the concept of transferability (as suggested by Lincoln and Guba in 1985) has been acknowledged. The individual who wishes to apply the findings to another study bears the responsibility in this case. The only obligation of the study's researcher is to offer adequate descriptive statistics which can be used to make decisions concerning transferability (Bryman and Bell, 2011). All background information on the respondents, the research context, and the unique setting were gathered in this study.

Furthermore, the following information (Shenton, 2004) is supplied to enable researchers better to examine the transferability of findings from this thesis appropriately: The number of respondents who took part in the fieldwork. The technique of data collection utilised (which for this study was a semi-structured interview approach). The amount of time set out for interviews with managers and their staff. The time frame in which the information was gathered. Such information would be helpful in gaining a better understanding of trust-based leadership in emerging economies other than Nigeria.

### **6.19 Conclusion**

This chapter's main goal was to explain and justify the chosen methodology. As a result, I examined the methodological uniqueness employed in addressing the research problem. I also attempted to establish the framework used in the collection of data, analysis, data interpretation, and the logic that underpins them. I pushed the discussions toward more informed judgments by contrasting methods, approaches, and philosophies. Furthermore, by using a qualitative approach, I emphasised the constructed nature of reality and the close relationship between the researcher and the subject of study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

As a result, one of the main points of this chapter was to demonstrate the richness of investigating key findings by emphasising the value-laden nature of the inquiry. I sought to investigate how social experience is formed and given meaning. As the fieldwork advanced, one of the qualitative research's main strengths was its ability to illuminate the specifics of human experience (Stake, 1995; Ayres et al., 2003). It was

especially relevant for revealing the process of trust and allowing the emergence of concepts previously not found in the literature. This contributed to the depth of observations that would not have been possible using conventional quantitative methods. Overall, and based on my own experience, I was able to provide justification for the techniques and unique choices adopted during my fieldwork. These choices were preferred based on their potential to reveal hidden aspects of the fieldwork. By way of illustration, direct observation proved effective because its main strength was the ease with which I gained access to social settings. The following two chapters will discuss the findings from the fieldwork.

## **Chapter Seven - Analysis, and Interpretation**

### **7.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the empirical discoveries from the interviews conducted in this study. It presents outcomes on cases concerning trust-based leadership in a Nigerian public health sector organisation. The study probe cases having to do with how employees perceive the factors that increase trust between organisational actors (leaders and employees) in the case study organisation. For clarification, this chapter, which is the reporting of analysis, will be presented in two parts. The first part seeks to answer research question one: "What are the perceptions of employees and their supervisors about what gives rise to trust in a Nigerian public sector organisation?". The second part concentrates on addressing the second research question: "What are the perceptions of the effects of a trusting relationship?" The findings follow from an in-depth analysis of the responses of the subjects of this study.

How employees perceive their supervisors in the workplace creates a perception because they draw inferences from their supervisor's behaviour. Based on their perception, the employees' judgment can positively or negatively influence how they relate with their supervisors and how trust is developed. These perceptions could result from several factors that will be discussed in the latter part of this analysis. The analysed interviews show that employees and supervisors perceive the factors that lead to the development of trust-based leadership differently in the case study organisation. Employees offered their views on a series of actions in their leaders. These actions are the basis on which employees relate and evaluate their supervisors. The analysis further reveals that employees perceive that the relationship with the workplace supervisor passes through several stages. These stages do not guarantee how long the relationship with the supervisor will last.

According to the interviews' analysis, the contributing factors influencing trust can be categorised into context, trustee, and trustor factors. The context factors indicate that in a supervisor-subordinate relationship, factors such as relationship length, participation in decision making, value congruence, and the frequency of contact are influenced by the context or situation a supervisor or subordinates finds themselves. This trustee factor is the party to be trusted. In the case of this study, the focus is on the supervisors and employees. From the interview responses, the findings highlighted all the factors that influence trust in daily supervisors. Lastly, the trustor determinants are attributed to the trusting party. This study regards the subordinates as trustors because they are faced with the decision to either trust or distrust their daily supervisor. This also indicates that supervisors have little or no influence on how the trustor factors perceive them.

### 7.1 Description of the Sample

This study recruited 20 participants who are public servants working in different departments in the case study organisation. They occupy the leadership or employee position; however, they are at different levels in their respective departments. Their age differences, how long they have been working at the case study organisation and gender provided further dimension to the data. Generally, a broad spectrum of public servants participated, and through their voices, they shared elements of their experiences of trust based on their everyday interactions with their supervisors. As previously mentioned in the methods chapter, two sample inclusion criteria were adopted to determine the selection of participants: (a) the individual has worked more than 5 years in the organisation, and (b) they have had an experience of trusting in their supervisor. Below is a table detailing the participant description.

Table 10: participant description

Names	Cases	Department	Designation	Grade Level	Gender	Years in Organisation
Representative 1	1	Administrative	Office Clerk	5	Male	5
Representative 2	1	Administrative	Secretary	8	Female	7
Representative 3	1	Administrative	Secretary	8	Female	6
Representative 4	1	Administrative	Secretary	8	Female	7

Representative 5	2	Human Resource	Head of Department	15	Male	12
Representative 6	2	Human Resource	Office Staff	10	Female	8
Representative 7	2	Human Resource	Office Staff	10	Male	10
Representative 8	2	Human Resource	Office Staff	9	Male	8
Representative 9	3	Research Education and Development	Head of Department	16	Male	23
Representative 10	3	Research Education and Development	Personal Assistant	13	Male	13
Representative 11	3	Research Education and Development	Team Leader	11	Male	12
Representative 12	3	Research Education and Development	Office Staff	9	Female	8
Representative 13	4	Media and Publicity	Staff	9	Male	14
Representative 14	4	Media and Publicity	Staff	11	Male	13
Representative 15	4	Media and Publicity	Staff	8	Male	13
Representative 16	4	Media and Publicity	Staff	9	Male	10
Representative 17	5	Service Communication	Staff	13	Male	12
Representative 18	5	Service Communication	Staff	12	Male	13
Representative 19	5	Service Communication	Head of Department	15	Male	20
Representative 20	5	Service Communication	Assisting Head of Department	14	Female	9

The departments where this information was collected have been renamed (case 1, case 2, case 3, case 4, and case 5 and the respondents grouped into representatives).

Table 5: cases and representatives

Cases	Case 1 Admin Department	Case 2 Human Resource Department	Case 3 Research, Education, and Training	Case 4 Media and Publicity	Case 5 Service Communication
Representatives	Rep 1 - 4	Rep 5 - 8	Rep 9 - 12	Rep 13 - 16	Rep 17 - 20

Empirical analysis from the conducted interviews reveals that employees and leaders in the case study organisation perceive the factors that give rise to trust differently. A general overview of the respondents' responses recognises that trust-based leadership is a significant factor for maintaining cooperation and teamwork in the case study organisation. In the case study organisation, social cohesion is borne out of the togetherness or a bond linking social group members to one another. It proves to depend on the behavioural and relational factors in this organisation. Respondent across the five cases attributes trust-based leadership to the leaders and the employees' reactivity. Furthermore, while trust-based leadership is a two-way dimensional process, the factor that constitutes the concept differs between the leaders and the employees. In order to answer the research questions, the outcome of the semi-structured interviews is summarised in seventeen significant themes.

## **7.2 Data Familiarization, Coding and Theme Generation**

Braun and Clarke (2019) thematic analysis procedures were adopted in identifying the codes and creating the themes as shown in Table 12. Thematic analysis is a technique for identifying and describing the themes that arise from a set of research questions. As seen from the figure below, the thematic analysis process began with the researcher going over the transcripts to be familiar with the data (Data Familiarization). Next, was the identification of codes and creation of categories. This was done with the aid of colour-coding technique. The codes, that is, relevant phrases and sentences that effectively captured opinions were highlighted with different colours. The codes were then grouped based on their similarity (similar colours were grouped together). The next stage (theme generation) involved an assessment of the codes, identifying patterns in them and grouping them under sub themes (Appendix 4). The sub-themes were reviewed to ascertain that they accurately represented the data. The fifth stage entailed coming up with a short and simple name for each theme, after which they were reported succinctly and substantiated with direct quotes from the transcripts.

**Figure 8: Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis Processes**

**Source: Authors Compilation (2021)**

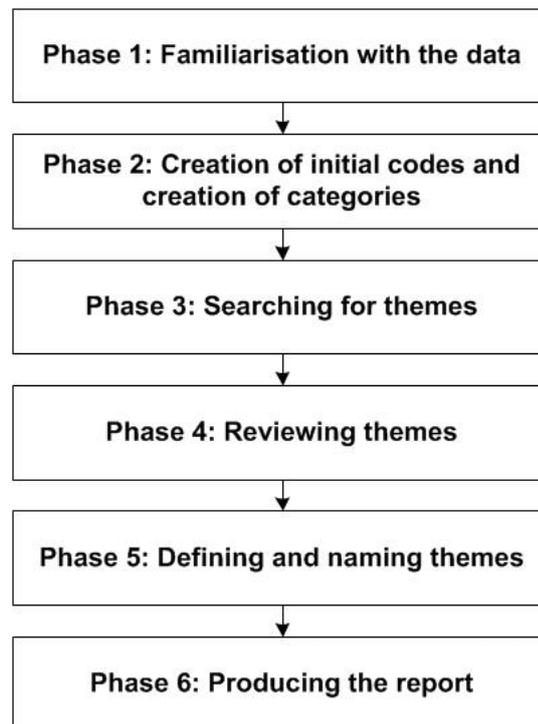


Table 6: Research questions and themes derived.

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Themes Developed</b>
<b>RQ1:</b> What are the perceptions of employees and their supervisors about what gives rise to trust in the Nigerian public sector organisation?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Benevolence</li> <li>2) Integrity/Sincerity/Honesty</li> <li>3) Participation/Delegation/Inclusivity (in group or out-group)</li> <li>4) Confidentiality</li> <li>5) Empathy</li> <li>6) Employee ability/competence</li> <li>7) Employee support/Development</li> <li>8) Approachable/ Accessibility</li> <li>9) Appreciation/Recognition</li> <li>10) Leadership Styles</li> </ol>
<b>RQ2.</b> What are the perceptions of the effects of a trusting relationship?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Motivation</li> <li>2) Employee engagement</li> <li>3) Confidence</li> <li>4) Increased performance</li> </ol>

### **7.3 Themes and their indicators (codes) (Research Question 1).**

#### **Benevolence**

- Acting in the best interest of the employees (Case 4, Rep 1).
- Supervisor showing concerns towards employee knowledge and personal development (Case 1, Rep 4).

- Act of benevolence through the supervisor showing compassion and understanding towards the employee (Case 2, Rep 6)

### **Integrity**

- He is a policy man (Case 1, Rep 1).
- You must do what you say as a leader (Case 1 Rep 2).
- People should always align what they say with what they do (Case 1 Rep 2).
- Sincerity of purpose, straightforward, and sincere (Case 2 Rep 5).
- Whatever he says he will do, he will do (Case 2 Rep 7).
- Morally upright (Case 3 Rep 11).
- He will not tell you black is white; he says things as it is (Case 3 Rep 11).
- He matches his word with actions (Case 4 Rep 14).
- Straight forward (Case 4 Rep 14).

### **Participation/Delegation/Inclusivity**

- Making employees part of the decision-making process (Case 1, Rep 2).
- Giving employees responsibility and treating them equally based on task (Case 1, Rep 3).
- Not focusing on some employees and not believing in other employees (Case 2, Rep 8).
- Trusting in all employees' work hence leads to employee development (Case 4, Rep 13).
- Believe in your employees to do the job (Case 4, Rep 16).

### **Confidentiality**

- Relating personal issues with supervisors (Case 3, Rep 12).
- No keeping of staff secret (Case 1, Rep 3).
- Supervisor holding confidential information's (Case 5, Rep 20).

### **Empathy**

- Relating to employee's emotions and feelings (Case 2, Rep 6).
- Actions demonstrating empathy (Case 5, Rep 19).
- Display an interest in employees' needs and involvement in employees' personal lives and empathise with them (Case 4, Rep 16).

### **Decision Making**

- Supervisors were taking employee opinions on board (Case 5, Rep 17; Case 5, Rep 20).

### **Ability/Competence**

- Building up employees (Case 1, Rep 1).
- Trust in employee ability (Case 4, Rep 13).
- Confidence in employee ability (Case 5, Rep 17).

### **Development**

- They are taking time to put employees through their job (Case 1, Rep 1; Case 3, Rep 12).
- They are giving employees responsibility beyond their capacity (Case 1, Rep 1).
- They are developing practical abilities (case 1, Rep 2).

- Development based on responsibility (Case 1, Rep 3; Case 2, Rep 6, Rep 8; Case 3, Rep 11).
- Development based on training (Case 4, Rep 14).
- Knowledge through development (Case 4, Rep 15; Case 5, Rep 20).

### **Approachable/Accessibility**

- Can approach him anytime (Case 1, Rep 1, Rep 3).
- Open door policy (Case 2, Rep 5; Case 3, Rep 9, Rep 10, Rep 11).
- Freedom with boss (Case 3, Rep 12).
- Freedom with staff (Case 5, Rep 19).

### **Appreciation and Recognition**

- Praising employees for a good job (Case 1, Rep 1, Case 4, Rep 13).
- Not appreciating employees (Case 1, Rep 4).
- Recommending staff as means of appreciation (Case 2, Rep 5, Rep 6; Case 3, Rep 11).
- Giving handshake (Case 4, Rep 15).

### **Leadership Style**

- Form of authority and command (Case 1, Rep 2).
- Task-oriented or task-focused person (Case 1, Rep 4).
- Friendly and lead right (Case 2, Rep 6).
- Leadership based on trust (Case 2, Rep 7).
- He leads by example (Case 3, Rep 10).
- Supervisor is always ready to listen (Case 3, Rep 11).
- Boss, not ruler (Case 4, Rep 13).

- Exemplary Leadership (Case 4, Rep 14).
- He carries everyone along (Case 4, Rep 16).

### **Building Relationship**

- Support from supervisor (Case 1, Rep 1).
- Interact as friend and family (Case 2, Rep 6; Case 3, Rep 11).
- Interest in employee and their family wellbeing (Case 1, Rep1).
- Religion and Ethnicity (Case 4, Rep 15).
- No discrimination (Case 4, Rep 14).

### **Leaders' perspective (Research Question 1).**

- Employee ability and competence (Case 2, Rep 5; Case 3, Rep 9; Case 5, Rep 19)
- Employee support (Case 3, Rep 9; Case 5, Rep 19)
- Honesty and Integrity (Case 2, Rep 5; Case 3, Rep 9; Case 5, Rep 19)
- Relationship (Case 2, Rep 5; Case 3, Rep 9; Case 5, Rep 19)
- Appreciation (Case 1, Rep 4; Case 2, Rep 5)
- Employee Behavior (Case 2, Rep 5; Case 5, Rep 19)
- Leadership Style (Case 3, Rep 9; Case 5, Rep 19)

### **Themes and their indicators: Employee Perception (Research Question 2).**

- Employee engagement (Case 3, Rep 10)
- Motivation (Case 1, Rep 4)
- Increased performance (Case 2, Rep 5; Case 4, Rep 13, Rep 14, Rep 15)
- Confidence (Case 1, Rep 4)

**Benevolence:** In the trust analysis, the term benevolence focuses on a specific relationship with the employee. Although it is not understood what a benevolent leader's motives and intentions are, Weiss et al. (2020) posit that trust component increases when there is a feeling of appreciation between the leader and employee. It

can also be regarded as the foundation of employee loyalty (Poon 2013; Wu et al., 2014; Svare, Gausdal, and Mollering, 2020).

The act of benevolence was viewed differently by respondents across all cases. An example of respondents who emphasised benevolence in their interpretation of trust was found in most cases. Employees across all the case study organisation departments explained that trust-based leadership should be reflected in their leader's feelings towards the employees by acting in their best interest. In view of this, central to the case study organisation is strong relationships and interactions underpinned by a strong sense of benevolence.

When the researcher asked the employees in case 4 to describe their leader, they suggested that:

*"If I am given an assignment, and I do not get it well, he will not abuse (insult) me o. He will sit me down and tell me" (Rep 1).*

Trust-based leadership to the above employee reflects in the leader's concern towards his knowledge and personal development. Another example of an employee that articulated benevolence was in (case 1, rep 4)

*"You know when you have a boss that understands you even though everybody has his or her own cross to carry or when you want to get something or when you want to do something, you tell your oga [the boss], "oga I want to take permission for a few days." He begins to ask questions, what happened? He will allow me and also support me financially. He is always being in support, whether financially".*

In case 4, I noted that the act of benevolence for some employees in the case study organisation reflects in their leaders' compassion and understanding toward their employees. It could also be borne out of genuineness and not sarcasm.

Furthermore, from case 1, Rep 4 and case 2, Rep 6

*"There was a time my baby was sick and needed urgent attention, I had to explain to him, and he allowed me to rush to the hospital to support my family. You see, situations like that make me happy to work. Leadership is not restriction, and that is what he always shows".*

It can be claimed that leaders who show benevolence towards their employees share some unique connection to that particular employee. This connection is evident in the leader's demonstration of concern, positioning the employee to perceive benevolence as one factor that gives rise to trust-based leadership. It is important to emphasise that while the leader shows concern towards the employee, he/she is not under obligation to be helpful. From the responses regarding benevolence, it is evident that benevolence is perceived as a leader positive orientation toward the employees. It can be argued that a benevolent leader helps employees feel safer in the organisation by creating a psychologically safe environment for them. It could also serve as an encouragement for the employee to discharge their responsibility effectively.

### **Honesty and Integrity:**

The concept of integrity has become dominant and prominent in trust research—the responses from the conducted interview positions integrity as an umbrella concept that combine sets of values. The values include sincerity, truthfulness, honesty, consistency, and fairness (Searle, Gustafsson and Hope-Hailey 2020). The researcher found integrity to resonate across most cases. Employees perceive integrity as a factor that gives rise to trust-based leadership in the case study organisation.

Leaders in the case study organisation demonstrate integrity by being honest and open. This was demonstrated in the response of case 1, rep 1.

*"...like I mentioned the other time, people should always align what they say with what they do. If you cannot do what you have said as a leader, you should relate it with your employees."*

Case 1 response summarises that employee measure integrity in their leader through adherence to principle, openness, and how well they keep their promise linked with honesty. To develop integrity, employees expect consistency in the leader's behaviour and compliance with the organisation policy.

Integrity also measures how the values of the leader and employee meet. Further to the response of case 1, Rep 1,

*" You must do what you say as a leader. When employees perceive that their leader has integrity, they will be willing to go miles for them. There is much disconnect between leaders and employers because some leaders are not true to their words."*

The response further reveals that integrity creates a positive atmosphere for the employees to work. When employees view their leader to be consistent and keep to their words, they might be willing to work efficiently. This is evident based on the above response: " The reason there is such disconnect between leaders and employers is that many leaders are not true to their words".

When leaders are not true to their words, there is a tendency for the employee not to trust in the leader. Integrity is one of the pillars of trust (Hope-Hailey, 2014), and employees in the case study organisation consider it a significant factor in trust-based leadership.

Across other cases, their response aligns with Case 2, rep 7 on integrity:

*"Whatever he says he will do, he will definitely do it, he is leading us by example, and that make me loyal".*

Case 4 Rep 14

*" He is a very committed person; he matches his words with action. He tells you to do as I do, and we follow because the examples the projects are positive".*

Case 4 Rep 14

*"He is straight forward, and I am free going to him with my personal issues".*

In the above responses, the importance of the supervisor exhibiting integrity can be deduced.

Employees expect their supervisors will act with integrity, either in practice or in their words. The responses show that employees want their supervisors to be responsible, accountable, reliable, and morally upright. This shows that employees will always draw inferences from the leader's action, thereby influencing how they perceive their leader's trust.

In addition, when a leader acts with integrity, it boosts employees' confidence to approach the leader with their personal issues having faith that the leader will act with integrity and not disclose the details of their conversation.

Integrity is also reflected in sincerity. Case 3 rep 11

*"He directs well, and he will not tell you black is white. He says things as it is".*

Theorists (Bogdanovic 2013; Gustafsson and Hailey 2016; Tasoulis and Krepapa 2019; Beshi and Kaur 2020) argue the construct of integrity. These scholars expound that the supervisor should display enough personal and moral integrity for employees to trust in their leaders. They further claim that this will enable the employee to trust them more. Supervisors must always show their integrity by being honest, sincere, consistent, and firm. This is tied to the supervisor's consistent actions and values (Beshi and Kaur, 2020).

On the other hand, when a leader's behaviour lacks integrity, it affects the employee's perception of the leader. In case 5, rep 18, the responses to the question "what would you like your leader to work on?"

*"He needs to work on his sincerity of purpose. it will make me trust him more and believe more in what he says".*

*"When I was transferred here from admin, yes, we related, he told me the nature of the job, what the job entails and assured me that everything is fine and that I am welcome. Two of us came, and that we have nothing to worry about, we will be fine. We found out that since we have been here, what he told us is different from what we are experiencing. Words of mouth at times should not be trusted, actions define people, and I have seen a lot. Let me leave it there."*

In related studies, Bates et al. (1997), Hope-Hailey et al. (2012), Gillespie and Siebert (2018) linked sincerity of purpose to integrity. Sincerity builds up integrity. It involves the leader keeping to his words, truth-telling and not going back on his promises. A leader needs to understand that employees do not only observe their words and actions. They are also in constant check if they match their words and actions together.

The responses of the supervisors show that their opinions on the matter of integrity in a trust-based relationship are consistent with those of the employees. Supervisors at the case study organisation expect their workers to conduct themselves honourably on the job. When the question "what are the activities, you expect from your staff that can build trust between you and them?" was put forward to the head of the department in case 2, Rep 5, his response;

*I believe it is sincerity of purpose. My staff should be straight forwards and sincere. The problem with people around here is that they assume a lot instead of seeking clarity.*

This statement depicts that integrity is an essential element in the case study organisation. When the head of this department was probed further on what he meant by "sincerity of purpose, straight forward, and sincere", he emphasised on staff admitting to their mistakes, keeping their promises, and standing up for what is right. Although the supervisor could not provide an example to these responses, the researcher in his observation could relate to instances where the supervisor addressed all employees and commended them for keeping to their words regarding a project they finished within the stated time frame. This behaviour from the employees can be equated to them keeping to their promise. Also, in one of his morning briefing, he laid emphasis on the reason for all employees to be sincere with their responsibility. In case 3, rep 9, the head of the department, also mentions honesty and integrity as one of the qualities he looks out for in his employees. In case 5, rep 19, the supervisor also indicated that it is important for employees to "always do the right thing". This can also be attributed to integrity. Doing the right thing could involve honesty and integrity.

By summarising the subject of integrity based on responses from respondents, the presence of a connection between integrity and trust is established. This relationship comprises two parties (employee and supervisor) who perceive alignment with a set of principles that each finds acceptable. When an employee's and a leader's actions are genuine, authentic, and dependable, such an employee/leader is considered as

having a high level of integrity. According to the responses of several participants, in order to develop confidence in employees or supervisors, there must be a degree of perceived credibility exhibited over time.

### **Participation/Delegation:**

Across the cases, some employees view participation in assignments or being given responsibility as a factor that gives rise to trust-based leadership. Scholars such as (Brown et al. 2012; Wortel, 2014; Silla et al. 2020; Zeng and Xu 2020) claim that participation and delegation are significant to the concept of trust-based leadership. While participation and delegation might be different in meaning, participants across the case study organisation have used these words interchangeably to mean involving them (the employees) in work-related activities.

When the researcher asked respondents, "If there was anything you want your leader to work on?". Few of the employees were worried that their supervisor does not give them enough responsibility. However, some of the employees have been classed as "trusted hands", meaning the supervisor has a circle of employees they prefer to handle most of the work activities. This act from the supervisors based on the responses from the employees aligns with the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory (formally referred to as the Vertical Dyad Linkage Model) found in the study of Dansereau et al. (1957). According to Liu et al. (2020) and Fein et al. (2020), the Leader-Member Exchange Theory posit that the theory focuses on the leader-member relationship. Through this theory, the relational dynamics formed between leaders and employees can be explained. Two types of relationships develop under this theory, categorised into two subgroups (In-group and Out-group). Employees in the leader's inner circle are considered the in-group, while the out-group employees have less influence on their supervisor decision, given reduced responsibility (Gottfredson et al., 2020).

Employees of the case study organisation use the word "trusted hands" on several occasions to mean that some employees belong to their supervisor inner group. This set of employees are given the most responsibility, and according to the employees of the case study organisation, it can be considered favouritism and discrimination. It tends to affect the trust placed in their supervisor.

The act of participation/delegation, according to different scholars (Han et al. 2010; Shariff 2020; Olusayero 2020), has always been from the standpoint of involving employees in decision making. Leaders' decision-making ability may be believed to be a component that fosters trust in the case study organisation. Employees are more likely to trust leaders following a comprehensive examination of their decision-making abilities while working with them. When an employee perceives his boss as someone capable of making binding and value-based judgments over time, he can trust this leader's decisions and his ability to take the organisation ahead.

In all the cases, decision making did not come out strongly; however, it was vital to the employees in the service communication department (case 5).

When the question was posed to them, "What are the factors that can increase the trust you have in your supervisor? The response of the employee in case 5, rep 17

*"He is very poor in decision making, hmmm very very poor... and that is a vital aspect of leadership, Number 1, he should work on his decision making, and he needs to be precise and give clear directives."*

In response to a different question, "So what are these natural weaknesses of your supervisor? Case 5, rep 20 responded.

*"Laughs, you this researcher, you want me to talk by all means. Okay, I think he needs to be firm and make good decisions."*

While it is unclear reasons to the importance of decision making as a trusting factor to this department, owing to the responses of the employees, it can be assumed that employees want to attain a level of trust in their leader's decision in a way they can agree and be comfortable with the decision made. It can also be assumed that employees trust or perceive supervisors with good judgment to understand their responsibility and competence. The above case further reveals that employees observe the decisions of their supervisors and judge these decisions. In the same vein, supervisors also seek to observe their employees' attitude regarding the made decision. Employees in this department understand how the decision made by their supervisor affects them. As a result, employees are attentive to their leader's decisions because they tend to affect the organisation, thereby affecting them.

As Han et al. (2020) mentioned, when a direct supervisor involves employees in decision-making, it positively influences trust. However, this does not mean that employees have all the decision-making power. Olusayero (2020) and Shariff (2020) maintains that allowing employees to participate in decision making creates a means through which their voice can be heard. Decision-making capabilities can be assumed as a factor that gives rise to trust in the case study organisation. Employees who are allowed to participate in decision-making feel their voice has been heard and create a sense of value. This, in turn, could positively influence employee trust in their daily supervisor. It is worth noting that this does not give employees the decision power. However, it depicts the supervisor regards the idea of the employees and their arguments. It also presents employees the opportunity to voice their opinion.

Nevertheless, In the case study organisation, employees were less bothered to make a decision. However, they were more interested in their supervisor, trusting in their ability by involving them in tasks, giving responsibilities that will enhance their development and enable them to progress in the organisation. The respondent's views in "Case 1 Rep 2" and "Rep 3" reflect their individualised opinion on their supervisor equally sharing responsibility amongst employees.

**Case 1 Rep 2:** *He should believe in us more and see us as part of the organisation.*

**Case 1 Rep 3:** *Oga (Oga is a Nigerian slang which means (leader or anyone in higher authority) can be partial at times. It is not good. He should be treating everybody equally. If you do not trust us to work, then we no fit develop [then we cannot develop]. Imagine, na him responsibility for us to develop o, yet the work wey he supposes use develop us, e no gives us [imagine, it is his responsibility to give us responsibility and he is not giving us the work that will develop us]. E no make me happy at all. E be like say I just dey come play for work (It is not making me happy at all, seems I only come to work to play). Them go dey shout "trusted hand", no be somewhere them sef start. Make I know too talk jare ( They keep shouting trusted hands, even the trusted hands started from somewhere. Please let me no talk too much.*

Representatives 2 and 3 working in the administrative department point in the same direction. Through this, it can be assumed that when employees are not carried along in the organisation, they feel their leader do not value their performance, which

causes a strain on their daily relationship with their supervisor and their confidence, leading to distrust and viewing their supervisor as being bias and treating them unfairly. A leader's act regarding some employees as "trusted hands" has been flagged by employees as unjust in the case study organisation.

**In Case 2, Rep 8:**

*"A leader needs to believe in his subordinate. He should believe more in me, give me task. He should build me up. Every time, it is only trusted hand trusted hand, what is trusted hand, even the trusted hands started from somewhere. There should be equality in leadership. I think that all about that."*

And

Case 4, Rep 16

*"He should give us more responsibility. A leader must trust his employees. We are here to work. If we make a mistake, he can correct us and not think we will not do the job well. Everybody knows their space. So that is all."*

Employees in these cases view trust-based leadership as self-development based on their involvement in the task. For an equal opportunity in the workplace, the supervisor needs to break the "in-group/out-group" cycle in the workplace. Giving employees a sense of unfairness in the workplace can affect the rapport and relationship between the two organisational actors.

Case 4 Rep 13:

*Hmmmm, you see, when I came here newly, we did not have a good rapport because he was not giving me responsibility, and that made me feel he did not trust in me or my ability. But as time continued, there was a time his trusted hands were not in the office, and I was the only one, so he had no choice, the work he asked me to do was perfectly done since them, I have become the star man here oooooo, (laughs).*

The above case explains the importance of employee participation/responsibility in a work-related task. It helps in boosting employee confidence and having a sense of belonging. Employees also need to understand that their competence level is

associated with how responsibility is allocated in the case study organisation. Supervisors in the case study organisation want employees to prove themselves.

*"well, we are all humans, and at some point in time, hmmm, our workflow might be up and down, sometimes you might be at your peak and sometimes not at your peak, and situations have risen where people have not met up to what is expected of them, and it happens almost every day. Some, we are disappointed in because we expect much from them and the other you are not really bothered, do not get me wrong, they are also capable but in public service we have those we call trusted hands. Your employees will reflect you as the leader."*

The above response is from the head of the department (Case 2 Rep 5). Even though employees view participation/delegation as a factor influencing trust-based leadership, the supervisor has a different perception from that of the employees. Based on the supervisor's response to the above case, consistency and competence level are key in allocating tasks to employees of the case study organisation. As explained, trust is a two-way concept, and supervisors also want to have a degree of trust and certainty in their employee's competence before trusting them with responsibility. It can be assumed that the word "trusted hand" is used for employees who have shown consistency in given tasks or responsibilities.

In line with the above analysis, it appears that the supervisors are more focused on achieving results in the case study organisation. As such, rather than allocating responsibility or delegating work to employees they do not have faith in, they rather allocate the work to competent and consistent employees. Supervisors need to recognise and understand their employee's viewpoints and recognise their strengths. They should be encouraged on how they can positively use their strength when given responsibility.

According to Abbink and Harris (2019); Harrison et al. (2020), the act of categorising employees into in-group and out-group can be discriminatory and could cause distrust among employees and their direct supervisor. The departmental head of case 3 Rep 9, when asked "how he maintains the working relationship with his employees", answered with the response below.

*"Well, the staff have their potential, and it varies. You have to know their strengths and weaknesses, which I have done since they started working with me. I make sure to capitalise on their area of strength so that they are more productive in those areas and the area of weakness we try to develop. I encourage them to interact with me on areas they are not confident so I can put them through. But the staff who still do not measure up there are ways I call them and try to encourage them and give them deadline for their work. I correct their mistakes. I also reprimand them".*

Rather than segregate employees, the supervisor in the above case explained that he focuses on observing the strength and develop means of helping the employee develop the strength. Harnessing their strength will develop their skill and knowledge of the job. The supervisor also encourages the employees to approach him if they do not understand what they have been asked to do rather than considering them as out-group employees.

Another reason why supervisors most likely consciously or unconsciously create the in-group and out-group is as a result of employee ability/competence. This concept is closely linked to participation and delegation.

### **Ability/competence**

The response which will be analysed below reveals that ability includes one's capability, skills result and track record. While competence in several pieces of literature has been pinpointed from how well a leader acknowledges employee skill and ability, this is quite different in the case study organisation.

When the researcher asked if is there was anything more you want to say about your leader? Interviewees replied as follows:

Case 2, rep 8:

*"A leader needs to believe in his subordinate. He should believe more in me, give me task. He should build me up. Every time, it is only trusted hand trusted hand, what is trusted hand, even the trusted hands started from somewhere. There should be equality in leadership. I think that all about that."*

The response from the employee of this department indicates that developing an employee's competence can be attributed to how the leader believes in the employee capability. It can be assumed that employees measure competence based on their supervisor's number and type of tasks. It is quite impossible to claim that the trusted hands referred to in this response are employees who have proven themselves over time or are being trusted out of favouritism. It is important to note that when a supervisor lacks confidence in an employee's ability, it affects the competence level of that employee, hence affecting the relationship between the two parties and thereby affecting trust. The employee might begin to perceive the supervisor as being partial and discriminating.

To support the above response, below is how an employee, case 5, rep 17, answered a follow-up question—the initial question centred around how they are corrected if they have not performed a task satisfactorily.

*"Yes, he hates mistakes, so he asks questions a lot, not to downgrade your work or make you feel bad; any bad report will come back to him and not the employee who made the mistake. And if the employee still does not get what to do after many corrections, he will just do it himself to protect himself and the employee. But one thing is when your supervisor sees that you do not get the work he is giving to you, he won't give it to you again and will not have confidence in your ability. This place is all about result, give result."*

This statement reveals that trust is linked to competence. From the supervisor's perspective, accomplishment over time determines how those around you in the case study organisation build trust in your competence. Based on the responses, factors that play a part in this include knowledgeable decisions and the practical understanding of how work gets done. This is essential because when a supervisor begins to micromanage the employee, it could be due to a lack of trust and such employee will not be delegated to take on an important assignment; hence the reason leader tends to have trusted hands.

From the perspective of the supervisor, this theme symbolises an employee's ability to do a task with little or no supervision. Two elements can be deduced from the responses of the supervisor across the three departments. On the one hand, supervisors expect the subordinates to have a degree of ability or knowledge

regarding the job or given task. When the supervisor spots this ability, this can then be backed up with mentoring and training which eventually leads to the competency of the subordinate. On the other hand, employees of the case study organisation are of the opinion that their supervisor has the responsibility to mentor them, recommend training and monitor the development. However, based on how the public sector in Nigeria is built up, achieving the result is the utmost priority. As a result, supervisors in the case study organisation tend to focus on employees who already possess the necessary skills or experience. The downside is that how the supervisor relates with these two sets of people will be different. Hence the unconscious creation of the in-group and out-group subordinates. Responses such as:

*Case 2, rep 5: well well, we are all humans, and at some point, in time, hmmm, our workflow might be up and down, sometimes you might be at your peak and sometimes not at your peak, and situations have risen where people have not met up to what is expected of them, and it happens almost every day. Some we are disappointed in because we expect much from them and the others you are not really bothered, don't get me wrong, they are also capable, but in public service, we have those we call trusted hands. Your employees will reflect you as the leader.*

The above case suggests the head of this department was referring to two sets of employees. They regard those whom they regard as knowledgeable and have a high expectation from them and those he does not expect too much from. This response justifies the stances of the employees that supervisors in the case study organisation do not give equal opportunity for all employees to develop. It can be assumed this will hamper the relationship between some employees in the department and their supervisor. From the above response, I also assume that this department leader will accord high trust to the employees they believe in and low trust to other employees. This could also be the reason the leader of this department could not rate how well he trusts his employees. He believes their workflows are different, implying that their capacities are as well. While the creation of the in-group and out-group might be obvious, ability and competence of the employees remain vital to the supervisors as it determines the trust level of the employees.

The head of the department in Case 3, rep 9, responding to the same question, stated,

*Well, the staff have their potential, and it varies. You have to know their strength and weaknesses, which is what's and weaknesses, which I have done since they started working with me. I make sure to capitalise on their area of strength so that they are more productive in those areas and the area of weakness we try to develop. I encourage them to interact with me on areas they are not confident so I can put them through. But the staff who still don't measure up there are ways I call them and try to encourage them and give them deadline for their work.*

*Case 5, Rep 19: So, I know their strength and weakness. I give them work according to their strength. How I trust them depends on their strength and weaknesses.*

This also reiterates the point that supervisors regard competence as a factor that builds trust. From the above responses, supervisors delegate duties based on the capability of their employees. It can be implied that while competence builds trust, supervisors trust in their employees differently. This could affect the motivation of employees because when your supervisor does not trust you or has a low level of trust, they could tend to micromanage their employees, and responsibility will not be delegated.

A significant factor that cannot be overlooked from the supervisors' responses is employee support. They have studied their employees and understood their strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to support the employees with low competence and recommend them for training. One of the tools used by the supervisor in case 3, rep 9 is encouragement. This will assist the employees in improving on their jobs and hence, developing trust among the organisational actors.

### **Development**

This current indicator can be linked to employee competence. Employees can develop their skills if or when they receive proper mentoring, coaching and tutelage over time. In lieu of this, development becomes an important element in building up trust. To sharpen employee skills and ability, they must be properly guided by their leader; the supervisor needs to be assessable. The respondents in the cases below explained:

Case 1, rep 2; *"Leaders should learn to encourage on the job training without assuming an employee should know the job because he or she has got a certificate. They forget that theory is very different from practical."*

Case 1, rep 3" *"...If you do not trust us to work, then we no fit develop (then we cannot develop). Imagine, na him responsibility for us to develop o, yet the work wey he supposes use develop us, e no give us (he is not giving us the work that will develop us)."*

"Case 2, Rep 6; Although he plays a lot but not when it comes to his job. He wants us to learn every aspect of the job. So he gives us new task when we are used to the previous task."

Case 2, Rep 8; *"A leader needs to believe in his subordinate. He should believe more in me, give me tasks. He should build me up."*

Case 3, Rep 11; *"When I first joined this system under a different department, I was still new at the time but not very new, my supervisor took me to the Lagos state director of land, but we did not see her on that day. So, the next appointment they gave us, I was asked to go alone, my supervisor gave me all the necessary details needed on how to secure a land for the hospital. On getting there, I met with the director and other deputies. The meeting was successful; I presented our case and the space challenge we have at the current location, and how it affects our job. They were very impressed; the director gave me her card. She said I should call her anytime so we can discuss further. When I reported back to my supervisor, he was impressed; he was even more shocked when I showed him the card. He asked me to put it into writing which I did and asked me personally to take it to the Managing Director office. The managing director of the hospital later sent for me after reading through it. She said, so you just joined us I said yes, she was very happy and told me I have done well and to open a file for the land project. She was impressed, and on the long run, we were able to secure the land. Till today, when they mention land, it is my name you will hear. I got a positive comment from my supervisor; My leader*

*didn't take the glory at all. It is very hard getting a good comment from my supervisor. When I remember till today, it makes me really happy. At the end, it gave me a promotion. Now I am one of the trusted hands here."*

*"Yes, when you do a good work, people will focus on you. This makes many people focus on me that I am a good material and a very useful person. Infact, to allow his staff under him to develop and shine. He is not somebody that wants to sit on your performance; he gives you the free hand to develop."*

The theme development is one that stands out. Every department emphasised this theme as one of the factors that build trust in the case study organisation. In the above cases, the voice of employees opined that those activities of employee development help in growth, competence, and the development of the employees. It also depicts those employees depend on their supervisors for career development. It also provides guidance on how to improve their skills. Case 1, rep 2 and rep 3 stress the need for superiors in the case study organisation to focus on the development of all employees and not selected few. Selective development could lead to the underdevelopment of some employees. As a result, they can stop trusting in the supervisor.

**Confidentiality:**

It is normal for employees and leaders to form positive relationships and discuss confidential matters. However, before an employee and supervisor relationship may progress to the point where confidential topics are shared, openness, approachability, and accessibility between the two parties is key.

Approachability, accessibility, and openness centres on exchanges between a leader and an employee on professional and personal matters that fostered honesty and sincerity. This entails having your employees feeling comfortable sharing their successful or challenging situations with their supervisor. This, at times, is based on the relationship between the two actors. When the supervisor is ethical in using the information or challenges related to them, they give their employees reason to trust them.

One of the qualities of being open or approachable is listening. Another important quality a supervisor needs to be approachable can be found in the response of

Case 5, Rep 19; *"As a leader, you do not judge or bully your staff. Talk to them calmly."*

To allow employee freedom to approach you, the supervisor should not be judgemental or condemnatory. This will strengthen the relationship between the two parties hence giving rise to trust.

Supervisors at the case study organisation describe how approachable and open they are to their employees.

Case 3, Rep 9: *I make sure they are free with me. This is why I run an open-door policy. They are not afraid of me.*

Case 5, Rep 19: *I want all of us to be open with each other. This will affect our job positively and also help the performance of my staffs.*

Case 2, Rep 1: *I try to be as open as possible. Doing this also makes my staff open with me. This is why I don't sit in my office; I sit among them here so they can be free with me. Again, this is the reason I run an open-door policy.*

Developing a transparent relationship between supervisors and subordinates entails social and professional interactions that allow them to get to know one another. It portrays the leader as a trustworthy confidant both personally and professionally. It also has a humanistic side in which a leader exhibits behavioural characteristics such as amity, benevolence, kindness, and empathy. A leader who is sensitive to an employee's needs demonstrates concern for the employee's overall wellbeing and empathy for others. When it comes to maintaining an open and trusting relationship, participants identified humanistic behaviours as a desired trait.

When asked how approachable and open their supervisors are, employees in the case study organisation responded as follows:

Case 1, Rep 1; *"I fit approach am any time o [I can approach him anytime], I tell am about my family issue, anything wey dey do me (I discuss my family issues with him and anything wrong with me). The way I have see him since I dey work for here, e don makes me trust am very much [I trust him very much]."*

Rep 10: *"It is cordial; he has given us a platform where we can approach him at any time. Some staffs are scared of their supervisors but not with ours. He knows the importance of positive relationships."*

Rep 11; *"Like in my office, the way we operate is very cordial, and it has built a strong relationship between us because it is very easy for us to approach our supervisor."*

Employees in case 3 reveal the need for a supervisor to be accommodating. One observation that came out strongly during my fieldwork is the open-door policy. Even though the supervisors have their own offices, they always leave their doors open while some supervisors, rather than sit in their office, share the same space with them. This is all in a bid for the staffs to have access to them easily. This appears to be a norm in this department as all employees in this department mentioned it. This fosters a sense of strong relationships in this department.

Case 3, Rep 12; *"Hmmmm, he is a good person. One thing I can say is that he listens. And his attitude is good, and this is why we are free with him and relate with him."*

When employees and supervisors form a working relationship over a length of time, there is a tendency for this relationship to transcend beyond the workplace and begin to relate personal issues between themselves. Employees, in most cases, expect their supervisor to keep their personal issues confidential. It is of utmost importance for the supervisor to keep this personal discussion to themselves in most cases.

This study uncovers that lack of confidentiality on the supervisor's part is one of the quickest means through which employees lose trust in their supervisor. This was reflected in the experience of case 3, Rep 12. When the question was posed to her: "what can make you lose trust in your supervisor?"

*Okay, let me tell you this personal experience. I once related a personal issue with him—very personal o. The following day, the story had gone around the building. I was so ashamed of myself; it affected my work, my self-esteem, and my confidence. I was so disappointed in him. He later apologised, but when trust is gone, it takes time to build it back.*

The above response establishes that the supervisor's consequence for not keeping employees issues confidential led to distrust, affecting the employee confidence and self-esteem. This can also lead to the employee losing trust, stopping loyalty, and perceiving the leader as a person who lacks integrity. When confidentiality is broken, it weakens trust and affects employee feelings, thereby leading to low self-esteem and fear. Another employee in case 2, Rep 7 of the case study organisation, responded when asked the same question.

*"If I discover that a confidential issue, I shared with him was disclosed to other staff, and I hear people saying it around. Distrust will set in immediately; once I lose trust in a person, I cannot trust the person again. Period."*

Comparing these responses, it is obvious that employees in the case study organisation regard keeping confidential matters by the leader as important. Keeping confidentiality is based on the supervisor's integrity, and it is also supported in the work of Twyman-Abrams (2017), establishing that a supervisor who cannot keep employees issues confidential lacks integrity.

*"They are personal, but I will say a bit. The area I will like him to work on is his ability to hold confidential information. I will like for him to talk less and be more stable and fit into his role. These areas are critical to leadership.*

*There was a time I confronted him based on something he said. I was very rude to him. This is because he has gone beyond his boundary and official matter. I know that was wrong, but I decided to damn the consequences. As a leader, you should be able to keep confidential issues. People are attracted to you naturally as a leader, so you must leave up to expectation.*

*After the incident, the following day he called me and apologised and told me he was very sorry. So, he repaired the trust. But that also made me build a guard. I filter what to tell him and what not to."*

The above case's interpretation indicates that the lack of a leader's ability to hold confidential information can create a hostile and tense environment between leaders and their employees and further breakdown in communication. In building a climate of trust, confidentiality needs to be respected. The above response also describes the

consequence of breaching confidentiality. It could lead to various negative outcomes such as employee demotivation, reduction in employee performance.

Confidentiality is significant in building and maintaining trust, which allows for the free flow of information between the leader and supervisor. Confidentiality ranges from personal issues to official matters. It can be assumed that leaders who keep employee's information and personal issues away from the public ear can potentially earn a trusted person's reputation. As a result, confidentiality needs to be upheld with a high level of integrity.

One of the benefits of openness, approachability and accessibility is that it strengthens the relationship between organisational actors.

The concept of building and fostering relationships remains significant in creating a trusting environment for organisational actors. This concept focuses on how supervisors and employees perceive interactions with one another on both a professional and personal level. This interaction can be said to have established or cultivated the relationship between the two parties.

Supervisors in the case study organisation relate with their employees using different strategies. These strategies are intended to create an environment where trust can flourish. From the Responses, this study deduces that supervisors understand the importance of maintaining a healthy relationship with their employees.

*Case 2, Rep 5: The approach I use will also affect our interaction positively and that is why I try as much as possible to relate with my staff.*

The above response resulted from the researcher questioning the supervisor how he cautions his employee in the workplace if they have not done a good job. While the supervisor understands the significance of cautioning the employee for them to be better at their jobs, he adopts an approach that will not deter the employees from relating with him. It could be assumed that he understands that the relational aspect is essential for employees to develop at their tasks.

In another department, when asked the same question,

*Case 3, rep 9: Well, as you have observed since you came in, my staffs are very friendly with me. There is no point in being too hard on them because it will prevent*

*you from communicating adequately with them. Moreover, it prevents you from getting to the root of issues if one occurs.*

This response suggests that this supervisor understands the need to keep an open relationship with his employees. The above response further shows that having a good relationship with his employees will foster good communication, comfort, and enable them to come back to him if they need help with the task.

In case 5, rep 19: the supervisor emphasised the need for a balance work relationship and still been cautious in correcting employees when they have not delivered a good work. He further stresses that when employees are not at ease in approaching their supervisor, there is a tendency for the employees to drop in their performance level. He also tied work relationships to the style of leadership adopted in his department. He mentioned that being a serving and exemplary leader makes it easy for the employees to approach him and relate to him personally and work-related issues.

Employees' responses regarding their supervisors suggest that their supervisors support employees, are friendly within and outside of the office, and that employees and supervisors of all religions and ethnicities work together to achieve the organisation's goal.

This positions the leaders as being human and developing a personal relationship with the employees. It also includes the supervisor's humanistic side, as demonstrated by good behavioural characteristics and actions of amity, kindness, compassion, and empathy. Employees identified these humanistic relationships as a desired trait for developing a trusting connection.

### **Empathy**

Empathy is the capacity to perceive others' feelings, emotions, or perceptions and react to them. Empathy seems more than mere sympathy and is capable of compassion or sensitivity to consider and help others. This definition parallels the response of employees in the case study organisation. In response to the question

"Can you describe your working relationship with your leader?"

Case 2, Rep 6 answered:

*He is not really strict, and he is the type of leader that wants to hear your part; he empathises with people and very involved in our personal lives; when I am feeling down, he knows, and he will call me to ask that is wrong, encourage me, he is nice like that. This also allows us to move closer to him and rely on him.*

"Can you give an example, and how does it affect your work?"

*There was a time my baby was sick and needed urgent attention, I had to explain to him, and he allowed me to rush to the hospital to support my family. You see, situations like that make me happy to work.*

The case above reveals that empathy is the leader's capacity to understand and react to their employee's feelings, emotions, or experiences. Also, from the above case, the respondents' experience shows that empathy goes beyond sympathy, including the ability to consider and support employees with compassion and empathy. It further indicates that the construct of empathy is significant to leadership and develops the relationship between leaders and employees. The leader in case 5, Rep 19, gave an example where he empathised with an employee.

*"I have a staff that's I am currently dealing with, I am trying to mould him he comes late to work. When we got talking, I discovered his family does not live in Lagos (Lagos is a state in Nigeria) , and that was bothering him. Where he is managing, he does not like the place. I had to speak with management, and they were able to bring his family down to Lagos. Immediately, his performance jumped."*

While the above example appears to be a benevolent act, therein is also a sense of empathy and emotional intelligence. Going by the definition of Bass (1985) and Humphrey (2013), the leader's action did not only demonstrate empathy, but it conveys empathic emotions by understanding what the employee was going through and feeling. It can be assumed in the response above that the leader showed empathy by displaying an interest in the employee's needs. He was willing to help the employee with his personal problem, and compassion was conveyed towards the employee when he disclosed his problem.

Another example of empathy from the employee perspective was found in case 4, rep 16.

*"There was a time my wife called me that our son was sick and in the emergency ward. Immediately I told him, he asked to stop all I was doing, close for the day and stay with my family. He even gave me transport. While I was at the hospital, he kept calling, checking on me and my family. When I returned to the office the following day, he said why did I come to work; he asked me to go back home and remain with my family for the week. In fact, he said I should send all the hospital bill I incur to him. Why will I not trust such a leader."*

Separately from the show of empathy, it can be assumed that the leader also demonstrated emotional intelligence in the above case. While this is not the focus of this study, it has appeared on several occasions in the respondent's responses. The above case recognises the leader's ability to understand the employee's thoughts and feeling, which can also be likened to compassions. The leader took on board the employee concern. For trust development among employees, it is significant for leaders to demonstrate empathy by caring and putting their employees' feelings first. This action tends to allow employees to develop a greater sense of confidence (Russell and Stone, 2002).

### **Appreciation and recognition**

Employees in the case study organisation used these words interchangeably. While most of the employees believed these words were the same, the context they used these concepts suggests they have a different meaning. Employees whose leader showed gratitude through handshakes, verbally saying thank you or popping wine after successfully completing an assignment or project mostly used the word appreciation.

The set of employees whose supervisors recommended them for promotion or awards used the word recognition. These were quite distinct in the cases below.

When employees were asked how they were appreciated by their supervisor when they had done a good job:

Case 2, Rep 6: *There are many occasions, but let me refer to the most recent, there was a time I conducted interview, and we are to shortlist candidates for the*

*candidate. The task came unexpected, and we have a number of people to choose from. We are to gather the whole application; I separated the applications into different categories, and the next stage was to enter them into the system. We did all of it within a short period of time and sorting applications of over 200, and he was really pleased with the time frame; and he put a good report forward and recommended us for an award.*

Case 3, Rep 11: *"...When I reported back to my supervisor, he was impressed; he was even more shocked when I showed him the card. He asked me to put it into writing which I did, and asked me personally to take it to the Managing Director office. The managing director of the hospital later sent for me after reading through it. She said, so you just joined us. I said yes, she was very happy and told me I have done well and to open a file for the land project. She was impressed, and on the long run, we were able to secure the land..."*

Case 4, Rep 15: *He commends you, shakes your hand and recommends you. This always makes me very happy and emotionally stable.*

The responses above show a mix of staff who were appreciated and recognised by their supervisors. This action is essential in the workplace.

While these concepts might not be directly connected to trust, they can be used to nurture trust and as a tool to help employees remain confident in work. Supervisors in the case study organisation reflected on the importance of acknowledging work done by employees and their effort through commendation and recognition. How a leader demonstrates their belief in employee ability to succeed in their role greatly impacted their perception towards their leaders.

The supervisors are also of the notion that recognising employees when they are deserving motivates the employees. Appreciating employees shows that their value is recognised. The response from case 2, rep 5

*When my staff does something well, I do recommend them to the director for promotion or acknowledge them to their colleague. I think it is my responsibility as the leader to encourage and motivate them. Everybody likes to be praised because it will continue to inspire them.*

*I believe it improves their work, it improves their confidence and makes them more open, and when they are in doubt, they can approach me as the leader to put them through. They could raise it formally or informally.*

The response above reveals that appreciation fosters relationships in the workplace. It also suggests that employees whom their leaders appreciate develop a positive attitude towards their job. Appreciating employees also leads to openness and builds a sense of security in their values to the organisation. The response also depicts that when employees are appreciated, it could lead to job satisfaction and increase engagement. The positive emotions displayed by employees are also elements that can give rise to trust.

Looking at the responses of the employees, there is agreement with the supervisors' point of view on the value of appreciation and recognition in the organisation under investigation. In a follow-up question where the researcher asked the respondent how they felt after they have been appreciated:

Case 4, Rep 13: *I will answer this in 3 simple words; first is my performance, it boosts my performance, it makes me to up my game, my confidence, and my degree of trust in him.*

Case 2, Rep 6: *Even though I was tired after the whole exercise, he did what he did by recommending us and putting a good report forward really made me happy and made the whole exercise worth it.*

Case 3, Rep 11: *Yes, when you do a good work, people will focus on you. This makes many people focus on me that I am a good material and a very useful person. Infact, this also made my contract permanent. Every boss was fighting to have me in their office. It has really brought me to limelight in the system. All because of supervisor who is ready to allow his staff under him to develop and shine.*

Case 4, Rep 15: *This always makes me very happy and emotionally stable.*

How an employee feels after being praised for doing a good job varies, and the feeling is quite personal to these employees. However, they all lead to a positive outcome. The above cases show employees were confident, increased trust, job satisfaction, and increased performance. In the long run, consistency in appreciating staff leads to increased trust and gives them a sense of security. This also positively impacts the case study organisation. Employees in the case study organisation will be willing to give their best to the organisation.

In contrast, one respondent explains the disdain and the effect of not been appreciated.

*Case 1, Rep 4: You see, every leader must try to earn their employees trust o. employee will be able to give their all and work better. Leaders determine a lot .as; for this, my leader, His communication technique, and he should give everyone equal opportunity and learn to appreciate us his workers. We do not receive enough appreciation for doing a good job, and we do not want to be working under fear. We will not be at our best, my brother.*

The statement depicts that when employees do not receive enough appreciation, it probably leaves them vulnerable. They are unsure if the work has been correctly carried out. This, in turn, could lead to a state of insecurity, low level of performance and low confidence level.

### **Leadership Style**

In leadership and trust research, leadership style has always emerged as one of the factors that enhances leader–employee relationships and trust. The style a leader adopts in the workplace is as important as the leader. While respondents reflected on the interview session experience, leadership style was strongly pronounced in their responses. Different examples were used to describe their supervisor leadership style. Across the cases, employees' perception of their supervisor style of leading depends on their personal experiences. An employee of a particular department perceives the supervisor as transformational; another employee within the same department might perceive the leader as transformational. The leadership styles as assumed by the employees are discussed below.

Case 1, Rep 3: *if I will summarise leadership from around here, it will just be a form of authoritarian form of doing things.*

Case 1, Rep 4: *I can describe my leader as a task-oriented or task-focused person. He always wants to ensure that tasks needed to be performed are done in other to meet goals or achieve certain performances.*

Case 4, Rep 13: *He is a boss and not a ruler, and by boss, I mean the leader. He directs us.*

In Nigeria, the term boss implies total control over their subordinates. As a result, I assume these respondents mean that their supervisors are authoritative. Based on their response, their supervisors prefer task completion and follow the stated way of doing things. My observation shows that building relationships between these employees and their department supervisors is not the utmost priority. This might hamper the trust relationship between these two parties. In a follow-up question where I asked the respondent how these affects them and their work, they use monotonous terms like "it affects my work" and do not make me free to approach my supervisor. These statements indicate that employees prefer approachable supervisors who allow them to work freely, hence building trust between the employees and the supervisor in this department.

In the responses below, it appears that supervisors who lead by example and act as servant leaders create a positive work environment by motivating and inspiring their employees. It can also be assumed that such a work environment creates a better trust climate.

Case 2, Rep 6: *his personality affects our work positively, this also allows us to move closer to him and rely on him to lead us right, he is friendly, quiet, and very tolerant. He is not really strict, and he is the type of leader that wants to hear your part; he empathises with people and very involved in our personal lives; when I am feeling down, he knows, and he will call me to ask that is wrong, encourage me, he is nice like that.*

Case 3, Rep 10: *Let me start by saying he has earned my trust as my supervisor. He leads by example. He has the understanding that whatever he does, we, the staff, will also do because we look up to him.*

Case 4, Rep 14: *He tells you to do as I do, and we follow because the examples he projects are positive.*

Case 4, Rep 16: *He believes in everybody. He has that participatory teamwork spirit. He believes he cannot do it alone. He carries everybody along.*

I assume that how these employees described their leaders created a strong bond between the parties. Two leadership types that appear to be prevalent based on the above response are exemplary and servant leaders. Resulting from the follow-up question on how the leadership behaviours affect them, their responses depict that it fosters a strong relationship, enables them to be committed, and performs well. One example that supports this claim was a respondent from Case 4., Rep 16:

*If you have a good leader, employees will give their all.*

Conversely, the response from the same follow-up question Case 1, Rep 4:

*In as much as I do not like it, this is work; I can't do anything about it. But I will be more efficient if he relates with me as a friend and not a boss. It will even motivate me to work more, and I can approach him on any issue. My brother, work is all about building a relationship with your staffs o. that is just the truth.*

This reaction indicates that employees desire to have a better working relationship with their leader; however, they are imparted by the leading style employed by their supervisor. It also reveals that leadership style profoundly impacts employee commitment, motivation level, and efficiency.

### **7.3 Themes and their Indicators (Research Question 2)**

According to the literature and interview answers, trust-based leadership is the foundation of collaborative relationships. This study also aims to understand the

perceptions of the effect of a trusting relationship. As a result, it is essential to understand how employees are affected based on the relationship between the organisational actors.

From the responses, the four major qualities outlined below were deduced from the interview responses.

**Employee engagement:**

This concept demonstrates the impact of a trusting relationship based on different positive employee encounters with their supervisor. These encounters are resulting from the identified themes in research questions one and two, range from empathy, appreciation, integrity, benevolence, competence, and other identified competencies. When there are positive interpersonal relationships, it facilitates different outcomes

Employees and supervisors from different departments provided the following responses.

Case 3, rep 9 and rep 10

When the department's supervisor was questioned on how the relationship created with his employees affects their jobs?

*Positive relationship with your staff leads to positive outcome. If you scold them because of their mistake, they will work with you in fear. But if they are free, they will be happy to come to you with their mistake, and you can then correct them. They will be more committed and dedicated to their work. In a nutshell, they will be happy to work.*

When the same question was put forward to an employee in case 1, rep 1,

*But I will be more efficient if he relates with me as a friend and not boss. It will even motivate me to work more, and I can approach him on any issue.*

The responses above indicate that there are drivers of engagement and disengagement in a trusting relationship. Employee engagement resulting from the trusting relationship between supervisors and their employees could be due to openness. In addition, how feedback is delivered is also essential in promoting a trusting

relationship. This can foster commitment and dedication in the workplace hence leading to employee engagement.

The response in case 1, rep 1 can be assumed to mean that the leadership style could hurt a trusting relationship. The employee, in this case, explains that leadership style can affect interaction hence leading to disengagement and demotivation.

Case 4, rep 13: *Now, positively, it is a great feeling when your leader trust in you ooo, especially in public service, it encourages you to do more because that is the only way to be promoted oooo or recommended. If your oga no trust for your ability, yourself no fit show your best oooooo (If your leader does not trust in your ability, you cannot prove yourself. So, I will say positive impact.*

Employees display positive emotion when they perceive they have a trusting relationship with their supervisor. These positive emotions encourage employees to be more involved and committed in the workplace. The quote "it encourages you to do more" is a clear description of employee engagement.

### **Motivation**

Three participants indicated that one of the influences of a good relationship between supervisors and themselves is motivation. They also suggest that leadership should be employed as a means of motivating others and not creating fear. There is a clear indication from the below response case 1, rep 1 that motivation could stem from leadership style and the accessibility of the supervisor. As a result, it can be established that the style of leading adopted by a supervisor has a determining effect on the level of motivation, morale, and employee job satisfaction.

Case 1, Rep 1: *In as much as I do not like it, this is work, I can't do anything about it. But I will be more efficient if he relates with me as a friend and not boss. It will even motivate to work more, and I can approach him on any issue. my bother work is all about building relationship with you staffs o. That is just the truth.*

Case 5, Rep 18: *It encourages me to work and come with my own ideas that can move the department forward.*

Case 4, Rep 16: *It motivates me to work more, makes me efficient and effective.*

Motivation in most cases is tied to intrinsic and extrinsic rewards; however, in the case study organisation, they claim to be motivated, resulting in the relationship with their supervisor. They further accrued the benefit of been motivated to increased efficiency and effectiveness. The responses also connote that motivation is a driving force and an essential instrument for regulating employee work behaviour. Motivation could also enhance how employees engage with their jobs. It can be further assumed that a significant element of motivation could be the quality of the relationship between the supervisor and their employee.

### **Increased Performance and Confidence**

Trust-based leadership is a critical factor in employee performance. Employee motivation and commitment are increased when supervisors and workers have a good relationship. Employees are more effective when they are satisfied. For instance,

Case 4, rep 15 says

*"The relationship with my supervisor is very cordial. It is a relationship of two good friends who understand their self's, a relationship of father and son. It is a mentoring and developmental relationship. One thing it does is that my performance increases on an everyday basis. This makes work enjoyable and satisfying."*

Case 4, Rep 15:

*I became better on my job when he came here, it helps my performance. He has used his experience in the private sector to develop us here in the public sector. Upon relating with him, I am more confident and independent. He has impact lot of knowledge into us.*

Drawing inference from the statements above, employees would be more productive, effective, cause less friction, and be more loyal if there is a good partnership in place. The extent of conflict in the workplace is minimised when the work environment is productive and friendly.

Maintaining a positive employer-employee partnership can be crucial to a case study organisation long-term sustainability, with positive outcomes. Employees are able to focus on the tasks at hand when there is less conflict, and they are thus more effective. From the responses below, it indicates that relationship is key in the case study organisation.

Case 5, rep 19: *I have a staff that's I am currently dealing with, I am trying to mould him. He comes late to work. When we got talking, I discovered his family does not live in Lagos and that was bothering him. Where he is managing, he does not like the place. I had to speak with management, and they were able to bring his family down to Lagos. Immediately, his performance jumped.*

*The relationship with my supervisor is very cordial. It is a relationship of two good friends who understand themselves, a relationship of father and son. It is a mentoring and developmental relationship. One thing it does is that my performance increases on an everyday basis. This makes work enjoyable and satisfying.*

Case 3, rep 11: *This is because when you have a supervisor that gives you free hand to operate, it builds your confidence and increase performance. Today, I handle all the mails in the office. He is not somebody that wants to sit on your performance, he gives you the free hand to develop.*

There are various reasons why employees might increase in their performance. From the above experiences, there is an element of empathy, relationship, employee development, an act of benevolence, openness, and communication. Fostering a strong relationship is a two-way channel, and every organisational actor has a role to play.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

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This chapter presents the findings from the interview conducted (face-to-face) with 15 employees and five supervisors in a Nigerian public sector (developing country). Through the data presented, answers were provided to the research questions. The following issues were examined in this chapter:

The factors that give rise to trust between supervisors and employees in a Nigerian public sector organisation.

The perception of the effect of a trusting relationship in a Nigerian public sector organisation.

The data collected has shown the factors that enable employees to create a perception of their supervisor and the factors that enable them to trust their supervisor. Identified factors include benevolence, integrity, empathy, ability, leadership style, development, appreciation, confidentiality, participation, leadership style, approachability and participation. These factors were examined and confirmed in the interviews.

During the interviews, the perception of employees regarding the effect of a trusting relationship were also explored. These effects includes, feeling of self-esteem, feeling of job safety, feeling of inclusion, increased performance, employee engagement.

In addressing the research questions, the insight revealed that employees perceive factors that give rise to trust differently across all cases. This is due to the fact that supervisors in each department relate with their employees differently.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Discussion of Findings**

#### **8.0 Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the literature on trust-based leadership by adding to the knowledge of the behavioural and relational aspects of leadership that employees perceive as facilitators of trust. Through the data gathered from twenty participants, themes that were perceived to give rise to trust in the Nigerian public sector organisation and the perceived effect of a trusting relationship was provided. The importance of this study is that it provides new contextual perspectives on various leadership behaviours and relationships that can be used to build and sustain a trustful relationship with employees to organisational scholars and practitioners. The knowledge uncovered from this study could be adopted by professionals and built upon by different scholars to assist organisations in their

attempt to facilitate trust between leaders and their employees. Various outcomes such as employee performance (Gustafsson et al., 2020), employee engagement (Hope – Hailey et al., 2014), and employee motivation (Krot and Lewicka, 2012) were also explained based on the study context. As a result, these themes could enable the case study organisation to establish a healthy workplace culture (Larson and Vinberg, 2010).

This chapter will present the analyses of findings for this study and how they are synthesised in a series of interconnected discussions. The findings are examined and analysed by drawing insights from the literature, and an empirical model of trust-based leadership in the Nigerian health public sector is offered. This empirical model is based on more advanced knowledge of trust-based leadership, identifying the factors required for trust in the case study organisation.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the empirical model of trust-based leadership, which is organised in accordance with the results obtained from the interviews. Following that, the model is critically described in light of the theoretical insights presented in the literature review chapters. Finally, in response to the first research question, this chapter concludes with an explanation of trust-based leadership and a new definition for the concept based on the data gathered during the study.

## **8.1 An empirical model of trust-based leadership**

Trust-based leadership is a broad concept that influences numerous performance areas in an organisation, as evidenced in the literature study. However, this concept has been understudied and has received little empirical attention. These gaps can be addressed through the creation of an empirical model on trust using the findings of this study. The emerging model identifies the factors that potentially give rise to trust and its effect on trusting relationships in the context of the case study organisation. It provides a representation of the interactions between the leaders and their employees and how it develops into the perceived factors that give rise to trust. A model is a means of expressing a phenomenon that is frequently adopted in management research (Krishnaswamy et al., 2009). They are useful tools for thinking and a depiction of the real world (Pidd, 1999). According to Pidd (1999), a model is

a helpful tool for academics trying to comprehend a complex system. Models can reveal vital insights through “...demonstrating the understanding of relationships within a phenomenon or diverse aspect of the phenomenon, and, most importantly, predicting the phenomenon’s future performance” (Krishnaswamy et al., 2009, p. 193). The domain of trust does not lack models exploring trustworthiness or the factors that give rise to trust; however, from the finding, this study argues for other factors aside from the currently known “empathy, benevolence, ability and integrity” (Mayer et al., 1995; Hope-Hailey et al., 2014). A model that is empirically based will give an understanding of how these factors relate to trust.

According to Morris (1967), it is not reasonable to expect a model to perform tasks for which it was not intended. Hence, this model aims to specify the factors required to increase trust between supervisors and their employees. Because the concept of trust is complicated, a model is needed to help researchers better grasp the phenomenon in the real world.

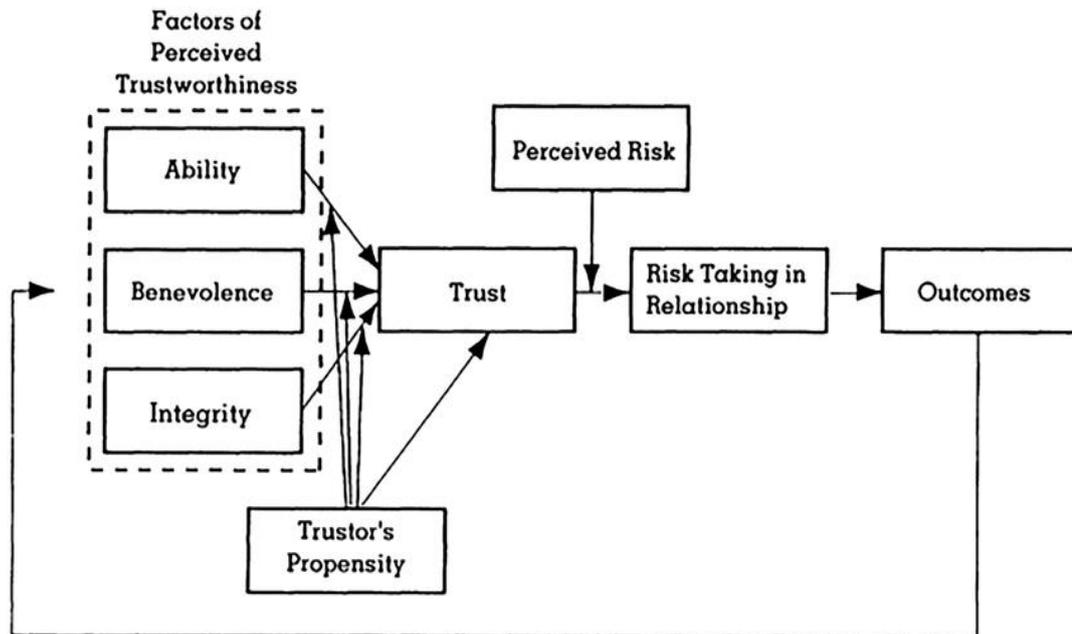
As previously mentioned, several trust models have been developed by several scholars. However, in the context of the case study organisation, this model will be the first of its kind. It is built upon the previously published work of (Mayer et al., 1995; Hope – Hailey et al., 2014) on trust between leader and employee (refer back to fig x in the literature review for the Mayer et al. framework). The established model addresses the causal conditions for trust-based leadership and the wider implication of the phenomenon. Causal conditions refer to the factors that lead to the occurrence of the phenomenon, the subject under study, or the central idea (Brown et al., 2002, p. 5).

In addition, it displays the factors that influence the phenomenon under study. These factors have been categorised under leadership behaviour, leadership style and employee development. Under the leadership behaviour, all respondents were very particular concerning the behaviour exhibited by their direct leaders. The behaviours categorised under these themes includes: (a) integrity, (b) benevolence, (c) empathy, (d) appreciation, (e) Ability/competence, (f) confidentiality, (g) openness (h) leadership styles, (I) building relationships. Associated indicators that can potentially give rise to trust under the relational category includes (i) inclusivity, (ii) Decision making, (iii) approachability. The factors under the relational category could

potentially build relationships between the organisational actors in the case study organisation.

The model also identifies employees' development, learning, and feedback process as significant factors from the leader and employee perspective. It could potentially balance the divide between the problem of in-group and out-group. The in-group, in this case, is referred to employees who are very close to their supervisor and seem to be the ones carrying out all responsibilities. They refer to them as trusted hands in the case study organisation. On the other hand, out-group employees seem to be given less responsibility in the case study organisation. This indicator includes (a) employee support, (b) leader–employee relationship. Categorising these themes under the three main headings can help the supervisor and employee understand the factor that needs to be strengthened and the main indicator it also belongs.

Fig 9. Mayer et al. conception of trust model



Source: Mayer et al. (1995)

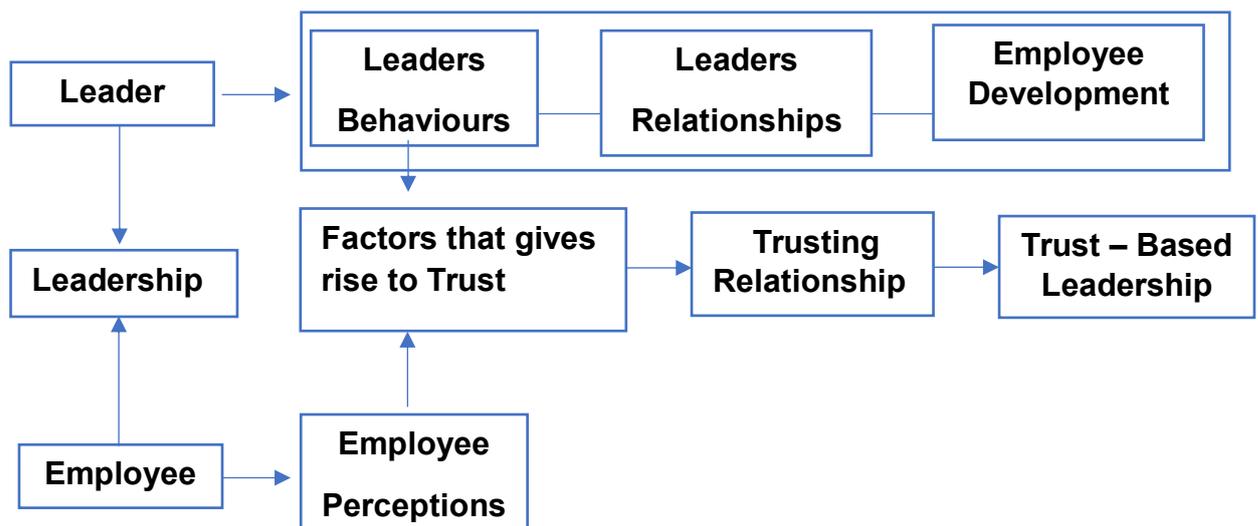
## 8.2 Presentation of the trust-based leadership model

As earlier noted, the trust leadership model, which was derived from the research findings reported in this thesis, builds nicely on the work of (Mayer et al. 1995). The trust model of Mayer et al. has been subsequently polished and refined through series of studies by mainstream scholars on trust and leadership (including Whitener et al. 1998; Hope – Hailey et al. 2014). The model represents an empirical construct that is based on the findings of this study. The model is an empirical construct based on the outcomes of this research that may be used to analyse and promote trust and leadership research. It identifies the various aspects factors that engender trust and how they interact directly or indirectly. Figure x depicts the model in diagrammatic form.

In modelling trust-based leadership, this study adopted the approach of Strauss and Corbin (1998). Originally, the approach was based on grounded theory; however, it has been extensively used in studies based on thematic analysis (Edwards and Lopez, 2006; Germann and Wilson, 2004). Thinking in line with Strauss and Corbin (1998) on modelling, the organisational actor representing this study are identified in the first node and followed by the causal conditions. These are the conditions in the second node that will explain how employees create a perception of trust in their

leaders. As argued in the literature review that employee will always draw inferences from their leader's behaviour. This study further argues that employees will also study the relationship between them and their leader and compare how their supervisor relates with other co-workers. This thesis will also argue the case of employee development as a causal factor that gives rise to trust. The third node presents the outcomes of the inferences drawn by employees based on the three causal factors in the second node. All these outcomes invariably lead to a trusting relationship. A fourth and final node will then display the effects of a trusting relationship between leaders and their employees. These effects will include employee engagement, feeling of safety, inclusion, self-esteem, and increased performance. It is also important to note that this study assumes that the factors that give rise to trust represented in the third node do not lead to trust-based leadership but a trusting relationship. However, if positively put to use, they enhance the relationship between the organisational actors. At the end of this chapter, this study will create an understanding that trust-based leadership is attained when a positive, trusting relationship has been created.

**Figure 10 trust-based leadership model**



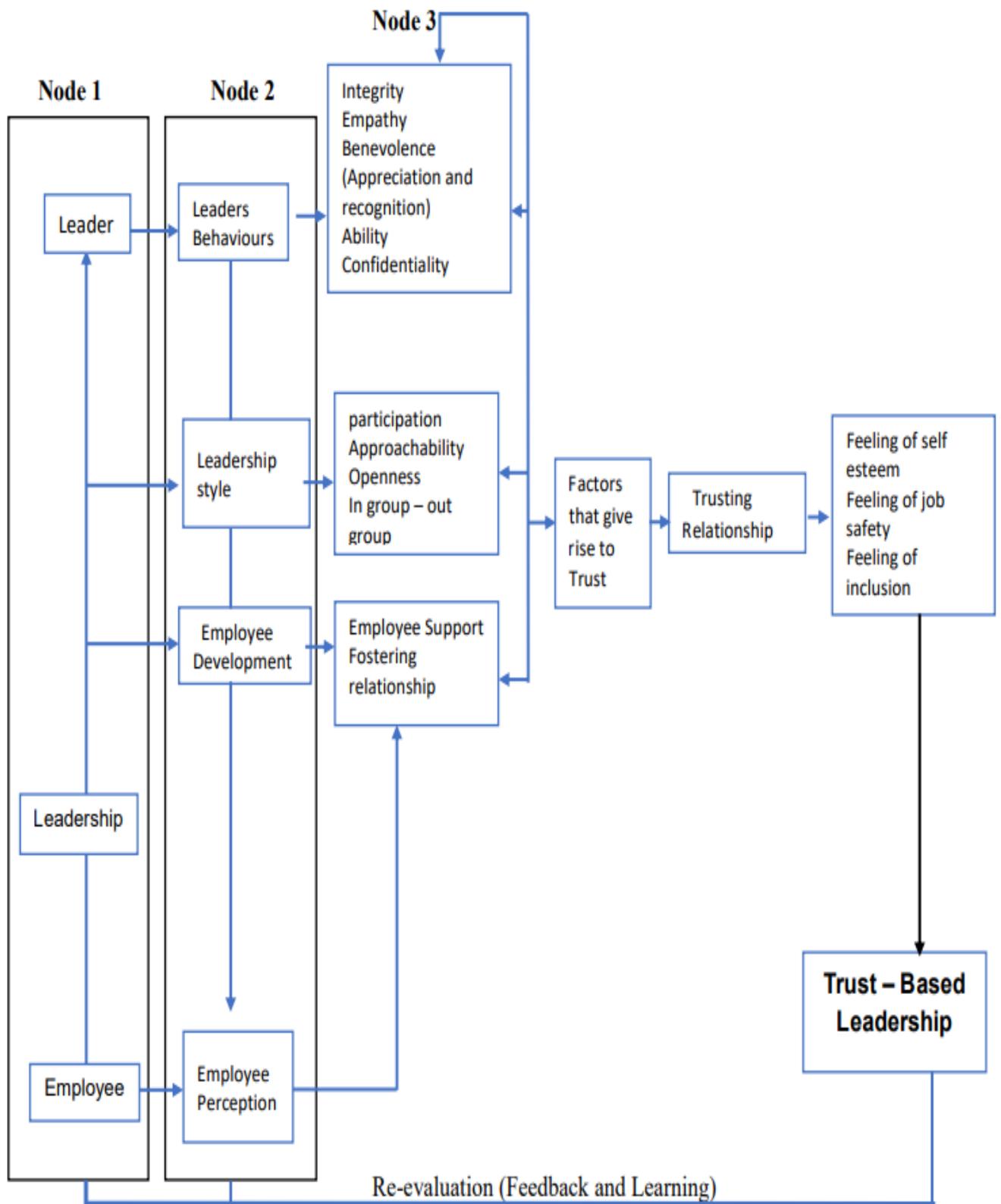


Fig 11: Trust based Leadership Model

Source: Authors Compilation (2020)

The trust-based leadership model is represented in three nodes (node 1, node 2 and node 3). The first node shows the concept of leader, leadership, and employees.

The first node tends to explain that the act leadership does not exist without leaders and employees in an organisation. Each of these concepts has been conceptualised in the literature review. The second node demonstrate that employees will draw inference from three leadership factors (leaders' behaviour, leadership style, employee development). These three factors are based on the findings of this study. Before trust can be formed or developed. Employee's perception is created based on these three factors. The outcomes in the third node are the "outcomes of trust". Resultant on the perception of employees in node 3, this leads to the trust outcomes in node 3. The factors in node 3 which are the trust outcome are the describe in this study as the factors that gives rise to trust. Leader and employee relationship are formed due to these factors thereby leading to trust-based leadership.

### **8.3 Developing context economy**

Contextual conditions, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 132), are "...a specific set of conditions (patterns of conditions) that intersect dimensionally at a time and place to form a set of circumstances or issues to which people respond through actions/interactions". The context chosen for this study is a public health sector in Nigeria; the trust outcomes in node 3 of the empirical model are significant to this context; however, a more general conclusion is drawn with broader application. The causative and intervening conditions that influence the factors that give rise to trust are determined by the nature of the context.

### **8.4 Causal conditions**

This sub-section discusses the perception of employees based on the behaviour, relational and employee development that results in the factors that give rise to trust. Some of these perceptions are influenced by the nature of the Nigerian environment. Some of these perceptions are also influenced by the interaction between the supervisor and the employee.

## 8.5 Leaders Behaviour

This study focused on understanding the factors that give rise to trust in a leader–employee relationship. Before these factors are developed, this study has established that employees draw inferences from their leader’s behaviour and character. These behaviours are assumed differently among the employees. Due to the interactions between the organisational actors, the interview respondents explain that they trust the organisation based on the work contract between them at the initial stage. However, trusting their supervisor depends on how they behave towards them and relates with them over time. The findings establish that employees in the case study organisation take their time to observe and interpret every move of their supervisor before deciding to trust. It was also apparent from the findings that the decision to trust also depends on interactions between co-workers about their supervisor. The above claim is also reflected by evidence in the literature review. According to Prime and Salib (2014), the leader’s behaviour mediated significant influences on trust. According to Mayer et al. (1995), these influences are integrity, benevolence, and ability. In accordance with the evidence from the respondents, the ability of the leaders to be consistent in these behaviours is a crucial requirement to maintain trust in their employees.

Based on the findings from the interview analysis, interview respondents from the case study organisation identified nine behaviours that could foster trust between them and their supervisors. Some of the themes identified by respondents align with the views of McAllister (1995); Mayer et al. (1995); McEvily et al. (2003); Hope – Hailey et al. (2014) that factors that give rise to trust are embedded in the leader’s behaviour and how they relate with their employees. However, the outcome of my finding introduces a new concept, ‘employee development’, as one of the significant factors perceived by employees that might give rise to trust in the case study organisation. This concept is might be peculiar to the case study organisation. These behaviours are explained below in detail.

**Research Question 1:** What are the perceptions of employees and leaders about what gives rise to trust between them in a Nigerian public sector organisation?

8.5.1 **Integrity:** respondents in the case study organisation and across all departments were very particular about their supervisor’s consistency between his words and actions. Supervisors who ‘walk the talk’ receive high trust from their employees. This view aligns with that of Mayer

et al. (1995) and (Hope-Hailey et al., 2014); they maintain that integrity involves the act of being fair and void of duplicity.

The respondents reiterate that when a leader cannot keep to his words or when a change in agreement occurs, integrity should prevail by carrying the employees along. This study reveals other factors associated with integrity, such as openness, confidentiality, keeping the organisation's values, and inclusivity.

However, this study found that integrity should not always involve a leader matching words with deeds. Through the interview analysis, this study found that it is also integrity when a leader is open to the employees when he/she is unable to match words with deeds. This will enable the employees to perceive the leader as being open and transparent. While consistency in integrity is essential, employees trust might remain unaffected when they are carried along in both positive and negative circumstances. The finding argues that integrity exists when a leader communicates clearly and timely to the employees when there is a change in their contract of agreement or deed.

**8.5.2 Benevolence:** after examining the finding, this study found that demonstrating benevolence involves a degree of sensitivity. Leaders display of care and concern is proven to be essential to the trust process. However, an interesting finding is how closely link benevolence relates to empathy. This is consistent with past literature, which argues that leaders need to display emotional bonds to enhance trust (Mollering, 2001). By means of illustration, it was suggested by Casciaro and Lobo (2008) that during interactions, competence might be irrelevant; in addition, they support a strong role of affections during interactions. This is in line with earlier research on affect factors such as interpersonal liking. For example, Hawke and Heffernan (2006) imply that interpersonal liking is attributed to benevolence, leading to sensitivity, relationship commitment, and collaboration between the organisational actors. In a similar vein, Johnson and Grayson (2005) elucidate that demonstrating benevolence in interpersonal relationships has been found to influence employee perception of trust in their leader.

On the other hand, this study also found that benevolence involves risk. When the parties are emotionally invested, it can be hard to determine the genuineness or authenticity of the leader's concern and care towards the employee. This, in turn, can result in a negative consequence for the trustor, which is the employee. For instance, Anderson and Jap (2005) contend that a dark side might occur in interpersonal relationships because it carries a level of risk. Similarly,

Mollering (2008) builds on the theoretical argument that elements of trust such as benevolence could open the door for deception from both subordinates and employees.

Findings from this study suggest that when leaders show concern for their employees' personal lives, it enables them to reach their full potentials. The supervisors are not engaging the employees to develop their careers, but because they genuinely care about the development of their employees. Furthermore, resulting from the supervisors' care and concern for the employees, they can spot the uniqueness the employees can contribute to the organisation and help them nurture it. Benevolence is also linked with compassion. This shows the human side of the leader. Supervisors should consider taking off their leadership badges and showing a more humanistic side to their employees. These were reflected in two cases. A leader assisted an employee in bringing the family down to Lagos, and a leader allowed staff to take the week off to look after the sick wife. The employees testified to how it positively robbed off on their performance and the positive psychological effect it had on them.

This can be supported by adopting the study of Yang (2014), which indicate that when leaders display actions that demonstrate concern towards employee's well-being, it leads to positive outcomes such as commitment to work and motivation. Based on the above explanation, it can be assumed that employees can use benevolence as a tool to assess the leader's trust.

Regarding benevolence, this study also found there is a degree of vulnerability in benevolence. Employees in the case study organisation consider supervisors who display concern about them as reliable, creating a sense of security. The respondents seemed to acquire a stronger propensity to make themselves vulnerable to others, including their boss, due to feeling secure and, to some extent, protected by their leader. It can be deduced from all the responses on benevolence that it is a behaviour that enhances trustworthiness. The researcher majorly found from the responses of employees that benevolence consists of three actions which include (1) exhibiting regard and sensitivity for employee's needs and interests, (2) operating in a way that preserves the interest of the employees, and (3) not exploiting the employees for personal gain. These actions from the supervisor will lead the employee to perceive him or her as a trustworthy and benevolent leader.

### **8.5.3 Empathy**

This study assumes that empathy is a deeper form of benevolence. In comparison, benevolence involves showing concern or the act of care, while empathy involves the leader putting him or

herself in the employee's situation. This study further argues that while it might be confusing to detect a leader's authenticity in demonstrating benevolence, it might not be the same with empathy because it involves a more profound sense of emotions. In my finding, it can be assumed that any leader can demonstrate a benevolent act (disposition to do good). However, it takes the interrelationship between leaders and employees built over a long time to display empathy. In support of the above, empathy and benevolence have been linked to a variety of psychological and interpersonal advantages. Previous studies (Lim and Desteno, 2016; Kim et al., 2018) establish that benevolence and empathy are linked, and compassion is developed from both concepts. However, there is a scarcity of research on the direct link between them.

More fascinating, this study unravelled two dimensions of empathy. From the interview findings, respondents express a sense of affective and cognitive empathy. From the respondent experiences, it was understood that showing affection in empathy encompasses sharing similar feelings and emotions of the other party. On the other hand, this study suggests that cognitive empathy is when the leader displays the ability to take on an employee's perspective by understanding their thought and feeling. Furthermore, although affective empathy might be more spontaneous and quicker, cognitive empathy seems to be deliberate and voluntary and is often developed as one grows older and matures.

The respondents' views support the findings of (Klimecki 2019; Singer and Klimecki, 2014), who observes that empathy is displayed differently among leaders and employees in an organisation.

#### **8.5.4 Ability**

The respondents acknowledged and indicated that ability is one of the key factors that give rise to trust in the case study organisation. However, from their responses, this study also found that ability could be the cause of division between the supervisors and employees in the case study organisation. This study conceptualises ability as the difference between the in-group and out-group in the case study organisation. The formation of these two separate groups results from the supervisor's perception of their ability. Supervisors in the case study organisation perceive some employees as competent and therefore treat them as 'trusted hands' – i.e. the in-group. However, employees whom the leader does not perceive as competent are unhappy with and reject this perception, believing they are unfairly treated. Employees who have shown to be more competent in their given task become one of the leaders trusted hands and mentally find themselves in the

in-group circle of the supervisor. The challenge with this is the divide it created among employees, and it negatively impacted trust and relationships in the case study organisation. The formation of these two separate groups results from the supervisor's impression of the competence level of each employee in relation to how they execute their task. In support of the above, Lewicki and Brinsfield (2011) mention that ability focuses on competence. This was not viewed from the employee perspective and how it could result in a separation between leaders and their subordinates.

This study further found that employees in the inner circle of their supervisor will have a stronger relationship than those in the out-group. How these two parties will develop trust in their supervisor will differ. Regarding ability, other findings reveal that dividing the employees into groups shows the leader's trust in their ability according to their skills. As a result, mutual trust is linked to the roles that each member plays inside the organisation.

Employees also require competence in order to be successful in their employment. Job tasks and job competencies might not necessarily mean the same thing. All relevant information, skills, abilities, and traits that make up a person's work are competencies. This combination of context-specific attributes has been linked to better job performance and can be used as a benchmark for measuring job performance and developing, recruiting, and hiring personnel.

#### 8.5.6 Confidentiality:

The analysis of the interview revealed that confidentiality is a key factor in trust. All 20-respondent identified that losing confidence in their supervisor due to lack of confidentiality is a deal-breaker. This is proven in the experience below

*(Okay, let me tell you this personal experience. I once related a personal issue with him—very personal o. The following day, the story had gone around the building. I was so ashamed of myself; it affected my work, my self-esteem, and my confidence. I was so disappointed in him. He later apologised, but when trust is gone, it takes time to build it back.)*

This was a reoccurring theme among the respondents, and it is a major contributing factor to trust and leadership. Supervisors must keep employee's information and discussion that affects their private life confidential. As a leader, employees naturally tend to open up about their workplace issues and challenges that also affect them personally.

Past research has focused on confidentiality to keep employee information, record, and contract safe (Atkinson, 2007; Scriven, 2016; Shenoy and Appel, 2017). Nevertheless, an interesting observation from the research findings showed that respondents were more particular about confidentiality but from the perspective of personal issues shared with their supervisor. The findings deduced that disclosing employee personal discussion is the fastest means of breaking trust and could damage both the reputation of the employee and supervisor. Another respondent from the case study organisation explains the effect of breaking confidentiality.

*It affected my work, my self-esteem, and my confidence. I was so disappointed in him. He later apologised, but when trust is gone, it takes time to build it back.*

Edmonds (2021) suggests that when a breach of trust occurs, employee morale reduces, and the leader will might lose the employee's trust. Although it is not determined who feels the effect of breach of trust the most, this might be a case for further research.

Findings from this study further suggest that breaching confidentiality leads to various adverse outcomes such as undermines trust, damages credibility, and encourages fear and negative emotions, demotivation, loss of confidence, breakdown in performance, and lack of concentration. When confidentiality is not breached, the supervisor gains the respect and trust of employees and deeper relationships.

Apart from the high degree of integrity linked with confidentiality, the findings from this study suggest that confidentiality also involves vulnerability. When employees disclose personal issues with the supervisors, the leaders need to understand they have placed themselves in a susceptible position.

When an employee confides in their leaders, there is also a sense of affective trust because it involves emotions and relationship-built overtime. As a result, supervisors should not take advantage of their employees' vulnerability but behave compassionately. To maintain or build on the existing trust between supervisors and their employees, the supervisors need to understand that vulnerability can also help build a trusting relationship. When employees demonstrate vulnerability, it encourages them to be open and honest about their issues, questions, mistakes, and blockages, resulting in improved performance (Colquitt et al., 2007; Cox et al., 2016).

### 8.5.7 Appreciation and Recognition

Appreciation and recognition were recurring themes in the interview of part of the factors that give rise to trust in the case study organisation. However, upon careful study of the findings, the distinctiveness of how the respondent used these concepts became evident. This is evident when you compare the two cases below:

*There are many occasions, but let me refer to the most recent, there was a time I conducted an interview, and we are to shortlist candidates for the candidate. The task came unexpectedly, and we have a number of people to choose from. We are to gather the whole application; I separated the applications into different categories, and the next stage was to enter them into the system. We did all of it within a short period of time and sorting applications of over 200, and he was really pleased with the time frame; and he put a good report forward and recommended us for an award.*

This could be termed as an act of recognising good work. While the second case :

*He will tell you, well done, thank you, and at times open a bottle of wine and he has a very common language that people almost everyone in the compound in FMC do say; they imitate it from him, "I appreciate it I appreciate it."*

It could be said to be a form of appreciation.

This study assumes that respondents who used the term appreciation referred to verbal appreciation such as thank you, handshake and words of encouragement. In contrast, those who used recognition were recommended for promotion, published in the organisation's report, or moved to a more senior role. This assumes that the case study organisations tend more towards using intrinsic rewards to motivate their employees.

This accentuates the view of Guest and Conway (2002), stating that one of the keys to motivating people to perform as expected is incentives. The reward can be monetary or in the form of recognition. Cash, recognition, praise, or a combination of these, can be given as a reward. Employees of the case study organisation whose trust in the leader was through appreciation and recognition also verified the views of Freedman (1978), which assume that when effective rewards and recognition are incorporated inside an organisation, it creates a positive working atmosphere that encourages individuals to perform at their best. Employees see recognition as a

sign of their worth and respect, which raises employee morale and, as a result, increases organisational productivity.

This study also evidence that employees in the case study organisation tend to use these two concepts to measure their ability, competence, and contributions. It gives employees a sense of how their work is valued by their supervisor and contributes to the goal and purpose of the case study organisation. Employees are looking for meaning and purpose in their jobs. Appreciation and recognition could be essential for employee self-worth, self-confidence, and self-esteem. This study also proves that employee performance is hampered when a good appreciation and recognition system is not in place, leading to demotivation.

*When I do not receive enough appreciation for doing a good job, it has a negative effect on my psychology, and we do not want to be working under fear. We will not be at our best, my brother.* Leaders who acknowledge and appreciate their employees' accomplishments remind them of how invaluable they are to the team and its success.

## **8.6 Leadership style**

The respondents identified leadership style when discussing trust-based leadership. These employees believe that the style of leadership their supervisor adopt largely influences their trust perception. The findings support the work of Darling and Heller (2012) on how leadership style impacts trust. These could be attributed to four primary outcomes resulting from the interview findings: participation, approachability, openness, and in-group and out-group.

### **8.6.1 Participation**

These concepts were used interchangeably during the cause of the interviews. While these concepts might have differing definitions, the finding reveals that respondents pointed to the exact meaning through the narration of their experiences. The majority of respondents shared what appears to be a significant divide between employees regarding their involvement in tasks and how responsibility is allocated.

From their responses, another significant finding is the attachment of participation to 'ability'. The case study organisation employees want to be viewed as partners, which involves bringing them into meetings, taking part in decision making, and being confident in entrusting sensitive information to them. This also empowers the employee and gives them confidence in their supervisor hence promoting trust.

The findings support Paxton and Ressler's (2018) stances, who indicated that, when decisions are made, it is important that employee interest is well reflected in the outcome resulting from their participation in the decision-making process. The participation of employees in these processes can increase the organisation's effectiveness, productivity, ability, commitment and increase employee motivation.

The downside with this concept tends to create favouritism. This could also be the reason for an in-group and out-group culture in the case study organisation. Numerous times in the responses, genuine concerns were made known by employees regarding employees referred to as trusted hands. This tends to have resulted in favouritism and could make employees feel their ability is not appreciated, which could repel trusting emotions in employees. One of the areas where employees aim to be actively involved is in decision making.

In line with the above, Yang et al. (2021) explain that supervisors can also profit from their subordinates' knowledge, skills, and experience. The willingness of the supervisor to adopt the participatory decision-making methods is linked to give rise to subordinate trust and reduce favouritism. Supervisors' propensity to promote involvement is related to their level of trust in their employees.

#### 8.6.2 Approachable

The respondents, both supervisors and employees, recognised approachability as a significant factor in building trust. This study found that employees attributed this concept to an open-door policy.

Case 1, Rep 1; *"I fit approach am any time o [I can approach him anytime], I tell am about my family issue, anything wey dey do me (I discuss my family issues with him and anything wrong with me). The way I have see him since I dey work for here, e don makes me trust am very much [I trust him very much]."*

Rep 10: *"It is cordial; he has given us a platform where we can approach him at any time. Some staffs are scared of their supervisors but not with ours. He knows the importance of positive relationships."*

Rep 11; *“Like in my office, the way we operate is very cordial, and it has built a strong relationship between us because it is very easy for us to approach our supervisor.”*

The workplace culture of open-door policy was resounded across departments. While the open-door policy is in place, this study suggests that it is not the factor that leads to trust. Supervisors often feel they exemplify an open-door approach. They express that employees can always approach them. Unfortunately, because an open-door policy exists does not mean it is interpreted the same way by employees. This study reveals a significant difference between supervisors who claim to be approachable and those perceived as approachable. A supervisor that is approachable or accessible is not dependent on their location; what determines the approachability of a supervisor is not an office or behind a closed door, but an agreed understanding of why, when, and employees can approach their supervisors and how they respond to their employees. Based on the interview findings, how approachable a supervisor is depends on how employees perceive them as open, benevolent, empathetic and honest and might not be the open-door policy.

In addition, this study further found that when it comes to creating relationships with employees, being approachable is essential because relationships are marked by trust, confidence, and the ability to produce new ideas. When a leader is approachable, their subordinates are less likely to hide difficulties and are more likely to bring them to their leaders’ attention.

Finally, this study found that employees with approachable leaders feel safe in their workplace and freely can contribute to the team and organisation. When the level of approachability increases, there is a tendency that employee level of cooperation, communication, morale and attitude will increase.

### **8.6.3 Openness**

The respondents acknowledge openness as one of the tools supervisors should adopt in trust-building. Several scholars agree that openness centres on interactions between a leader and an employee and encourages honesty and sincerity in professional and personal affairs (Merien and Christensen, 2013; Kaplan et al., 2015; Schmidhuber and Ingrams 2021). Although this study supports the above, establishing an open relationship between a supervisor and their employee includes social and professional encounters that allow them to get to know each other. This means that openness could fast track effective communication

This study does not agree with the above evidence as the respondent argues that an open leader does not necessarily mean the leader will be honest and sincere. A leader can be open for different reasons and motives.

While the above could be a potential cause for future study, this study also found that openness portrays the leader as a trustworthy confidant personally and professionally. It also incorporates a humanistic aspect, in which a leader demonstrates amity, benevolence, compassion, and empathy by his or her actions.

#### **8.6.4 In-group and Out-group**

This is one of the significant contributions to this study. All 20 respondent identified this concept as a significant factor influences employee perception of trust in their leader. Employees in the in-group are those perceived to be trusted by their supervisors and given more responsibility in the case study organisation, while those in the out-group are employees who complained of favouritism in the case study organisation. According to Singh and Rukta (2018); Hirvi et al. (2020), they support the findings that employees in these two different groups perceive trust differently because one of the groups is closer to the supervisor than the other. This study finds that these might be the reason for favouritism, inequality and perceived causes of discrimination in the case study organisation. Research has not focused its spotlight on these concepts and how they potentially affect relationships, leading to trust. This study further assumes that the division of employees into this group could be attributed to employee competence, leadership style, and employee development.

This study also found that members in these two categories are led differently, hence the reason why their trust perception of employees might be different. This study found that the case study organisation use in this research is result-oriented. As a result, leaders tend to lean more to those they already know have consistently proven their worth.

The style of leadership also plays a significant role in trust facilitation. As established in the literature review, the Nigerian environment itself is more of an autocratic, dictatorship leadership environment. This study further finds that When work performance is stressed, the leader's leadership style toward in-group and out-group members differs; in-group members tend to be led more democratically, while out-group individuals tend to be led in a more authoritarian manner. However, employees tend to prefer two particular leadership styles across all the cases—the servant/exemplary leadership style.

Case 3, Rep 10: *Let me start by saying he has earned my trust as my supervisor. He leads by example. He has the understanding that whatever he does, we, the staff, will also do because we look up to him.*

Case 4, Rep 14: *He tells you to do as I do, and we follow because the examples he projects are positive.*

## **8.7 Employee development**

This concept is one of the fascinating findings of this study. All the respondents who appeared to belong to the out-group in the case study organisation explained that the lack of belief in their ability and not developing them to become of standard affected their trust level in their supervisor. Although it might be almost impossible for supervisors not to create the in-group and out-group mentality, there should be a process where employees are adequately trained and moved to the in-group based on improved performance. Under this concept, employees identified two factors that could potentially enhance their trust in their supervisor.

### **8.7.1 Employee support**

All respondents across the departments agreed that receiving support from their supervisor will increase the trust level. This support cut across emotional support and, more importantly, task-related support. They further accentuate that although receiving support from their supervisor will not erase the in-group and out-group, it might boost the performance of those in the out-group, hence potentially increasing their competence. Employee support entails the supervisor trust in the capability of the employees to conduct their tasks responsibly. Supervisors can also adopt supporting employees as a technique to increase the overall confidence of the employees in the case study organisation

The finding of this study supports the stance of Barsi, Ziglari and Abadi (2013). They further suggest that employees who are not up to par can be sent for training to aid their development and increase competence.

### 8.7.2 Fostering relationship

Across all cases, respondents found building relationships between the organisational actors as the bedrock of trust. Several researchers have focused on the concept of relationship in trust-building (Mayer et al., 1995; Dirks and Ferrin, 2004; Hope – Hailey et al., 2014),

However, this study found that these relationships do not just form; it takes the combination of the leader's behaviour and style of leadership to foster these relationships. These findings might be context-based. All respondents in the case study organisation agree that building relationships between themselves and their employees is vital when seeking to enhance several organisational outcomes such as performance, job satisfaction, motivation, and employee engagement. Through the participants' experiences in the case study organisation, this study also found that leaders shape employees' behaviour, resulting in trust perceptions.

This study further found that supervisors who have a relational mindset always aim to create, sustain and continuously build relationships because they recognise creating a climate of trust. Through the respondent response, when supervisors create this trust enabling environment, it also enhances their competence because they can receive feedback from the employee without fear and through collaboration and consultation.

The actions of a supervisor, including their behaviour, creates the basis for trust. The supervisor needs to own responsibility by taking the first step to building trust. As a result, supervisors need to pay attention to their behaviour and engage in building trust in the trust-making process. While several factors could be adopted in the process of building and fostering relationships, two major elements that determine how employees and supervisors in the case study organisation build relationships are their levels of positive interaction and the style of leadership.

**Research Question 2:** What are the perceptions of the effects of a trusting relationship?

Across all cases, respondents pointed to different benefits of the effects of a trusting relationship. Several researchers have also highlighted the significance of a trusting relationship. Some of these benefits, such as ‘‘increased employee engagement and increased performance’’ have been highlighted in the literature and widely supported by several scholars (Dietz and Gillespie, 2011; Searle and Skinner, 2011).

## 8.8 Increased employee engagement and commitment

The respondents identified increased employee engagement as a significant benefit of a trusting relationship. This was found to be affirmative in the case study environment. Respondents in the in-group explained that their supervisor's personal, trusting relationship propelled them to engage better in their responsibility. Employees who appear to be in the out-group shared similar opinions with the in-group employees. They explain that if their supervisor develops them through mentoring and training, their work efficiency will increase, leading to increased engagement. In support of the above claim and judging by past research, the meta-analytic findings of trust in the leadership of Dirks and Ferrin (2002) found a positive relationship between trust in leaders and employee engagement. They establish that trust in leadership mainly was strong on job performance due to increased employee engagement. This study also found that increased employee engagement links to the supervisor's consistency in the factors that give rise to trust.

## 8.9 Increased performance

The interview findings reveal that performance is based on two factors employee ability and employee motivation. Similar to employee engagement, several scholars (French and Synder, 1959; Tzafrir and Gur, 2007; Dietz and Gillespie, 2011; Searle and Skinner, 2011) have found a positive relationship between trust and employee performance. However, this performance is dependent on not just the work relationship between the two organisational actors. Supervisors need to create a level of work and personal relationship without bias or discrimination with their employees to aid performance. This study reveals that personal relationships could potentially increase or decrease job performance. For example, respondents explain that if a personal issue discussed with their supervisor is exposed, it will break down trust, affecting job performance.

This study also uncovered new benefits of a trusting relationship between employees and their supervisors. These benefits include the feeling of self-esteem, feeling of job safety, and feeling of inclusion.

#### 8.10 The feeling of self-esteem, inclusion, safety

Based on my analysis, it reveals that trust and self-esteem might be closely related. When an employee has been given responsibility, it can potentially create a sense of self-esteem. In turn, it can improve the outcome of the job because it will enable them to take ownership of their work, hence increasing job satisfaction. More importantly, when employees develop a sense of self-esteem, it will influence how they communicate with their supervisors. Employees will also perceive themselves as an essential part of the organisation, thereby creating a sense of self-worth and value. Contrarily, employees who perceive themselves as out-group members of the case study organisation might find themselves low in esteem and not viewed as an integral part of the organisation.

Regarding the feeling of inclusion, the result of the participant response indicates that no employee in the case study organisation wants to be an out-group member. From the finding, they emphasised training and development, mentoring and modelling. When employees develop a sense of their leader attempting to develop them, it creates a sense of inclusion and further increases their competence and ability on the job. This will create a sense of belongingness in the workplace and enhance teamwork. Based on previous research, it has been established that trust leads to a positive work environment.

Research has further shown that through trust, an environment that is first and foremost perceived as safe by employees is created (Prime and Salib, 2014). This study proposes that feeling safe in the workplace is essential to employees. When employees feel safe in the case study organisation, they tend to feel less at risk. This implies that they are not frightened of making mistakes, trying new ideas, and wanting to be empowered. As a result, their sense of contribution to the organisation may grow, as well as their job satisfaction. When a safe environment is formed through mutual trust, it can increase decision-making quality and generate more support from other organisation members.

### 8.11 The conceptualisation of trust-based leadership

This definition stems from my findings and previous research of Savolainen and Malkamäki (2011), where they claim that the foundation of trust-based leadership, which was conceptualised as ‘trust in leadership’, is embedded in trust relationships. Bligh (2017) points out that trust in leadership is a strong predictor of employee engagement, commitment, and performance over time. These two scholars Savolainen and Malkamäki (2011) and Bligh (2017), have explained the concept of trust-based leadership from two different perspectives. Savolainen and Malkamäki (2011) explain that trust-based leaders involve the relationship between the leader and the employee. This trust relationship is claimed to be dependent on how a leader interacts and engage with the employees. However, Savolainen and Malkamäki (2011) did not consider several other factors highlighted in my model as important factors when discussing trust-based leadership to understand the factors that give rise to trust. Bligh (2017) also examined the concept of trust-based leadership using the term ‘trust and leadership’ from the viewpoint of a leader and employees’ attitudes and behaviour. Although Bligh (2017) supports Savolainen and Malkamäki (2011) claim that trust-based leadership has its root in workplace relationships, it further claims that the attitude and behaviours exhibited by the organisational actors, the leaders and employees are determinants to the formation of the connections. The differences in how scholars have identified trust-based leadership might be due to their different opinions, which reveals that when trust is operational in an organisation, it could create and facilitate teamwork and relationships (Dirks 2000; Dirks and Ferrin 2002; Gustafsson and Hailey 2016; Fulmer and Ostroff 2017; Gordon 2017)

The concept of trust-based leadership cannot only be attributed to leadership behaviour and leader employee relationship, as assumed in previous studies (Dirks 2000; Dirks and Ferrin 2002; Sharkie 2009; Savolainen and Malkamäki 2011; Bligh 2017). In this regard, the outcome obtained from this study points to the role of leaders and employees in creating a trusting environment by exhibiting trustworthy behaviour, building relationships, adopting the right leadership style, and developing the employees to avoid the perception of in-group and out-group. In addition, trust-based leadership is seen to be impacted not only through trustworthy behaviours (integrity, ability, and benevolence) but also by several other factors highlighted in the model above. The participant in this study pointed to integrity, empathy, benevolence, appreciation, ability, confidentiality, participation, approachability, openness, in-group and out-group, employee support, and leader–employee relationship as the factors that could potentially

give rise to trust in the case study organisation. Based on all the comments from the finding, this study extends the definition of trust-based leadership as stated below:

*This research will conceptualise the construct of trust-based leadership' as to how the leadership style, employee development and behaviours between leaders and employees in an organisation promote trusting relationships which could positively impact employee performance, engagement, and motivation.*

## **8.12 Conclusion**

The study's findings have been discussed in this chapter in the broader context of the previous empirical literature. The findings of the study have been presented from the perspective of existing empirical literature in this chapter. The research questions were answered by the outcomes of both the interviews and the literature review. The authors suggested and discussed an empirical model of trust-based leadership. The causal conditions for trust-based leadership (which include factors that give rise to trust) were discussed in the context of a developing economy. Specifically, the factors were discussed with reference to literature on trust and leadership.

In addition, intervening conditions that facilitate trust between leaders and employees in the context of a developing economy have also been discussed. Respondents highlighted these conditions as significant factors for trust-based leadership.

The effects of a trusting relationship, which is also an essential part of the model, were identified by the respondents and discussed and supported with literature. This effect includes the feeling of safety, inclusion, self-esteem, employee performance, and employee engagement. It was discovered in this study that previous research emphasised just three factors that give rise to trust (integrity, ability, and benevolence). This study found that while these three factors played a significant role in this research, other factors identified by respondents also play a key role in building trust in the case study organisation. There has not been any universally established causal condition for trust-based leadership in the context of a developing economy, and previous research has only focused on the behavioural aspects (Mayer et al., 1995). Finally, based on the empirical findings of this study, a definition of trust-based leadership was proposed and justified.

## **Chapter Nine - Conclusion**

### **9.0 Introduction**

This final chapter provides a summary of the study's findings in relation to the research aim, objectives, and questions. It also considered the implication of the findings and the ways in which the research findings, both theoretically and methodologically, contribute to the canon of knowledge. The implications of the findings for practice and policymakers, including the study's limitations, are discussed. The chapter concludes with a list of areas for future research and also some general conclusions.

### **9.1 Overview**

This thesis contains original findings on the concept of trust-based leadership, which are detailed in the sub-section below:

### **9.2 Conceptualising trust-based leadership**

The review of the literature on trust and leadership found that these two concepts had been studied and various definitions established. The only challenge was the inconsistency in defining the concepts. However, from the literature review, it was revealed that trust-based leadership concept is underdeveloped. The focus was mainly on a limited set of trust elements (integrity, ability, and benevolence) Mayer et al. (1995); Withener et al. (1998) and Hope-Hailey et al. (2014), ignoring the impact of leadership style, employee development, other factors, and context. Furthermore, in mainstream trust and leadership literature, there exists limited research in developing countries.

This study demonstrated that trust-based leadership is a relatively new research area that needs to be given much attention (theoretically and conceptually). The impact of trust-based leadership in an economy that is still developing has not received too much attention. As a means of evidence, it could be justified in the limited number of sources cited about trust-based leadership from the viewpoint of a developing economy—research conducted in a developing economy presents researchers with a challenging context. The behaviours and other trusting factors exhibited in a particular organisation might not present the same outcome in another because the trusting factor might differ (Acts, 2006). Particularly, the literature revealed the literature dearth on trust-based leadership in a developing economy. It is important to note that while this study

has focused on the concept of trust-based leadership, other scholars have conceptualised it as “trust in leadership” or “trust and leadership”. The authors of the most cited work in the literature review discussed leaders trustworthiness (Mayer et al. 1995, Hope-Hailey et al. 2014), while other scholars considered other aspects of trust while building on the earlier work of Dirks and Ferrin (2003).

### **9.3 Interviews**

This study was an exploration of the perception of employees regarding their leader’s trustworthy behaviour, which gives rise to trusting factors from employee’s perspectives and the leaders. This study took into account the perspective of the employees concerning trust-based leadership and leaders in a developing economy, owing to the assumption that previous research studies have focused on leaders and employees in developed countries (Dirk and Ferrin, 2003). This was decided in an effort to create a better picture and a view of reality. A better understanding of trust-based leadership was obtained by adopting an approach that incorporates different viewpoints.

This study adopted an interpretivist-relativist approach. The subjective experiences of leaders and employees in various departments of a public health sector in a developing economy context were used to build theory on trust-based leadership. Because the study’s goal was to understand rather than measure, it was regarded as fundamental to employ a strategy that gave voice to individual employees and leaders (Bluhm et al., 2011) and allowed them to discuss their perspectives on the elements that contribute to trust (Gartner et al., 1992; Smircich and Stubbart, 1985). This suggested a qualitative and case study approach, which was backed up by the study’s exploratory nature (Paul and Whittam, 2010; Yin, 2003). In-depth interviews were the vehicle used to gather information. Such an approach aids subsequent analysis, allowing for the examination of data patterns (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998; Paul et al., 2007a) and the extraction of rich contextual information and interpretations in an area that has not been thoroughly investigated previously (Howorth et al., 2004; Paul et al., 2007b).

As a result, face-to-face interviews with respondents were conducted. The construction of the interview protocol was informed by the study questions, aims, objectives, and literature evaluation. The respondents came from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, and as a result, they offered valuable data for the study. The factors believed to give rise to trust in the case study organisation, which might enhance their performance, were identified. Twelve themes

were identified (integrity, empathy, benevolence, appreciation and recognition, ability, confidentiality, participation, approachability, openness, in group and out-group, employee support, and leader-employee relationship), and these factors were divided into three main headings (leaders' behaviour, leadership style, and employee development). This study argued that these factors lead to a trusting relationship, which enhances the employees (feeling of safety, inclusion, increased performance, and motivation). The aim of this study was to understand the perception of employees and leaders regarding the factors that give rise to trust. The focus was on a developing economy, namely, Nigeria. The purpose was to understand how these factors build trust between the leaders and their employees. On the basis of empirical evidence, which is valid, a trust-based leadership model was developed.

These objectives (which were outlined in chapter one) through face-to-face interviews with the supervisors and employees in the case study organisation were fully achieved. In addition, two research questions were posed at the start of this study:

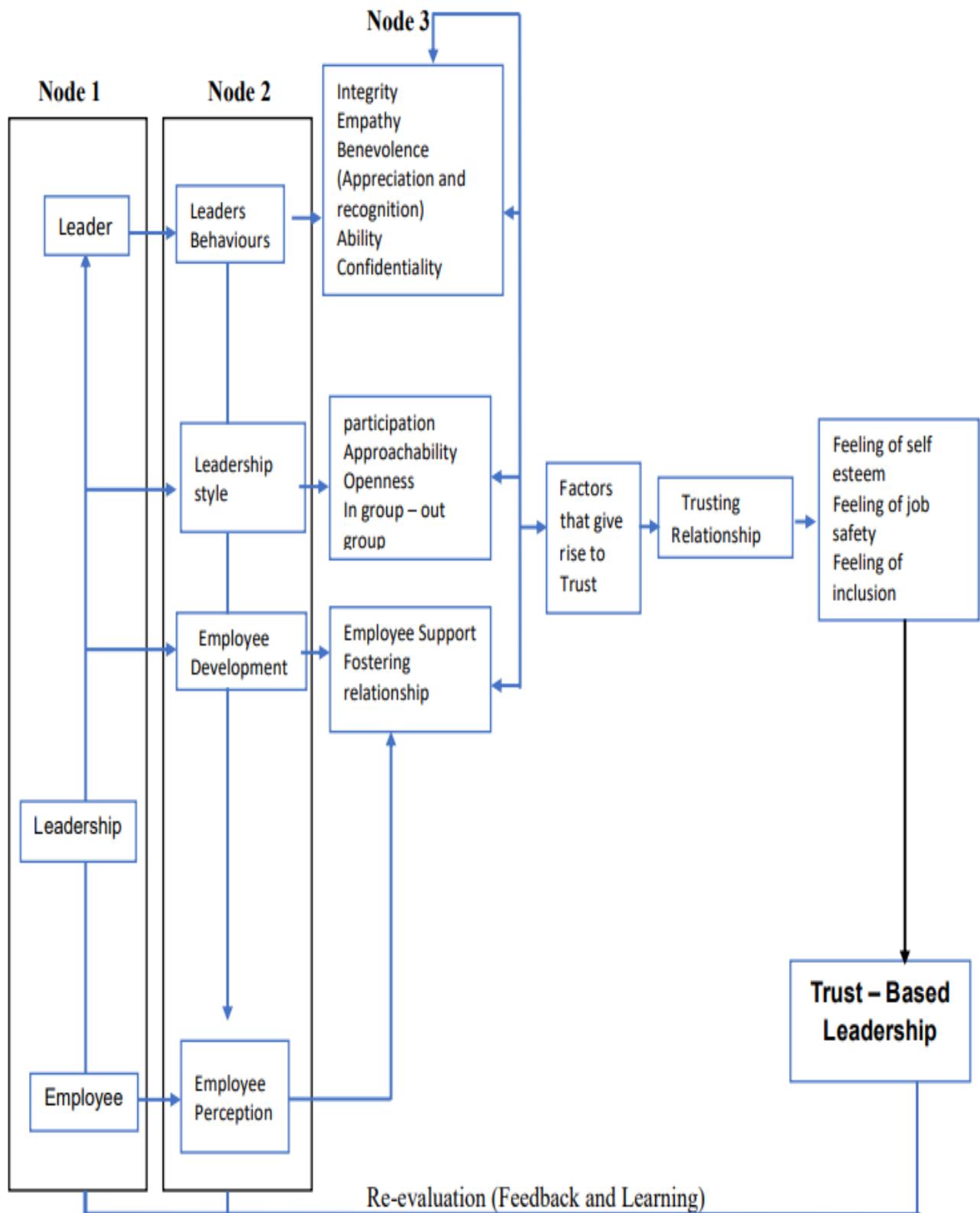
RQ1. What are the perceptions of employees and leaders about what gives rise to trust between them in a Nigerian public sector organisation?

RQ2. What are the perceptions of the effects of a trusting relationship in a Nigerian public sector organisation?

The findings from both the literature studies and the interviews have fully answered each question.

#### **9.4 Implications of the research findings and contribution to knowledge**

This study has contributed to the understanding of trust-based leadership in a developing economy in a variety of ways. The key contribution is the empirical model of trust-based leadership designed for organisational leaders and employees in the setting of a developing economy.



### **Trust-based leadership model**

This model accounts for key factors that give rise to trust in the context of a developing economy. Some of these factors have been identified by several scholars. However, the difference of the identified factors is in the mean of operationalisation in the case study organisation. This study also identified two new factors in the build-up to trust (leadership style and employee development). Furthermore, these factors could be different based on context. In addition, the study's findings provide a contribution to the theoretical, methodological, and practical understanding of trust-based leadership.

### **9.5 Theoretical contribution**

As stated in the previous sub-section, this research contributes to theory with a trust-based leadership model for organisation leaders in a developing economy. It is worth noting that this is the first qualitative study to offer such a trust-based leadership model for leaders in a developing country like Nigeria. A contribution to knowledge has been made by linking the research findings to the Mayer et al. (1995) trust model and other significant studies (e.g. Hope-Hailey et al. 2014) within the trust and leadership domain. The domain of trust-based leadership lacks a definitive framework on the trust-based leadership model. This study conceptualised trust-based leadership *how the leadership style, employee development and behaviours between leaders and employees in an organisation promote trusting relationships which could positively impact employee performance, engagement, and motivation.*

Most models identified three factors that give rise to trust based on the leader's trustworthy behaviours (Mayer et al. 1995). Hope-Hailey et al. identified four with the inclusion of predictability. Therefore, the proposed model provides a detailed description of trust-based leadership by maintaining the leader's behaviour with the inclusion of leadership style and employee development.

There has been a scarcity of research that focuses on trust-based leadership from the standpoint of a developing country. Through the literature review, there has been a little in-depth investigation of trust-based leadership from the perspective of a developing economy, according to the literature review. As a result, the problem was solved by looking at the Nigerian phenomena. The findings of this study contribute to leaders' and employees' awareness of the factors that could lead to trust in the case study organisation and in the context of a developing

country. The research findings are not only limited to the new reveal of leadership style and employee development. From the factors that give rise to trust, another significant contribution was the in-group and out-group concepts. This was one of the significant determinants of trust in the case study organisation, and thus, a contribution to the literature on trust-based leadership in developing economies has been achieved.

Furthermore, while the study focus was on trust-based leadership, the finding of the research bridge the gap in knowledge in the present body of literature by identifying the effects of a trusting relationship and are very relevant in a more holistic view of trust-based leadership. These effects include a feeling of self-esteem, feeling of job safety, feeling of inclusion, Increased performance, Employee engagement. From the mentioned effects, feeling of job safety and inclusion appears to be a new focus that can foster relationship in the case study organisation. As a result, this study findings answers the call for more conceptual frameworks of trust-based leadership to be developed by researchers (Renko et al., 2012b).

This study has also contributed to the conceptual definition of trust-based leadership. Previous research focused on the definition from the viewpoint of vulnerability, risk, leader's behaviour and leader employee relationship. However, this study developed new insight into this conceptual definition (leadership style, in-group and out-group and employee development).

## **9.6 Methodological contribution**

The lack of a qualitative dimension of trust-based leadership propelled my research forward and toward a better understanding of how supervisors demonstrate their trustworthiness in organisations via their daily behaviours in order to enhance employees' readiness to trust them. It appears that most trust and leadership study has been quantitatively investigated. This study employed the qualitative research method technique as the framework and guidance for creating new insight in order to contribute to the literature on developing trust between a leader and an employee. Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, (2015) analyse the components that make up the whole of the event, as well as outliers and unquantified organic gestures. Because quantitative approaches have dominated trust and leadership research, there is a need for empirical data combined with qualitative research methodologies to deepen and expand the understanding of trust between leaders and employees. According to Li (2011, p.17), "*it is the policy of the Journal of Trust Research to encourage qualitative methods without the prevailing bias toward quantitative methods.*" Thus there is a need to balance quantitative theory-testing with qualitative theory-building methods to achieve a proper rigour-relevance balance. Qualitative methods were

favoured rather than acquiring statistical data since there was a desire to acquire more natural insight into behaviour or when a phenomenon exists. The researcher aimed to look at the settings in which a leader exhibits factors that give rise to trust leading to trustworthiness and how this leads to beneficial behaviours. This study has contributed to methods by adopting qualitative techniques and case studies to understand the concept of trust-based leadership in a developing economy. This involved the use of triangulation.

Triangulation, according to Shenton (2004, p. 66), allows "...individual opinions and experiences to be tested against others, and ultimately a rich picture of the attitudes, needs, or behaviour of individuals under investigation to be formed based on the contribution of a range of people." The leader/follower strategy is well established in the domains of leadership and trust (e.g., Groves, 2005; Meindl, 1995), but in the setting where this research was conducted, leadership has been well represented while trust requires further investigation. Face-to-face interviews with supervisors and their employees yielded a more detailed description of trust-based leadership, which is also related to material in the existing literature. The study aimed to acquire a detailed description of trust-based leadership, and many viewpoints were employed to confirm such data. To acquire a deeper understanding of employee perception of their leaders' behaviour and social world, as well as how they make sense of their activities, a dual perspective of trust and leadership from both leader and their employees was used.

### **9.7 Implication for practice and policy**

The study makes several contributions to organisation practise and policy. This research was carried out in the public health sector of a developing nation, specifically Nigeria. The study of trust-based leadership magnifies the role of leadership style, in-group and out-group and employee development in the Nigeria health public sector. The trusting factors this study identified serve as a prerequisite to enhancing trust. The case study organisation can empower both leaders and employees by employing the findings suggested from this study to create means of developing the organisational actors toward building a trusting relationship. The trust-based leadership model also provides both leaders and employees with guidelines that can be put to use to foster trusting perceptions. The factors that give rise to trust need to be exhibited daily in order to maintain a trusting climate in organisations. Most importantly, leaders should design means through which they can develop the competence of employees who are perceived to be in the out-group. This can be done through learning and training, feedback systems, mentoring, and modelling.

This finding also takes into account leadership style. The style of leadership employed in an organisation might play a significant role in direct cause and effect relationships upon organisations and their success. In lieu of this, supervisors need to study and understand their employees to maintain trust. The findings of this research may also aid human resource/industrial/organisational managers in developing programmes that are centred on building trusting relationships with employees. These practices could assist in increasing trustworthiness at the organisational level by:

- Establishing opportunities for open discourse and conversations about trust
- Building trust across the organisation by establishing cross-team exchanges, including line managers in the process, and enhancing consistency.
- Selection and development procedures that promote objectivity and transparency lead to increased views of integrity, inclusivity, and thus higher levels of trust.
- Putting proper recognition in place for practices that contribute to the internal and trustworthiness of the organisation

The heroic, command-and-control leadership approach has become almost axiomatic in suppressing the creativity and energy of people in organisations. “The biggest tragedy....comes from people’s incapacity to have an intelligent discussion to find out what is true” (Glazer, 2019). The key aspect to recall regarding the approach a leader employs is that if employees are unhappy with leadership or are unsure about it, it allows those committed to the practice to engage in an authentic dialogue in order to reproduce or transform it – and in doing so, they are generating leadership. In a nutshell, we believe leadership to occur when social processes alter the trajectory of people’s engagement in practices. These traditions can be changed by anyone’s efforts or by the collective as a whole through collaborative engagement (Realin, 2011).”

The concept of trust-based leadership is of practical value and assistance to policymakers. This thesis will be helpful to stakeholders such as the federal ministry of health in making policy decisions and educate them on why trust-based leadership is so important in driving organisational success. However, due to the size of the participant involved in this study, this study remains valuable to their organisation. Furthermore, this thesis might offer policymakers, such as the Federal Republic of Nigeria’s government, ideas for solving the obstacles that individuals in this sector encounter.

## **9.8 Limitation of the study**

Like every other research in the field of business and management, this study has methodological limitations that should be addressed. The sample, mode of data collection, generalisability, and empirical model utilised in this work all have limitations:

### **9.8.1 Sample**

In sub-section x, the criteria for selecting participants for the study were outlined. As a result, the number of respondents was low, particularly among supervisors. However, because it was critical to engage employees who have related with their supervisors over a length of time, a purposeful sampling rather than a random sampling was better suited for the study. Another weakness of this study is the sample size. Future research with a larger sample size and a different industry sector could provide new or different insights into the growing theory of trust-based leadership.

### **9.8.2 Data Collection**

The effect of data collecting on the research is the study's second limitation. A semi-structured interview strategy was chosen as the data collection method for the study. Although this method is useful because of its flexibility, it can introduce bias in both the interviewee and the interviewer. The interviewer may show bias by interpreting responses in a particular manner, and the interviewee may introduce bias by withholding relevant information on the topic of interest (Saunders et al., 2012). However, by gathering substantial knowledge through literature reviews, conducting pilot interviews, finding relevant interview themes, and developing a proper guide, the overall bias was reduced, and interviewee prejudice was more discernible.

Leaders and employees may also give comments that may not accurately reflect their own experiences. Previous research Busenitz and Barney (1997) and Cooper et al. (1988) have indicated that organisational actors have an exaggerated perception of their experiences; thus, in order to address this concern, interviews with employees and leaders were conducted to validate data from the interviews with the organisational actors. It is also recognised that if the interview had taken place at a different time, the results would have been different; nonetheless, the goal of this study is to reflect reality at a specific period, not to ensure repetition. Alternative methodologies, such as ethnography, might have been appropriate for the research because

ethnography is distinguished by the richness of its world description (Blumberg et al., 2011). Following such an approach in the context of this research study may have also produced significant insights through a more in-depth understanding of the factors that give rise to trust. Due to time constraints, however, such an approach would not have been feasible. Ethnography, on the other hand, might be suited for future longitudinal studies.

### **9.8.3 Generalisation**

The lack of generalisation is qualitative research's fundamental weakness. However, because the objective of this study was not to generalise findings but to get a thorough outlook of trust-based leadership, this constraint has no bearing on the reliability of the findings. The goal of this study was not to provide objective evidence of reality but rather a socially constructed picture of it (Hammersley, 2002). The study concentrated on the public sector in order to collect the leaders' and employees' subjective perspectives. However, as previously stated, the proposed concept of transferability or fittingness by Lincoln and Guba (1985) needs to be considered; thus, rich and detailed information on the respondents' backgrounds and the study's setting was obtained to make the research more transferable to other settings.

### **9.8.4 Empirical model**

As previously stated, the domain of trust-based leadership currently lacks a definitive framework on factors that lead to trust, with most models focusing on integrity, ability, and benevolence (Mayer et al., 1995; Hope-Hailey et al., 2014). As a result, the proposed empirical model based on robust findings provides a solution. However, more research is needed to prove the validity of the empirical model presented in this work

## **9.9 Recommendation for future research**

This research on trust-based leadership includes first-of-its-kind empirical findings in the field of trust-based leadership. However, there are a variety of directions in which this research topic could be expanded. There are three major areas that have been identified:

### **9.9.1 Other sectors and countries**

Although the research was conducted in a thriving sector (Nigeria's public health sector), future research studies could look into other sectors to broaden the scope of the study. Researchers could validate and enhance the data on trust-based leadership by choosing a new industry and

increasing the number of participants in a developing economy. Furthermore, the study's scope might be expanded to include other developing countries. The picture of trust-based leadership given in this work can be confirmed by testing the empirical model in other developing countries.

### **9.9.2 Leadership style**

The style of leadership was identified in the data analysis. Many of the respondents in the study mentioned that a more favourable leadership style could be a factor that enhances trust. The respondents identified servant and exemplary leadership. While this can be attributed to the case study organisation. Further research on how different leadership styles could impact trust-based leadership could be a useful avenue to explore.

### **9.9.3 Employee development**

This study has shown that employee development is a concept that needs further investigation into how it builds trust. Further research could investigate the effect of employee development on trust-based leadership.

### **9.10 Alternative approaches**

Researchers should use different methodologies in future studies, such as ethnography, to better understand the factors that give rise to trust. Future longitudinal research may benefit from such a strategy.

### **9.11 Conclusion**

This study has examined relevant findings in an important sector in Nigeria, a developing country. This study identified the causal conditions and how they lead to several outcomes. The concept of trust-based leadership was examined through a qualitative approach that comprises semi-structured interviews with 20 respondents. A dual viewpoint from both leaders and employees was adopted for the study. This was useful in the triangulation of data. Furthermore, the literature review served as a resource that is valuable in recognising gaps in knowledge in the field, especially from the perspective of a developing economy.

This study also provided a vivid picture of trust-based leadership and proposed a trust-based leadership model of this phenomenon in a developing economy. This study has implications in both theory and practice. The study's findings give an empirical paradigm for trust-based leadership in a developing economy, a topic with a scarcity of literature. In practice, this research can be used as a resource for practitioners and policymakers in the Nigerian public health sector.

Therefore, this thesis has contributed (theoretically, empirically, and methodologically) that is valuable to knowledge. This investigation into trust-based leadership in a sector that is fast-moving and in a developing economy context has offered an insight that is new on this phenomenon.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1: Interview questions**

1. Can you tell me what you do here and what your job involves? (How long have you worked with your supervisor)?
2. How do you describe the working relationship between you and your supervisor? (Can you give an example of how this relationship affects your work)?
3. How will you describe your supervisor? (If given the role of a supervisor, what will you do differently)?
4. How will you describe your supervisors' actions towards you at work? (Does his/her action impact how you do your job)?
5. Can you give me an example where you have done something and received praise or appreciation from your supervisor? (How did it impact your work)?
6. Have you handled any project in your department without supervision (what was the outcome)? (What was your supervisors' reaction)? (How did you feel afterwards)?
7. Do you trust your supervisor? (What are your reasons for the chosen answer)?
8. On a scale of 1 – 10, where one is (my supervisor does not trust me), and ten represents (my supervisor trust me absolutely), how will you rate your supervisor? (Why the chosen number)?
9. What can make you lose trust in your supervisor?
10. What leadership qualities will you say your supervisor possesses? (Can you give an example of when he/she has exhibited this quality)?
11. What are the leadership qualities your leader needs to keep developing?
12. How will these qualities increase your trust in your supervisor?
13. Is there anything else I have not asked you that would help me understand how to gain trust

## **Appendix 2: Participant's information sheet**

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

Participant information sheet, debrief & consent form

Title of Project: **UNDERSTANDING TRUST BASED LEADERSHIP: AN ENQUIRY INTO THE NIGERIA PUBLIC SECTOR**

My name is Folorunsho Oladipupo. I am a PhD research student at York Business School. As part of my PhD program, I am researching into the importance of leadership and trust in Nigerian organisation public sector. I am hereby seeking your consent to use your experience in my research as an employee of the case study organisation to achieve the purpose of my research.

#### **1. What is the purpose of this investigation?**

The purpose of this investigate is to complete a research study undertaken by the researcher towards the attainment of a Doctoral degree.

This study aims to

- Consider the feelings and activities of employees and line-managers in your organisation.
- To recognise how the activities and daily task in your organisation encourages the employees to work effectively.
- To increase the awareness and the importance of employee and line-manager engagement in the Nigeria organisations.

#### **2. What will I be required to do?**

You will be required to discuss your work experiences and the dynamics of how employees and line-manager work together to achieve positive result. The researcher and the interviewee will agree to a time and venue where we can meet to discuss the activities in their organisation for a maximum time of 1 hour.

The discussion will hold in a more relaxed environment.

**3. Why have I been invited to take part**

You have been invited to take part in this study because as an employee of the case study organisation. Your experience will help in the development of this research. You will be encouraged to answer questions that will possibly have a positive impact on your organisation and you as an employee of the organisation. My research is concerned with understanding the dynamics of relationship between employees and their line-managers and how these could impact on employees' performance" in so doing, I will examine the nature of factors that help employees have a better relationship with their managers

**4. When/how will this take place?**

This will be a face to face discussion and will be arranged at a time and place of your own convenience.

**5. How often will I have to take part, and for how long?**

The interview will last for a maximum time of 1 hour

**6. What will happen to the information I provide you with?**

All information about you and your organisation will be treated in strict confidence and you will not be named in any written work arising from this study. Also, any audiotape material of you will be used solely for research

purposes and will be stored in a way only I and my supervisor will have access to it.

**7. What if I do not wish to take part or I change my mind during the research?**

Participation is totally voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without having to give any explanation. This will have no adverse effect on your work or your role in your organisation. You are free to withdraw from the process 2 weeks to the end of the research. If you wish to withdraw, please contact the Researcher, Research Supervisors or the ethics committee.

**8. Details of who to contact with any concerns during or after the study.**

<b>Researcher</b> <b>Folorunsho Oladipupo</b> <b>Doctoral Student</b> <b>York Business School.</b> <b>Oladipupo.foloruns@yorks.ac.uk</b>	<b><u>Research Supervisor</u></b> <b>Dr George Boak</b> <b>g.boak@yorks.ac.uk</b>  <b><u>Co Research Supervisor</u></b> <b>Dr Serge Koukpaki</b> <b>s.koukpaki@yorks.ac.uk</b>
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Thank you for reading this information. If you have further questions, please contact any of the above email.

NOTE: As a potential participant, you will be required to sign a consent form if you are happy to be involved in this project

If you have any questions/concerns, during or after the investigation, or wish to contact an independent person to whom any questions may be directed, or further information may be sought from, please contact:

**Nathalie Noret**  
Chair of the cross-school research ethics committee,

York St John University,  
Lord Mayors Walk,  
York,  
YO31 7EX  
Email: [n.noret@yorksja.ac.uk](mailto:n.noret@yorksja.ac.uk)

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Participant Consent Form**

#### **Understanding trust-based leadership: an enquiry into the Nigerian public sector**

#### **Consent to take part in research**

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
  
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
  
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
  
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
  
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
  
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
  
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
  
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be stored safely.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained and can be reused for further research.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of research participant

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Signature of participant

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Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

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Signature of researcher

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Date

