

**A method to support Leadership Effectiveness in a
Construction Project Organisation in Nigeria**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the



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by

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Abstract

Title: A method to support Leadership effectiveness in a construction project organisation in Nigeria

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Background: The leaders of a construction project organisation live and work in Abuja, the Nigerian capital. These leaders are the participants of this research and desire to improve their effectiveness. Why? The current recession in the Nigerian economy has adversely affected their organisation by drastically slowing down operations. The critical situation signifies the importance of this study which focuses on a \$10m (ten million USD) project that involves conceiving, designing, developing and selling of seventy-one houses. The planned lifespan of the project was thirty-five months but has seen an extension of another eighteen months. The extension came directly from the scarcity of funds. The challenge has called for the concerned group or the leaders of the organisation to rethink from an individualistic to a more collaborative approach (Raelin, 2015): an internal response to an external business challenge.

Research question and objectives of the study: The main research question is: How can a method be developed to improve leadership effectiveness in the construction project organisation? The objectives of the study are 1) Developing mutual collaborative behaviour, 2) Value creation from analogical reasoning, 3) Effective decision making from critical reflection. These objectives came from the three organisational issues that make up the organisational problem.

Methodology and methods of inquiry: The action research methodology was used to work on the organisational problem. A social constructionist perspective and the positive note of appreciative inquiry were used to define the challenge collectively, take action, and evaluate the action. The aim was to develop an ethical process to dealing with messy problems not by solving situations but by making them significantly better.

Outcomes: The result was the development of actionable knowledge for the participants from the three areas of collaboration, value creation and effective decision making. While these areas were developed from the three organisational issues, a collective action inquiry phase together

with an individual template analysis by the researcher revealed three other thought-provoking areas. These findings were 1) Integrative, 2) Questioning, and 3) Development and Learning approach to leadership effectiveness. There was also methodological significance as the action inquiry process highlighted leadership effectiveness as appreciative, developmental and as a continuously evolving process. Finally, there was the continuous application of critical reflexive practice as personal development for the researcher. Alternatively, there was a challenge of managing organisational politics which was confirmed as the most complex process in researching one's organisation.

Limitations: Although there were several limitations in this study the ones that stand out are: firstly, the action inquiry phase was majorly within the leadership team. Hence there was a limitation in the exploration with external stakeholders. Secondly, the participants were used to facts and figures to confirm the impact of inquiries like this one. As a result, a mixed-method study could have provided additional evidence on the findings of the study.

Keywords: Leadership effectiveness, project management, action research, case study research, template analysis

Declaration

I declare that no part of this thesis has been submitted previously for the award of a degree or any qualification to either this University or any other institution of learning.

Signed: Ahmed Muhammadu Ibrahim

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to Almighty God for granting me the possibility, understanding and resilience to start and finish the research journey often seen not as a test for knowledge alone but a test for endurance...

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my profound gratitude to my first supervisor, Dr. Haitham Nobanee, for the constant guidance throughout this study. Similarly, I am extending my appreciations to my second supervisors – Dr. Victoria Hanna and Dr Ali Rostron, for providing directional guidance towards the success of this research.

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Abbreviations

AR – Action Research

ARC – Action Research Cycle

AI – Appreciative Inquiry

CAL – Critical Action Learning

DBA – Doctor of Business Administration

PMBok – Project Management Body of Knowledge

PERT- Program Evaluation and Review Technique

CPM- Critical Path Method

SPL® - Strategic Project Leadership®

SWOT – Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat

WBS- Work Breakdown Structure

Chapter 1.

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Interestingly, there exists a vast amount of literature on leadership, and as of 2012, over eighty thousand books have been published in a decade (Allio, 2012). There is a wide variety and the information gathered does indeed cover all areas of human endeavour. Traditional organisational leadership features the individual that has power resources such as background, education and experience (Rost, 1993). Another description says leadership comes from the ability to influence others that are constructed from values like vision and the method of communicating it (Heifetz, 1998; Fraser, 2000). However, a more comprehensive and contemporary approach to the description of leadership involves developing a mission, meeting the organisational goals, maintaining attention and adapting to the ever-changing business environment. These features are achieved through leaderful practice, a new leadership approach that utilises the four tenets of being collective, concurrent, collaborative and compassionate (Raelin, 2003). The responsibility lies with those who lead and manage the organisation; central to this practice is away from the traditional personal traits and characteristics.

The work on leadership development will never end as new contexts arise; this includes the effort required to combine a variety of traits. The direction in contention here is contextualised by being in the construction project environment. The narrowing down simplifies the broadness in leadership at the same time it opens a broad array of subjects to consider. The most salient feature of leadership in this realm is - leadership by doing. That is leadership that acts on its practice for improvement which is a project organisation that aligns with the rethinking leadership approach (Raelin, 2015). This leadership approach invites participation and enhances mutual collaboration. Mutual collaborative leadership is increasingly recommended to assist construction project organisations especially in a developing country such as Nigeria (Toor & Ogunlana, 2009; Ofori & Toor, 2012) which is the location of this research.

1.2. The context of the situation – The Case

The organisation under consideration is a construction project organisation and located in the Nigerian capital, Abuja. The leadership of the organisation is the focus of the study where effectiveness is desired. More specifically, the study was facilitated by a researcher working with

a group of three other participants all belonging to the leadership team. The project was conceived in 2014 even though the organisation had been in existence doing construction work and selling finishing materials in housing construction. The organisation is currently involved in the development of residential housing in addition to supporting services such as facility management. Furthermore, the organisation provides primary and secondary infrastructure such as road construction and building services engineering.

The focus was on a particular project which involves conception, designing, building and selling seventy-one houses in a residential estate arrangement. The same process was used to develop two additional projects as they came up during this research. The brief of the main project is given in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Project Brief

S/NO	ITEM	DESCRIPTION
1	Project	Conception, Design, Build and Sell seventy-one residential houses
2	Organisation	Estate development, renovation and facilities management; provision of primary (roads and drainage) and secondary (water and power supply) infrastructure; building services engineering
3	Customers/Users	Individual and group investors, ownership for use such as rent and reselling
4	Need/Goal	Build and sell quality houses within the estate
5	Project Duration	35 months (From February 2014 - December 2016)
6	Project Budget	\$10m
7	Project Team	Leadership made up of a project and construction engineering team
8	Participants	Four members of the leadership team (researcher included)
9	Post graduation experience	22 years, 19 years, 7 years and 6 years (as at December, 2017)

The project is to be completed in thirty-five months, but due to external factors, the completion date has been shifted by another eighteen months. The indication is that even organisations with effective leadership can be devastated by the external business environment (Allio, 2012). Similarly, the leadership of the organisation is overwhelmed externally, where Nigeria fell into recession in addition to a change of leadership in government.

These current challenges in the construction business environment are a source of concern. The price of Oil and Gas sector as the mainstay of the Nigerian economy (where the business resides)

is down by more than 60% of its average value (Mitchell, 2016). Also, there is a change in government with the opposition party now the leadership of the country. The situation is characterised by policy reversal and other tight fiscal policies- these all combine to dilute the efforts of the leadership of this project.

When this construction project was conceived in February 2014, the currency exchange rate of the Nigerian naira to the United States dollar was \$1 to N176 (Nigerian Naira). In September 2016 it became \$1 to N305 at an official rate from the Central Bank and involved a bureaucratic process. So it is easier to get the US dollar at the parallel market but at an exchange rate of \$1 to N480- a fall of over 270% in 30 months. The exchange rate has affected the project since about 60% of building materials are imported using the US dollar (Aliyu cited in Okeke, 2016). These are usually on finishing items like sanitary wares, electrical fittings, doors, wall and floor tiles and roofing sheets.

An additional challenge is that the new government has enforced the Treasury Single Account or TSA which is kept in the custody of the Central Bank of Nigeria. It is an account that collects receivables and payments for all the government Ministries, Departments and Agencies directly and not through commercial banks as done before (CBN, 2015). The implication is that the government has withdrawn all its money from the commercial banks and other financial institutions (Adeolu, 2015). This withdrawal has further compounded the situation at the project organisation from the negative impact of this policy on financial institutions which are significant players in project financing. Finally, investors show extra caution when a new government is in place.

1.2.1. Organisational problem in a construction project organisation

The researcher is a consultant in Engineering, Projects, and Manufacturing and has over twenty years experience not only in consultancy but as an engineer in manufacturing and as a leader in projects. This experience has been used to work with the leader of the project organisation for seven years (2011 to date). The current construction project was conceived in early 2014, and in the same year the technical design, business projections and building approval were completed. However, actual construction did not start until the beginning of 2015. It is during the

implementation of the project that this organisational problem was identified – that is an external challenge that requires an internal response. The external challenges as discussed earlier were first, the recession in the economy from the fall in oil prices (Mitchell, 2016). Secondly, the change in the leadership in government in 2015 that came with tight fiscal policies directly affecting the construction industry (Chima, 2016). These significant reasons have led to the slowing down of the business and hence inability for the project to deliver on time.

The problematisation of the organisational problem came out of critical action learning activities that started during the researcher's doctoral coursework. It involved bringing observed organisational issues by the participants of the organisation (through the researcher) to the learning set members (doctoral colleagues). This kind of learning is a collaborative inquiry into an organisational problem and involves the application of programmed knowledge and questioning insight (Pedler, 2008).

The first issue: The leadership of the organisation is used to the hard skills of project management. For instance, there is over-reliance on the efficiency measures like the cost, quality, and timescales of the project. This weighting is an individualistic trait that comes with a lack of collaboration (Raelin 2003, 2010). A specific example is in the planning of this project where the hard facts were used to plan the project and not taking into account the qualitative aspects. More specifically, the cost and duration of the project were calculated without proper consideration for the qualitative elements such as the capabilities of the people in the leadership team that can mitigate the development of the project (Toor & Ogunlana, 2009; Ofori & Toor, 2012). This assertion was seen in the failure of several collaborative efforts with individual and institutional investors. In other words, the inability of the leadership team to collaborate has led to a significant non-negotiation and loss of business.

The second issue: The second issue is an extension of the first issue. The individualistic tendency and lack of collaboration have resulted in a deficiency in the creation of value necessary for the organisation to prosper (Freeman et al., 2010). Still, at the onset, the project was designed to be self-funding. This funding process generates revenue from individuals or

institutions that come and buy the houses and pay in installments. As a result, these payments will be used to develop the project. However, the down market resulting from a downturn in oil prices and the change in government has not allowed this to happen. Conversely, organisations around the same market are creating value through various means. This observation is an indication that these organisations are doing something different from this construction project. For instance, the clients of this organisation are consistently asking for value-added services to their purchase agreements. The inability of the leadership to collaborate and create value has been a revelation and additional issue for the organisation.

The third issue: Part of the considerations at the developmental stage was the type of houses required (size, location, design, low, medium or high density), what will be the price range, what is the expected delivery date of the project and towards the complete occupation of the seventy-one houses. Additionally, what will be the source of funding, what is the shape of the project team? These were the primary questions asked although the questions were never ending – only to give a guide answering of which brings clarity over time. Schon (1992, p. 183), however, calls the answers to these parameters as professionally planned and come from the assumptions of the designers of the project. Practically, these assumptions have failed, and evidence was seen in the slowing down of the project from the lack of funding. The issue is not from the absence of discussion (of funding) at the conception stage; the issue is that method was not critically analysed; this comes with planning superficially, with bias and experience that comes with much ambiguity (March, 2010). Again the result is seen in the current situation- a situation of low project performance. Elsewhere, the reflections on failed action learning, similar to the critical action learning in this doctoral coursework indicate that experiential assumptions are usually wrong in fast-changing businesses (Oliver, 2008, p. 81). Although the construction industry from the inside is not a fast-moving business, its external environment can be as dynamic as a fast-changing business. The evidence was seen in this project model where previous experience was used to assume the preference of self-funding that has failed in this situation. Summarily, this issue culminates into a lack of effective decision making.

1.2.2. Three Issues into one organisational problem

The researcher and the three participants collaboratively developed the three issues presented. The integration of these issues shows a lack of leadership effectiveness. Why? As Raelin (2003, p. 5-6) explains, it is the responsibility of the leadership to set the mission for the organisation, ensure the achievement of goals, sustain commitment in this cause while adapting to the ever-changing environment. Sustaining commitment to the dynamic environment requires continuous learning. For instance, to deliver the construction project requires new ways that are embedded in learning in a continuous mode.

The organisational problem is from a lack of Leadership effectiveness and is derived from the three areas of showing collaboration, value creation and effective decision making (Raelin, 2003; Freeman et al., 2010). While these are all broad areas, they are interconnected in this organisational context and are narrowed down to being the starting point to develop a specific method suitable for this organisation and not necessarily to other organisations. This method is in a manner that requires the participants to genuinely engage with these issues with the achievement of an in-depth understanding of this boundary of exploration. As a result, the inquiry is from the action research methodology– a suitable choice for researching these kinds of problematic situations.

1.2.3. Action research in organisational change

Rigg & Coghlan (2016) used Revans philosophy to connect action learning and action research. The philosophy contains the alpha, beta and gamma system: where Alpha is the inquiry into the organisational context as described in the organisational issues above, while action research here is the beta or inquiry into the resolution. Gamma is the learning taken away from these processes. Since action learning has assisted in highlighting the issues here, the action research continues with the resolution process and hence the purpose of this research.

Action research is a qualitative inquiry and is a type of social research carried out by a researcher and others that are either from organisations or a community of stakeholders – all concerned with the same organisational problem (Greenwood and Levin, 2007; Coghlan & Brannick, 2010).

Action research is quite useful in complex environments as it brings clarity from fuzziness (Gummesson, 2000). In this research, the fuzziness is the process of development of a precise method that assists in leadership effectiveness. Again action research takes input from daily activities while maintaining attention on the big picture (Dick et al., 2015). Here the AR cycles take input from daily activities, for instance, better collaboration toward the more significant aim of improving leadership effectiveness.

What is appealing is that it offers flexibility for use as an active case-study in the narration of an evolving story. Additionally, it is used as a traditional case-study where the report is used as a learning history to promote learning and reflection (Gummesson, 2000). Similarly, here the action research is aimed at developing a continuous learning mode, of trying to show continuous effectiveness in the face of challenges. In the realm of effectiveness, action research has also been used to improve training in healthcare (Chukwu, 2015). While this situation is not in healthcare, the methodology is useful in achieving leadership effectiveness. The achievement process has complexity from being in project environments that are characterised by the diverse requirements of stakeholders.

Hales and Chakravorty (2006) reveal the two major strengths of action research. First, it provides a rich source of information from the exploration and explanation of a situation that cannot be derived by statistical analysis. Secondly, it happens in a natural setting of the organisational issue rather than in isolation, as in the case of experimental laboratories.

Alternatively, action research has two major weaknesses: Firstly, Argyris and Schon (1996) note that leadership ineffectiveness usually comes from espousing a theory and not putting it to practical use – it remains at the advocacy level. The solution to this they reiterate is to carry out bouts of double-loop learning, where the framing of the situation is explored with the aim of reframing for a better resolution procedure. Secondly, Hales and Chakravorty (2006), say that it lacks generalizability: While this is true, this generalizability issue will be tackled with the mindset to use it as an opportunity for learning that can be taken away from each situation not directly but after the consideration of the variables in a given context.

On a final note, action research has been used with success in construction engineering and management (Azhar, Ahmad & Sein, 2010) and in project stakeholder management in

construction (Yang & Shen, 2015). Again it has been used in value co-creation with the interested parties (Dick et al., 2015), in organisational change (Sankaran & Kumar, 2010), and in the improvement of operations management (Coughlan & Coughlan, 2002). As a result, there is unrealised potential for having a better situation on the organisational issue together with the extrapolation of actionable knowledge to the academic and practitioner community (Anderson et al., 2015).

1.3. Method of improving Leadership effectiveness

Throughout this report, an argumentation method is used. It entails three elements: claim, data, and warrant (Gold, Holman & Thorpe, 2002). Claims are drawn from literature in this field of study, and many other sources of information such as engagements with participants and observations of a group and organisational dynamics. The insights are derived from critical thinking with the knowledge that there are multiple ways of knowing (Coughlan & Brannick, 2010).

Qualitative research is interpretive, and there are a variety of sources (data) that warrant these claims. However, these interpretations remain plausible only to the organisational context that is dependent on the researcher and participants. Again the knowledge gained can be extrapolated for broader use only after further processing from additional layers of critical thinking and reflection. The warrants come from experience, theory and in some cases a combination of both these sources. The combination brings the issues involved in organisation method studies. These studies do not have restrictions, and that is why they use multiple paradigms; the result is that a certain level of creativity is required (Buchanan & Bryman, 2007). For instance, varying subjects are connected such as psychology, sociology, economics, public policy, and history all resting on core business areas like finance and accounting, or marketing and sales. However, there has to be alignment, and in this study, this aligning comes out as a product that is to improve leadership effectiveness in the project organisation.

1.4. Research Title, Question and Objectives of the Study

An improvement in leadership effectiveness is presented in this action research study and is titled: A method to support Leadership Effectiveness in a construction project organisation in Nigeria. As a result, the research question is: “How can a method be developed to improve leadership effectiveness in the construction project organisation?”. It comes with three objectives that are qualitative developments (thinking and actions) derived from the three issues discussed earlier in the organisational problem. These objectives are: developing mutual collaborative behaviour, a value creation strategy and effective decision-making. A detailed discussion of these objectives is provided in the next chapter (section 2.8).

1.4.1. The purpose statement of this research

The purpose statement of this research is a connection between the subject and the research approach (Creswell, 2013). It is action research with an appreciative tone and is also a specific case study on a construction project organisation in Abuja, the Nigerian capital. The aim is to describe a method to support the leadership effectiveness of the organisation. The participants are all three members of the leadership team together with the researcher as a consultant and a member of the team. At this point, leadership effectiveness is the thinking and actions of the participants that demonstrates the way towards overcoming the current economic challenges of the organisation. While leadership effectiveness is not achieved at a go, beginning the journey and moving in a learning sphere is the main achievement. The process is through the application of the three objectives that are responses to the three organisational issues identified by the leadership team. These objectives are developing mutual collaborative behaviour, a value creation strategy and effective decision making in addition to looking for insights that come out of the analysis of the engagements.

1.5. Contribution of the Thesis

The significant contribution of the thesis was to provide an in-depth understanding of the organisational problem and to work towards achieving leadership effectiveness. This

achievement was explicitly designed to develop the researcher and the participants that aim to improve their effectiveness. The process is through trying to answer the research question that is narrowed down to three issues contained in the organisational problem. The primary contribution was actionable knowledge. That is in understanding why the problem is happening and knowing what to do about it (Tenkasi & Hay, 2004).

The study has been practically significant to the organisation from the findings of the research. There are five main areas in which this significance was evident:

1. Understanding of the organisational problem from the three objectives

The AR process has led the participants and researcher to a better understanding of the three issues that make up the organisational problem. These issues were a lack of collaboration, value creation and effective decision making. There is now new knowledge of identifying and problematising organisational issues going into the future.

2. The understanding and application of the Integrative approach

The study has also revealed the importance of the integrative approach to leadership effectiveness. It is integrative because the findings have shown that collaboration, value creation and effective decision-making work together to bring the best in leadership effectiveness. The integrative approach also includes combining the current technical background with leadership qualities. Finally, the integrative approach also requires that the participants combine the two significant areas of a questioning approach and development and learning approach to leadership effectiveness.

3. The understanding and application of the Questioning approach

There is an understanding that the questioning approach is the essential leadership tool especially when it comes to inquiry and problem resolution. It is through questioning that the issues were problematised and critically reflected before combining with suitable literature. Similarly, the questioning approach is the area that directed effort in aiming to minimise the adverse effects of personal and group biases that have been in the way of making effective decisions - one of the issues that make up the organisational problem. However, it is not any questioning- it is questioning that is appreciative, learner type and always seeking to open up opportunities.

4. The understanding and application of Development and Learning approach

The participants have variously identified development and learning as the key to achieving effectiveness. The research being social constructionist has identified several perspectives on development and learning. For instance, the importance of developing professionally through certification – this is in addition to the various ways of improving self towards strengthening the capacity to solve organisational problems. There is also the understanding that leadership desired is of the collaborative nature – although, in some circumstances, a competing approach is necessary. There is then the requirement for the development of taking a situational approach to leadership. The development and learning approach is in line with the development of leaders towards effectiveness (Gronn, 1997).

5. Methodological significance

While the primary aim of the research was to develop actionable knowledge, there was also the development of methodological significance. This knowledge came from an in-depth understanding that AR is a dynamic process and continues to change (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). This continuous change is the primary reason why particular attention is required to carry out a successful study. The study confirms the use of various tools and techniques in an AR setting irrespective of the philosophical tensions. Ethically and excitingly, there was the management of the tension from using the AR methodology based on the features of appreciative inquiry.

The detail of the actionable knowledge is discussed in chapter six and a summary of findings in chapter eight – the conclusion.

1.6. Structure of the thesis

Chapter one is the introduction. The main reason for the research study comes with the description of the particular case and the identification of the organisational issue. There is an additional discussion on action research as the methodology to be used and the method of achieving the practical aim or in this case the development of actionable knowledge. The chapter

closes with the presentation of the title, research question, objectives and the contribution of the study.

Chapter two is the literature review where the rethinking process of leadership is the main action. Here there is an extended discussion in the context of the research. It entails the discussion on project management with a particular focus on the leadership and the way towards improvement. It is this way that leads to the research question and the sub-questions that come out of the objectives of the study.

Chapter three is the methodology and methods of inquiry. The knowledge creation process is highlighted starting with the philosophical assumptions and then justifying the action research methodology. The positive note of appreciative inquiry is used with the aim of a fruitful engagement. The ethical review process is next before the description of the analytical strategy.

Chapter four is the action inquiry phase where the data is generated in three cycles. The cycles are engagements with the participants that produce desired and at other times undesired consequences. The first cycle is in appreciating leadership effectiveness, the second cycle is in developing it, and the third cycle is its identification as a continuously evolving process.

Chapter five is the template analysis procedure and entails a seven-step process of analysis (King, 2004). While chapter six is the combination of the findings of the action inquiry and template analysis; it also involves the response to the research questions and a further discussion on the high point of the research- that is the development of actionable knowledge for the organisation.

Chapter seven is personal reflections. It highlights the reflections on the outcome of the research and the personal development of the researcher. It begins with a discussion on what the researcher brings to the research. More specifically, from the professional and doctoral journey that involves not only critically reflexive practice (Cunliffe, 2004) but also an advanced approach towards becoming an effective doctoral practitioner.

In the final chapter (chapter eight), a summary of the key findings is presented. In other words, the practical relevance of the research and on a lower scale, its methodological significance. These findings come with study implications for both practice and theory. The limitations of the

research are also delineated and similar to traditional research, there is a discussion on the areas for future work.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review: Leadership Effectiveness in a Project Organisation

2.1. Introduction

The literature review has two aims: firstly, to give the background of the organisational problem that is embedded in the leadership of a construction project organisation in Nigeria. The aim is an indication that there is the requirement to give a full presentation on leadership, construction project management and their interrelationship all in a developing country Nigeria- a broad view of the overall subject. Secondly, to explore the literature that guides the study towards the solution procedure. More specifically, the organisational issues are developed into the objectives of the study - this assisted in making the actions operational.

The organisation is currently being run efficiently. In other words, from observation, company documents and the structures visible on the site, there is evidence of proper utilisation of cost and time, also, an above-average quality of work. However, there are complex issues that are hindering its effectiveness. One primary reason is the traditional leadership methods characterised by the typical individualistic and controlling traits (Raelin, 2003). This individualistic tendency is an indication that the researcher and the rest of the leadership team are all constituents of the problem (Revans, 1998). To go away from this conventional method is to shift to a new approach to leadership- one that is more collaborative in its activities (Raelin, 2003).

The shift towards this new approach is the challenge in the organisation and leads to the research question - How can a method be developed to improve leadership effectiveness in the construction project organisation?

The method is to shift to the new approach of leadership through working with high-level collaboration with stakeholders that are both internal and external to the organisation. The purpose of the collaboration is to have good working relationships and more importantly to create value for the organisation and its stakeholders (Freeman et al., 2010). Practically, the aim is for leadership to improve its working relationship so that an enlightened team will be functioning at a level that will contain most of the challenges found in the leadership and management of project organisations.

The structure of this literature review is designed to assist in developing actionable knowledge and starts with the rethinking of leadership in the organisation. The process begins with the

introduction of leadership and its collaborative nature. The discussion also involves taking construction project management both closely and afar in the Nigerian context; this consists of the construction industry, in general, and its critical success factors. The solution procedure is framed in such a way the organisational issues are explored in-depth (Kaplan, 2008). The aim is to develop the three objectives of mutual collaborative behaviour, value creation and effective decision making in the research participants who are the leaders of the project organisation.

2.2. The Leadership perspective in this study

As presented in the introduction, there exists a vast amount of literature on Leadership and its studies (Allio, 2012; Ofori & Toor, 2012). The aim here is not to bring a debate about which is the best leadership in general but to identify the best leadership perspective that suits the organisational problem. However, briefly, Ofori and Toor (2012), recently researched leadership development in construction projects with a systematic presentation of leadership development in the last half-century. Their findings show a movement in the approaches and indicate that in the '40s leadership research involved classified approaches such as motivation and traits. Between the '50s and '60s it was transactional, for instance, behavioural and contingency; Between the '70s and '80s, leadership was seen as the transformational and charismatic type. Finally, the contemporary approach to leadership is now seen from the human capital side of utilising a multi-cultural and multidisciplinary approach. Some of the works cited by Ofori and Toor (2012) include the theory behind leadership effectiveness (Fielder, 1967); its reciprocal nature (Burns, 1978); its challenges (Bennis, 1989); in organisations (Yukl; 1989); as persuasion (Gardner, 1990); as integrative (Chemers, 1997). Other areas are the concurrent, collective, collaborative and compassionate (Raelin, 2003); as situational (Vroom & Jago, 2007); as trait-based (Zaccaro, 2007) as an art (Manning & Curtis, 2012); from theories (Allio; 2012) to mention a few.

Ofori and Toor's (2012) narrowed down the leadership perspective to collaboration as the key to success in any activity; in other words, success is highly dependent on the project leadership (Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996). Similarly, here the leadership of this organisation is responsible for overcoming all the challenges that the external environment presents to the organisation; this is

together with identifying a suitable internal response mechanism to these endless challenges (Kotter, 2001). That is the broad perspective taken in this research although a more operational approach is developed during this research.

2.3. The presence of a consultant as researcher in the project organisation

This construction project organisational structure is made up of four layers although there are no clear-cut boundaries between these layers. That is from the site workmen/assistants, artisans/subcontractors, professionals/project managers and the project director/project leadership consultant. There are other support workers such as the security, drivers and other members that carry out clerical/office duties. The focus is on the leadership team (as the participants of the research) and is made up of a quantity surveyor, an engineer, the project director (project leader) and the researcher who is also a Consultant to the organisation. There are other construction and business professionals like architects, builders, building services engineers and marketing and legal consultants that are not members of the organisation – they are on a part-time basis and are not permanent staff.

As mentioned in the introduction the researcher has been working with the project leader from 2011 to date on a consultancy basis in the areas of engineering and construction project management. More specifically, the working relationship is on technical issues and business problems for the organisation. However, since 2013 – the start of the researcher's doctoral journey the mode of working is different with the project director. The difference is that the critical action learning activities mentioned in the introduction have brought a method of problematising of an organisational issue. Not just any issue but an issue that is connected with many variables and does not have a single answer – only a better situation (Pedler, 2008). The procedure involves framing of a problem that is directed at the solution (Kaplan, 2008). The method of problematising aligns with double-loop learning which assists managers in framing problematic situations with the aim of having a better situation (Argyris & Schon, 1996).

Although the researcher has been facilitating the framing of the organisational issues into an organisational problem, the ideas did not come as a unitary decision-making process. For instance, when the researcher took the doctoral practitioner course, the issue that came up then

was how to develop and retain professionals in a new project. In another course, a crisis was the issue where there was a significant loss of client leading to a significant loss of revenue. In the knowledge creation course, the issue was to develop agile strategic decision making in the organisation. These are all instances where the researcher as consultant used preunderstanding of the organisation to define the issue (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). However, going further with the development of the researcher and organisational members, there was more skill in going deeper to uncover the underlying organisational issues that are worthy of research. As a result, after taking six additional courses and a doctoral development plan the organisational issues were collectively narrowed down to a lack of collaboration that mitigates value creation and effective decision making.

The researcher brings an understanding of leadership – The understanding in this way is about having a systematic approach to the interconnection between the external and internal environments of the organisation. At the centre of this kind of leadership is collaboration (Grint, 2005; Raelin, 2003) that is of interest to this research. On a final note, the knowledge base and use of theories to understand the organisational problem is the difference between being a consultant and being a researcher (Azhar, Ahmad & Sein, 2010).

2.4. Collaboration and Leadership effectiveness

Gray (1989) describes collaboration as the process through which parties tackle problems from taking different perspectives and using the differences creatively to find solutions. The description suits the organisational issue in two ways; firstly, it brings different parties to work on a problem and secondly it brings out the creativity in the engagement (Axelrod, 2001). The connection here is a significant reason why some negotiations in the organisation have led to disagreements in implementing collaborative efforts.

Currently, the mode of operation in the organisation is more serial than concurrent, more individual than collective and more controlling than collaborative (Raelin, 2003). Why is it not collaborative? From observation, one of the reasons is that not everyone in the team can speak for the entire team (Raelin, 2004). The issue is also related to the complexity of interaction between humans that see power and ideology issues (Stacey, 2011). The issues in power are not

necessarily seen in positional power (from authority) or level in the organisation, they also come from the participant's use of either knowledge power or the use of networks (Mechanic, 1962).

There is also the possibility of the individualistic traits coming from a broader issue- where technical professionals come with objectivist backgrounds - the firm belief in only facts and figures (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). This trait is evident in the mode of the design of this project where mostly programmed knowledge was used with less emphasis on the qualitative elements (Pedler, 2008). In contradiction to the support for collaboration, Steiner (1995) says that engineers need the individualistic trait that is required for innovation which mitigates these qualitative elements.

Another reason for the lack of collaboration can be linked to the diversity in requirements of stakeholders which oppose the objectives of this construction project organisation (Freeman et al., 2010). For instance, the material suppliers to the project are highly interested stakeholders to the organisation. However, they operate with the objective of negotiating the highest price while the organisation is looking to procure good quality items at discounted prices. This tension is not new and is ever present in the dealings with most of the suppliers. Similarly, as the houses developed are for sale at specific prices, the buyers try to negotiate additional value before signing the sales agreements. For instance, there is a persistent request for better quality items for use in finishing the houses without any support such as paying a higher price. This request is challenging to the project leadership due to the scarcity of funds, and these types of requests erode the profit of the business.

In these examples, the leadership team appears to lack the necessary skills that will assist in collaboration. Taking a perspective from Raelin (2015), the effort in research is wasted in trying to look for leadership in where it is not there. Accordingly, he describes leadership as a collective set of activities carried out together – away from the individualistic trait. Therefore, it is necessary to rethinking leadership as an option and although like the way Allio (2012) discusses the vast amount of work done on leadership, the organisational issue starts from a very critical look at collaboration and the way it leads to value creation and effective decision making.

Raelin is the creator and advocates for developing leaderful practice (2003, 2010). A kind of leadership that is centred around four tenets of being concurrent, collective, collaborative and

compassionate. This work is about taking one of the tenets that are collaborative, not because the other tenets are of less value but because it is at the centre of issues in this organisation. Again Raelin (2003a) presents the American business community as paying the highest attention to leadership, a leadership with charisma. This type of leadership is seen in the individual with the personal inspiration to resolve organisational issues mainly from uniquely observing the environment and developing visions that are invisible to others. Here charisma derives from the Greek word for 'gift'; so these types of leaders are gifted – but gifted individuals are rare, and hence the development of leadership from a collaborative perspective can contribute to the organisation to overcome its primary challenge. Finally, collaboration may not be the solution to the organisational issue; however, it can bring avenues where leaderships invite participation in resolving problematic situations (Huxham, 2003). This element of collaboration is essential in viewing the value that can be gained and towards effective decision making in this organisation.

2.4.1. Why not collaborative leadership in a construction project organisation?

In presenting the organisational issue, collaboration was the highlight of the issues. However, with a more in-depth exploration of the problem, there was an additional revelation that the lack of collaboration was evident in two areas: a deficiency in value creation and effective decision making. What kind of value is required for the progress of the organisation? The sort of value is derived from collaborative efforts. For instance, meeting with interested investors and at the end ensure either a sale or construction materials are supplied in exchange for a house; in simple terms advancing the project. Again it does not stop there since the investors have to be given a significant discount or some other form of incentive. These kinds of engagements are quite tricky and end in either deadlocks or conflicts (Malhotra, 2016). For example, at the time of assessing the organisational issues, these tendencies were observed every week, both within the leadership team and with clients. The outcomes shown were competitive behaviour where one party must win at all cost (Raelin, 2003, p. 184).

Secondly, the lack of effective decision making has contributed to the organisational issue. Research on decision making is not new, and a vast amount of literature exists (Bazerman & Moore, 2012; Kahneman, 2011). There is no attempt to narrate the debates on effective decision

making here since a unique situation is the interest. The interest is in the lack of making proper assessments of projects before implementation. As it was mentioned in the organisational issue, there were suggestions by business consultants to consider seriously the effect of a change in the external business environment and how it may affect the business. Effective decision making comes from the consideration of programmed knowledge and questioning insight (Pedler, 2008). In this case, using the project management variables to define, plan and execute the project and additionally question the opportunities and threats potentially involved in the project.

Finally, apart from collaboration, value creation and effective decision making are the constituent elements of the organisational problem. Although they are related, as collaboration appears to be the source of the other two issues, they are not neutral themselves. Hence the area of research and action is not collaboration alone but includes value creation and effective decision making.

2.5. Project Management and the organisational problem

Project management as described by the Project Management Institute Body of Knowledge is the application of tools and techniques to achieve set requirements (PMI, 2013). While the office of the government of Commerce in the UK uses the PProjects IN Controlled Environments or PRINCE2 and describes it as a management environment aimed at achieving a business product. The highlight in this description is the practice of balancing the prescribed plan in the beginning to adapting it to the changes as the project develops (Phillips, 2012). From a project management perspective, that is precisely what the project leadership team is trying to achieve. In other words, the implementation of the project plan and guidance of the project to overcome changes in the business environment; this is to fulfill the operations of timely completion, managing costs and providing the right quality (Chitkara, 2009).

More specifically, the deliverables are the timely completion and sales of fifty-four houses out of a total of seventy-one. The remaining seventeen houses are not for sale and belong to the landowners as part of their equity contribution. The cost and quality measures are not the issue. It is the timely completion that is the main issue. Identified from the paucity of funds; this situation is not new especially in developing countries (Ofori & Toor, 2012). Nigeria, where the project is

situated, is currently in recession (Mitchell, 2016) with a resultant effect that not only the construction industry/real estate sector has slowed down, but a decline is also seen in other areas like manufacturing, trade, transport, finance and government (RTC, 2016). Other sources affect the timely completion of construction projects, but before then, there is a brief discussion on the background of the housing sector in Nigeria.

2.5.1. Housing construction in Nigeria

The context of the research is on a construction project in Nigeria; more closely, in the development of houses for sale in the Nigerian capital, Abuja. According to Kelly (2015), the housing deficit in Nigeria is currently between 17-23 million units in a population of over 170 million people. Also, the construction industry contributes just 8% to the GDP as opposed to between 30-70% found in developed countries.

A discussion on the organisational issues highlighted the lack of funds and an improper project appraisal (Okpala, 1991). This statement still holds today (2018), where the lack of funds and improper project appraisal has affected this project. Furthermore, the mechanistic projections carried out at the planning stages were quantitatively based and have confirmed to be grossly inadequate from the lack of qualitative analysis suggested by business consultants at the planning stages. The omissions of the probable risks have significantly affected the project performance (PMI, 2013). These reasons have intensified that lack of collaboration towards value creation and effective decision making.

A further outcome is the expectation of additional costs from time extensions (Aibinu & Jagboro, 2002). This extension of about eighteen months projected will come with other costs that can exceed 17% of the initial expenses (Aibinu & Jagboro, 2002, p.598). At the moment there is no guarantee that the completion will not bring other hidden costs outside the projected amount.

Odusami, Iyagba and Omirin (2003) explored the relationship between the project leadership, team composition and project performance. The results of the exploration suggest that project leaders are usually professionals in the construction industry such as civil engineers, architects, builders, building services engineers and quantity surveyors. There seemed to be no effect on the

difference in these professions, but that additional postgraduate qualification together with related experience in construction projects made a significant difference. The inadequacy again highlights a deficiency in leadership qualities as projects usually maintain a focus on quantitative performance - a bias that also inhibits the progress in qualitative research in construction projects (Ofori & Toor, 2012).

Finally, leadership is the primary requirement to answer problems of the housing construction in Nigeria (Ofori & Toor, 2012). More specifically, is to solve the leadership problems of this organisation- the quest calls for an in-depth understanding of the multivariate problems. These problems are both technical in the operations of the project and the dynamics of complexity found in developing productive engagements with others (Stacey, 2011).

2.5.2. Critical Success Factors in Construction

The question here is in asking the essential factors required to overcome the challenge in the project organisation. The traditional approach and to an expert project manager, a construction project is successful when it is within time, cost and quality achieved through the management of the project team and organisation of resources (Chitkara, 2009). Similarly, White and Fortune (2006) present a more generic framework, which says success in projects has to come from considering defined criteria. These criteria are the support of senior management, having a realistic schedule; adequate resources clear goals and requirements, a suitable organisational structure and more specifically, the competence of the project manager or project management team. Alternatively, China is by far the leader in the construction industry and accounting for up to 70% in South-East Asia (MarketLine, 2012). The criterion it uses to measure project success is not the management of the cost, quality and time variables alone. The project is successful based on the quality and quantity of meaningful relationships (*guanxi*) built over the cycle of a project (Wang & Huang, 2006).

The research approach here is therefore not the full pre-planning towards control and monitoring. This approach deals with collaboration within the leadership team and with clients; a type of collaboration that sees the use of 'soft power' of asking the right questions (Marquardt, 2014) and not necessarily the use of 'hard power' found in critical or tame problems. The increased

requirement for collaborative power is the contemporary approach to leading projects as the problems are enormous and usually messy (Grint, 2005).

2.6. Leadership Effectiveness and the organisational problem

Leadership effectiveness has no standard formula because it is an art and requires more skill than knowledge (Manning & Curtis, 2012, p. 54). From this generic statement, it follows that every situation has its circumstance. However, the argument here is that for confidence to develop and practice the skill there has to be knowledge: since even the anxiety under challenging situations is dampened by the anxiety to learn (Coutu, 2002). The learning anxiety becomes relevant when the leadership begins thinking of business failure that is tied to economic reasons (Arditi, Koksall & Kale, 2000). Currently, the organisation has not headed for failure because it has no debt and has low expenditure from a lean organisation (Womack & Jones, 2003) and an efficient procurement system (Chopra & Meindl, 2001). The efficiency in procurement is evident from company records where materials are supplied at discounted rates derived from bulk purchases. In addition to lean management, the labour rates for sub-contracts are also low from substantial volume work/unit discounts.

Alternatively, the organisation can still think of failure from the lack of cash flow that has significantly slowed down the site operations. The financial indicators in the business are essential for the leaders to consider since they reveal the financial health of the organisation (Kangari, Farid & Elgharid, 1992). A five-year study from 1989-1993 showed that over 80% of the failures came from insufficient profits- 26.71%, industry weakness- 22.73%, heavy operating expenses- 17.80%, insufficient capital- 8.29% and institutional debt- 5.93% (Arditi, Koksall & Kale, 2000, p. 130). It is only industry weakness that is not a budgetary issue and which not much can be done. What can be done is to work on the human issues that can either be internal or external. It is internal that is between the members of the leadership team and external between the leadership team and their clients or sources of funds.

The financial approach has been directly tied to a quantitative approach and hence to the efficiency of the project while effectiveness involves these measures in addition to the qualitative

aspects. Therefore the need arises to explore the similarities and differences between efficiency and effectiveness.

2.6.1. Leadership Efficiency and Effectiveness

In the project management sphere, Efficiency and Effectiveness are similar and often used interchangeably. The application of these terms leads to the blurring of efforts in achieving project deliverables utilised by both academics and practitioners (Sundqvist, Backlund & Chroner, 2014). Efficiency is defined as all that meets the internal requirements for cost, margins, asset utilisation and other measurable parameters, while effectiveness is to satisfy all customer requirements (DeToro & McCabe, 1997, p. 56). Efficiency is then based on management of variables while effectiveness goes beyond efficiency and suits leadership through developing a strategy to satisfy the customer requirements who in the end determine the organisation's existence.

There are several reasons for the choice of effectiveness over the efficiency of leadership in this context. The leadership is currently doing an excellent job in managing the project efficiency variables. The additional requirement is effectiveness- a more holistic approach to leadership and deals with achieving efficiency in addition to the qualitative aspect of the business. In this respect, efficiency takes on realist ontology while effectiveness takes both a realist and relativist ontology. Similarly, efficiency is about positivist/objectivist epistemology while effectiveness takes the positivist/objectivist and constructionist/subjectivist epistemologies at the same time (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Efficiency is about scientific analysis while effectiveness adds craft from experience and insight from artistic thinking (Mintzberg, 2004). Efficiency is about being missionary in operations while Effectiveness is about being visionary and strategic. Toor and Ofori (2008a, p. 67) agree and say that leaders are concerned with effectiveness while managers are concerned with efficiency.

The predictability and stable nature of efficiency require the operational research activities of optimisation. The researcher has held the efficiency and optimisation techniques from working in the manufacturing sector for more than twelve years. Alternatively, the complexity of effectiveness demands collaboration (where the researcher and participants are deficient) -

majorly due to its unpredictability and instability (Grint, 2005). It is the collaboration that brings in the need for democracy and towards leading change and is the reason for the consideration of leadership effectiveness and not management efficiency in this study.

2.7. Leadership Effectiveness in construction projects

Organisational effectiveness is the primary indicator of leadership effectiveness and strategically is the outcome of successfully managing uncertainties and converting them to opportunities (Kolltveit, Karlsen & Gronhaug, 2002). The proposition comes from the multivariate construct either implicitly or explicitly. Organisational effectiveness is the alignment that comes from achieving the set objectives while maintaining a balance between the internal and external demands. For instance, uncertainty as a condition for error has a corrective response measure with an inquiry as a resolution process (Argyris & Schon, 1996).

These demands are closer to management activities from trying to answer the how and when rather than the quest for what and why (Bennis, cited in Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2012, p. 100). The reason for bringing this to a leadership discussion is the misunderstanding between leadership and management practice. Leadership involves a broader scope from the way it combines both the relativist that is constructionist in nature and objectivist positions which entails facts and figures; where management usually entails more objectivist approaches alone (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). The emphasis is in the way management always analyses rather than crafts situations, is missionary rather than visionary is more operational than strategic, is oriented towards resources than people and demands stability than change and has more individualistic rather than a collective approach (Zaleznik, 1992; Toor & Ofori, 2008). While this is not a debate about management versus leadership, it is worthwhile mentioning the underpinning of this research in the way leadership is intensified rather than management in the quest to strategise the project organisation.

In the leadership effectiveness found in project environments, effectiveness comes from understanding the situation and then moving towards mutually collaborating with others. The mutual collaboration in the context here is with project stakeholders towards value creation. Collaboration towards value creation is at the heart of this research study and discussion will

continue more extensively in this direction. Finally, in support of the collaborative idea, rather than asking the way to become an effective leader, it is better to ask the best way to contribute to the leadership process. The indication is that effectiveness in leadership is a social and not an individual process (Drath & Palus, 1994). In this case, the effectiveness is from the professionals in the various fields of the real estate business; these professionals have expert knowledge and hence cannot be managed but instead can be supported to be more productive (Drucker, 2010).

2.8. Research Aim, Objectives and Questions

The previous sections have described the broader and narrower concepts of the organisational context. Here the aim is to connect the practical challenges to theoretical ideas that will assist in gaining a better understanding and towards resolution (Anderson et al., 2015).

The actionable knowledge in this study is a response to the three issues in the organisational problem earlier described in the introduction. Holistically, the thinking and actions on these issues make up the research study which aims to explore a method that can assist the leadership of the project organisation. The title of the study is “A method to support Leadership effectiveness in a construction project organisation in Nigeria”.

The research question is “How can a method be developed to improve leadership effectiveness in the construction project organisation?”

The research question is made up of three objectives that translate to research questions. These objectives are specific developments in mutual collaborative behaviour (directed at individualistic behaviour), a value creation strategy (directed at the lack of value creation), and effective decision-making (directed at the inadequate decision making). The integration of these objectives is the pinnacle of achieving leadership effectiveness. In other words, the actionable knowledge developed in this action research study. The three objectives are further developed below.

2.8.1. Mutual Collaborative Behaviour

The first objective is a response to the first organisational issue that is about the individualistic trait of members of the leadership team. According to Toor and Ogunlana (2009), the negative attributes of the leadership team can lead to the overall ineffectiveness of the project. The individualistic trait is a negative attribute that has hindered the effectiveness of the leadership team.

On a broader scale, this individualistic trait is from the reliance on hard facts by engineers and scientists (Steiner, 1995) and less so on the soft skills of interaction highlighting a lack of leadership skills (Grint, 2005). For instance, in Nigeria, national planning and policy making is left in the hands of politicians, economists, and sociologists that is from their better use of soft skills and hence better leadership capabilities (Grint, 2005). Conversely, these soft skills are lacking in engineering/construction/project management that is the backbone of national development and is seen as operational rather than a strategy that guides policy (Adeola, 2009).

Again there is contention here as some authors argue that traits alone do not affect leadership effectiveness (Vroom & Jago, 2007; Zaccaro 2007); they work in combination with other situational factors (Manning & Curtis, 2012). However, this organisational context makes it relevant and is given significance – in other words, the effort is directed on the organisational issue. The individualistic trait here differs from individualized leadership which focuses only on leader-follower relationships (Wallis, Yammarino & Feyerherm, 2011).

As a result, collaboration is required and is in alignment with the conversation with the situation (Schon, 1983). Collaboration is one of the four tenets of leaderful practice and more importantly towards rethinking leadership (Raelin, 2015). The other tenets are being collective, concurrent and compassionate in behaviour (Raelin, 2010, p. xvi). However, Raelin presents collaboration mainly from the several ways it is brought to leadership practice, and although this aspect is our interest here, a comprehensive definition of collaboration is not provided. For better understanding, there are several definitions of collaboration, but the closest one to this research and for a more extensive application is Gray's (1989) definition who says that:

“Collaboration is the process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively manage their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their limited vision of what is possible.”

Collaboration in the context here is from two areas; firstly, is to learn mutually from analysing and synthesising multiple perspectives and secondly, to translate it to mutual benefit in business relationships. Mutual learning comes from an interaction between the members of the leadership and also from dealing with a variety of groups that add value from business relationships. For instance, to have high-advocacy and inquiry away from either high-advocacy or high-inquiry alone that leads to imposing or interrogating or even having low-inquiry and advocacy that leads to withdrawing (Action design, cited in Raelin, 2010, p. 42). A useful model is Conflict Management skills (Thomas, 1977). The model aims to have mutual collaborative behaviour as an outcome of having high assertiveness and cooperation. That is away from the negatives of competing that has high assertiveness and low cooperation: avoiding that has low assertiveness and cooperation: accommodating that is high on cooperation and low on assertiveness: and the middle ground of compromising that is deficient in both assertiveness and cooperation.

In the action and decision to be taken on the collaboration objective here; research participants are coming together primarily to improve their personal, interpersonal, team, organisation and network level skills towards mutual collaboration (Raelin, 2010). However, there is no guarantee that the objective will be achieved even though awareness has been created. The researchers with awareness may appreciate the situation (Wood & Gray, 1991) one of the reasons for using some attributes of appreciative inquiry- the detailed discussion of which comes in chapter three- the methodology.

Finally, collaboration in this organisation is about turning collaborative relationships firstly for learning purposes and secondly into business results. These elements combine to demonstrate leadership effectiveness in the project organisation.

The first research question here is: How can collaboration be used constructively to improve leadership effectiveness?

2.8.2. Value creation from analogical reasoning

The second objective is an extension of mutual collaborative behaviour and is a response to the second organisational issue. That is the way stakeholders come together to constructively develop a value creation strategy (Freeman et al., 2010). Stakeholders in this business are the leadership team, shareholders, employees, artisans, suppliers, sub-contractors, and clients, financial and regulatory institutions; in fact, all those that can affect or be affected by the running of the project (Freeman et al., 2010). The most critical stakeholders in focus are those connected to this organisational issue; those that are engaged towards value creation (Gronroos, 2008). Practically, they are the individual and institutional investors that hold resources necessary for the completion of this project (Frooman, 1999).

The organisational issue is about consistent non-negotiation and loss of business; these are outcomes that usually come from opposing parties (Malhotra & Bazerman, 2008). According to Malhotra (2016), there is the requirement for creativity without using economic or other forms of power. Creativity and creative thinking come from analogy (Shen & Lai, 2014). Although other types of creativity exist, it is most useful in making effective negotiators (Nadler, Thompson & Van Boven, 2003).

Gick and Holyoak (1980) further describe analogical reasoning as a process of drawing from previous learning and experiences and mapping it with the current organisational situation. However, it has to undergo a rigorous process of comparing and contrasting the similarities and differences, past and present situations before application. Again the learning and experiences do not necessarily have to come from the same organisation as these are too few but from a wide array of instances. This approach includes the deep thinking of comparing a scenario from, for example, soccer - a sport and taking away the insight and applying it to the leadership effectiveness of a construction project organisation. Hence value creation does not have to be a special theory; it can be a substantial theory or idea that is of practical importance to the organisation (Anderson et al., 2015).

As a consultant, the researcher has used analogical reasoning with a reasonable measure of success. Indeed members of the leadership of the project organisation have all used analogical reasoning in one way or the other. The difference is that it was done subconsciously. Maximum

benefit is achieved when the analogical reasoning process is done intentionally (Gick & Holyoak, 1980). The gains of analogical reasoning demand a breadth of experience that comes from a wide array of businesses and equally important is the depth which is provided by the other research participants. The depth comes from the deep understanding of the local situation specific to the organisation. Of importance is not to take situations superficially, but go down to the roots and consider the assumptions involved (Gavetti & Rivkin, 2005).

The second research question here is: How can analogical reasoning be used towards value creation?

2.8.3. Effective decision-making from critical reflection

The third organisational issue is about ineffectiveness in decision making. The deficiency in negotiation (second organisational issue) is directly connected to decision making (Bazerman & Moore, 2012). Decision-making is one of the most important jobs of the leaders of an organisation (Garvin & Roberto, 2001) and a lot of research work has been done in this area (Courtney et al., 2013). The focus here is on the integration of all necessary checks before making judgments on important decisions.

The main reason is that the thinking and actions of leadership can sometimes be inconsistent (Kahneman, 2011). For instance, capturing the traps and biases of the leadership (Bazerman & Moore, 2012) - practical examples are the overconfidence which the leadership team brought to the mode of funding the project. In the construction industry, the self-funding design had been successful in previous sub-contracting jobs carried out by the project leader and the researcher as the consultant. However, the external business environment has changed, and it is now unsuitable for funding housing projects of this nature (more than seventy houses). Furthermore, there was the illusion of control (from the overconfidence) and complacency in failing to examine the leadership activities in place (Kahneman, 2011). Broadly, the errors in judgment in designing and implementing the project are consistent with the anchor's effect, status quo, confirming-evidence trap, and framing trap, which are all related to making decisions from previous experience (Hammond, Keeney & Raiffa, 1998). Again, there were errors in forecasting: the evidence is seen from being inconsiderate about changes that came from the

business environment to even groupthink that ensured all the members of the leadership were involved in making ineffective decisions (Szanto, 2017).

There were additional errors that came from throwing good money after bad (sunk-cost) and became deficient in comparing the forces of persistence and those of abandonment (Northcraft & Wolf, 1984, p. 431). In other words, the capability to know whether this project is turning out to be a good business or not and in mitigating the adverse effects of escalation and commitment especially found in project organisations (Drummond, 2014). Escalation is evident in the way the second and third construction projects were embarked upon without taking insights from the first project. In the way of this capability is confusion, and according to De Bono (1999), confusion is the most significant factor when it comes to human judgment. Therefore leaders tend to oversimplify and use an approach contained in system 1 thinking that is characterised by speed and intuition -this thinking is more related to managerial activities of controlling resources. What is required is system 2 thinking (Kahneman, 2011) that is slower and deliberately aimed at reflection, imagination, and insight (Drummond, 2001).

Hence to collaborate is not only from sharing resources and intent but also in coming together to learn and improve the process of genuinely learning together. The thinking and actions were not sufficiently demonstrated in signing the two additional projects in succession. The idea is for the invention of new ways to lead collectively and draw insights from strategic decision making (Raelin & Raelin, 2006, p. 58). At the centre of this engagement process is the reflection and comes with many questions from reflective thinking. For example, reflective practice is said to be difficult (Rigg & Trehan, 2008) and can it be taught (Russell, 2006)?

Mintzberg (2004) reiterates that there is much knowledge held in organisational members and *others* (researchers emphasis), and the only way to draw it out is through reflection (Raelin, 2007). However, reflection here is of the critical type where questions are asked to reveal underlying causes. For instance, in a given situation what is happening, what is the observation, why take that decision, what are the assumptions, what are the feelings, why feel that way (Academic Skills Centre, 2011)?

Practically, in the organisation this would involve: what are the underlying issues that brought a lack of collaboration and value creation (first and second organisational issue), for instance, the

result of adopting the self-funding process (third organisational issue)? What is the insight that came from the issues in the main project that can serve as input to designing subsequent projects (if at all they are going to be considered)? What is the response to improve the current project in the short-term and long-term?

The third research question is: How can leadership effectively utilise critical reflection towards effective decision making?

2.9. Summary

This chapter has provided a detailed background of the proposed study. The background has provided a more in-depth exploration of the organisational problem as a whole, for instance, rethinking leadership (Raelin, 2015). Secondly, the investigation has provided a theoretical framing of the organisation problem; in other words, taking an in-depth approach to the organisational issue to develop a method of supporting leadership effectiveness in a construction project organisation which is in line with the title of this thesis.

In more detail, the leadership perspective is provided, while acknowledging the presence of the researcher as a consultant. The implication is the amount of information with the researcher that comes from observations and engagements with the research participants in addition to the organisational knowledge of processes (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Collaborative leadership is the backbone of action in this study although not exclusively as the research is not called collaborative leadership since other significant variables added towards leadership effectiveness. The construction project management is discussed in connection with the organisational problem, the housing construction in Nigeria and the critical success factors required. Leadership effectiveness is again revisited in connection with the organisational problem and contrasted with efficiency. Efficiency is more directed at management and leans towards measurable variables. As presented, Leadership is management but on a broader scale although a manager also requires leadership skills (Toor & Ofori, 2008). This is the understanding held throughout this thesis.

Chapter 3.

Methodology: The Process of Achieving Leadership Effectiveness in a Project Organisation

3.1. Introduction

The methodology describes the process of inquiry in this study. It is a process where a suitable choice of a methodology is made and more specifically in the execution of methods (Nayak, 2008). Another description of methodology says that it is a philosophical approach to what to do while the methods are the specific activities carried out (Anderson et al., 2015). Therefore, the methodology starts with the way philosophy informs the study and towards its justification. A detailed description of action research is provided from its varieties and use in social research. Moving even closer it highlights the appreciative inquiry as a more suitable method and a type of action research. Holistically, it is a case of a construction project organisation where the researcher is also a participant and object of study as a team (Gummesson, 2000).

The research involves human participation that demands institutional ethical approval. The ethical review process includes informing the participants of their rights and the researcher's boundaries. The interview process and observations are used for data generation and analysis. Figure 3.1 is used to depict the placing of the methodology in this research process - a structure developed by the researcher.

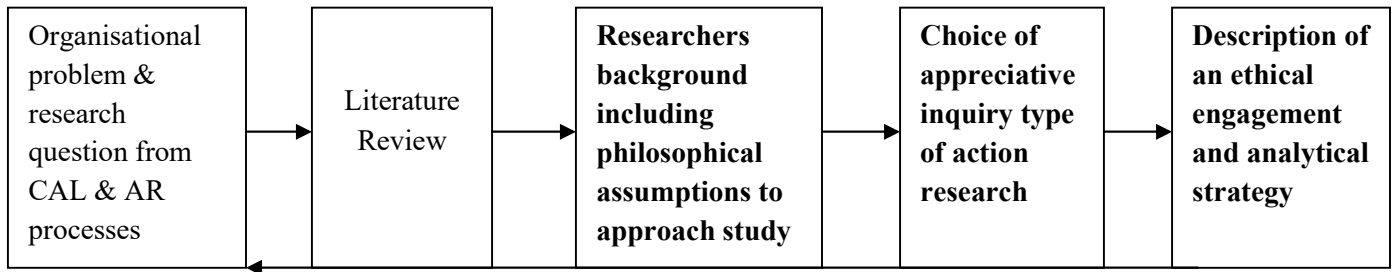


Figure 3.1 Description of the methodology in the research process

The qualitative data analysis phase is brought to the discussion: with the methods to be utilised and the mode of interpretation. On a final note, the introduction here proceeds with reiterating the research question:

How can a method be developed to support leadership effectiveness in the project organisation?

The theoretical support for the answer to the research question was broadly discussed in the literature review. The aim here is to describe the procedure of achieving leadership effectiveness through the application of the action research methodology in this single case. The first step is the description of how the study is approached from a philosophical stance that ultimately leads to the description and understanding of the case under consideration.

3.2. Philosophical assumptions and knowledge creation

Philosophy is made up of two Greek words; Philo meaning love and Sophia meaning wisdom which combines to form - the love of wisdom (Weislogel, 2011). The journey to wisdom is the knowledge creation process, where the exciting part is a quality criterion in learning and management research (Bartunek, Rynes & Ireland, 2006). The procedure involves the use of data that is contextualised to become information. Theory and experience combine with this information to form knowledge. This knowledge is reflected upon to reveal the wisdom embedded in the learning process of knowledge creation (Small & Sage, 2006).

In 1980, a framework was offered to assist in making arguments about social science research and applies here in aiming to understand management research (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). More specifically, social scientists should not only have a way of describing their method and analysis but also be evident in depth and breadth about the way to create a theory. Here, the interest is the in-depth study of the case of the leadership of the project organisation that involves a few participants found in qualitative studies. The in-depth is preferred to the breadth of sampling a large population that is typically found in quantitative methods (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Also, the process has to do with taking assumptions in making judgments in thinking and writing. Therefore, there is an avenue to question these assumptions before they become new knowledge. The result is a discussion on how we take the philosophical assumptions towards creating knowledge from the research process.

In this context, it is the way to use the theoretical underpinnings to inform our research (Creswell, 2013). These theoretical underpinnings are mainly used to advance philosophy. How? By contemplating, arguing, criticising and debating on and around these theories. The intention is not to disqualify theory from data and vice versa but to acknowledge that the information

derived is suitable especially for the work here which involves constant interaction between theory from scholarship and data from practice. The progress in philosophy belongs to the ontological issues (what is the nature of reality?) and epistemological issues (way to inquiring into) of a research study (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). However, understanding and using the right ontological and epistemological differences and similarities to methodology do not guarantee good quality research (Mir & Watson, 2001). The position taken is that although there is no guarantee, it does shed light in the right direction. How? Through taking the epistemological issues used to guide this research. The process is illustrated below.

3.2.1. The preference for social constructionism

Social constructionism is one of the two epistemologies in research, the other being positivism—although they both have strong and weaker versions (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Kenneth Gergen is an authority in the area of social constructionism, and he highlights the subject of conversation where the focus is on socially creative abilities aimed at problem resolution (Aceros, 2012). Similarly, this case is towards social constructionism mainly because it is the deficient area from a lack of collaboration. The facts are explicated first as an organisational issue in the introduction and secondly in the literature review (Gray, 1989). For instance, achieving Leadership Effectiveness is broad, messy and demands unbounded creative abilities (Grint, 2005).

The research is an inquiry from the inside because the researcher belongs to the leadership team (Coghlan, 2001). The indication is that there are personal traits of the researcher and participants brought to the research such as experience, and interactive and interpretive elements (Evered and Louis, 1981). Furthermore, there is alignment with the second mode of knowledge production; while the first is about the traditional mode one of finding the scientific truth, this second one is the less formal mode two and comes from understanding the practical situation of things, for instance, the knowledge developed from the practitioner's experience (Gibbon et al., 1994).

A point to note is that even facts from positivist epistemologies are socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The explanation is that all knowledge is socially constructed: firstly, socially interacting to give meaning or externalization, secondly, thinking and actions to confirm

the situations through objectivation, and thirdly, understanding and storing the knowledge or internalization. The process is underpinned by the social constructs of background, culture, history, and language of the participants (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). Thus the research here is about giving sufficient voice to participants who prepare the ground for meaning-making in a collective manner. This idea suits the rethinking leadership (Raelin, 2015) that we are concerned with in this research without one person taking control (Cunliffe 2001). More interesting is the connection that social construction is a benign process. This pleasant attribute is supported by an appreciative underpinning (Watson, 1994) similar to the one in this study.

Additionally, the preference for social construction comes from being relationally responsive; this is from the basics of examining what we say and do in organisations (Cunliffe, 2008); what we think the organisation should be. This preference comes from allowing space for participants to avail themselves in an ongoing manner that suggests change is required and immediate. These attributes align the study to action research that entails combining, aligning, integrating or including the multi-disciplinary perspective (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010); an area that we turn to in the next section, the justification for action research.

3.3. The justification for action research in this study

As described in the introduction, action research is a meta-learning process of collectively identifying a problem, constructing, planning, taking action and evaluation in a continuous fashion (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). In another vein, action research is a collaborative effort between professional researchers and practitioners in work life or a practitioner's research done by professional groups (Eikeland, 2007).

In this study, the researcher is a DBA candidate at the University of Liverpool - an educational institution; the aim is to solve an organisational problem with the participants concerned by the same issue. The mode of the DBA in this university is action research based - and several doctoral candidates have been successful (e.g. Crockett, 2015; Chukwu, 2015; Yeomans, 2017). The mode of engagement suits social constructionist philosophy presented earlier mainly from the superiority of action research which entails activeness and relational being (Gergen, cited in Aceros, 2012). Additionally, it involves a meta-learning development (Coghlan & Brannick,

2010) obtained through problematising of the problem which has been given from the bouts of inquiry and reflection in the organisation to planning and taking action.

The action here is with the dual purpose of carrying out a successful action research project to improve the organisational situation at the same time reporting a doctoral thesis (McKay & Marshall, 2008). However, the process sounds straightforward, but action research is unique in the way it deals with complex problems – these are usually problematic as they are characterised by uncertainty, emergence, anxiety, and ambiguity (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Also, there is the consideration of the issues that the researcher brings to the inquiry – from the preunderstanding, access, role-duality and organisational politics; the features that come with action research as an insider (Coghlan, 2001). Additionally, there are other concerns about emotional, managerial and leadership activities (Seo, 2003).

3.3.1. Action research with an appreciative inquiry undertone

Action research has developed over the years and was first formally used by Lewin in the '40s and also by Whyte in the '50s for the exploration of social science research (Harris, 2008). One of the ways action research came to management was in trying to improve professional effectiveness in management (Argyris & Schon, 1974) – an important idea that contributed to several other action research modes.

There are now several types of action research. For instance, action learning: action science: appreciative inquiry: cooperative inquiry: participatory action research: classical action research: developmental action inquiry: learning history: and clinical inquiry (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010).

The action research, in this case, is suited towards Appreciative Inquiry. This inquiry seeks to enhance the positive aspects of a business situation. This mode is through a continuous appreciation so that energy is maintained to solve complex situations (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stravos, 2005). More strictly, it deals with the search for the best in people, for what gives 'life' to a system when it is most productive and alive (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stravos, 2005). In line with the characteristics of social constructionism and towards action research, there is the usefulness of relating with hope and values in other words- working with appreciation (Gergen, cited in Aceros, 2012).

Appreciative inquiry is a kind of action research but with a significant difference (Anderson et al., 2015). Action research starts with an organisational problem while appreciative inquiry looks for what is working well for the organisation and builds on improving the system. It has been mentioned severally in this study that the leadership is doing an excellent job in managing the project resources mainly from an efficient procurement system and other operational activities. However, the leadership is rethinking its approach (Raelin, 2015); it is trying to improve its effectiveness through the use of the softer skills of collaboration and inquiry (Grint, 2005).

The organisation under study is not meeting its target, therefore, resulting in low morale. When this happens the leadership team and other organisational members tend to go into defensive routines (Argyris & Schon, 1996), organisational silence (Morrison & Milliken, 2000) and resistance (Ford & Ford, 2010). In this condition, the response is in a manner that is judgmental and therefore closes room for further discussion and problem resolution (Marquardt, 2014).

These negative attributes are resultant effects when executives (in this case the leadership team) suffer a condition called Sympathetic Nervous System. This condition leads to increased levels of stress that arise from immune deficiency, emotional, perceptual impairment and general ineffectiveness. As a result, appropriate actions are required to change the Negative Emotional Attractor (NEA) characterised by problems, fear and weaknesses to a Positive Emotional Attractor (PEA) that emphasises on hope, collective strengths and future possibilities (Boyatzis et al., 2013). Not that the leadership team is already in a distressed situation, there are many positives as the project is efficiently managed.

This inquiry brings the probing of the situation to highlight the problems and rather than trying to solve them, they are converted to opportunities through the positive sides of the inquiry. The analysis approach answers what Hayek (1974) calls pretence of knowledge through deliberately focusing on one perspective. Again Golembiewsky (1998) calls partial by focusing only on the positive sides of the research. In the creation of knowledge, certain positions are taken so that a further understanding can be gained in the attempt to change a situation, in this instance; it is to rethink the leadership approach. The main reason why improving “Leadership Effectiveness” is the highlight of the challenge in the organisation. It is, therefore, chosen as the generative metaphor to maintain focus on improvement (Marshak & Bushe, 2009).

Finally, from the difference between action research and appreciative inquiry, particular attention is paid to ensure only the positive property of appreciative inquiry is taken and not the whole appreciative inquiry process, this is towards the mode of questioning in the interviewing.

3.3.1.1. The qualitative approach used in this study- Case study research

Although there are several types of qualitative inquiry, Creswell (2013) highlighted five approaches which are: Narrative, Phenomenological, Grounded-theory, Ethnographic and Case-study approaches. Narratives are stories told about a lived experience. Phenomenological studies are towards a particular phenomenon, single concept or idea. Grounded theory is directed towards the theory development out of a process in focus. Ethnographic studies are also about developing theory, only this time it is about many individuals sharing a common cultural trait. Finally, case-study research is an inquiry into a contemporary case or setting.

The approach here is the case study research; it is a one-off case-study approach where the leadership looks into improving its effectiveness (Yin, 2017). Although there are slight differences with action research, a case study is more subjective than action research which is more dynamic (Harris, 2008). Again this case study differs from action research because some scholars consider case-study research to be neither a qualitative inquiry method nor a research approach but only serves as a data collection method (Amoo, 2014). Case study research is useful mainly from the way this single case is researched in-depth (Creswell, 2013). More specifically, from problematising a problem in a single construction project organisation (Stake, 2010) using a contemporary real-life context (Yin, 2017). Similar to action research, it is aimed at working on a specific context and hence the knowledge may not be generalisable, more practical than theoretical, has a substantial weighting on verification and presents challenges in summarising the findings (Flyvberg, 2006). These are contrary to scientific research where theoretical development is the emphases. However, it suits this aims of this research. A case study is most suitable for developing hypotheses (Flyvberg, 2006), although there are no hypotheses in this research study.

There are several reasons for the lack of hypotheses in this study even though it has been used by some action researchers (Greenwood and Levin, 2012). The study is not quantitative and is not

trying to confirm theories from statistical inferences derived from positivism (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Additionally, there are research questions that are to be answered and hence hypothesis will be a duplication of effort (Punch, 2006). Finally, the absence of hypotheses is from trying to avoid closing up of the study that does not lead to the evolving nature of action research which involves the consideration of new insights.

3.4. The ethical review process

It is a mandatory requirement to approach research involving human participation with utmost care: with what is appropriate and acceptable (Bell, 2008). These conditions mainly apply to the researcher which involves dealing with participants. Furthermore, it strictly abides by the University of Liverpool's policy on research ethics. The fundamental principles in this regard entail the avoidance of any form of harm to the participants while respecting their rights and dignity. This activity was through the protection of their privacy by maintaining confidentiality to individuals and anonymity in the organisation. The participants were also not deceived in any way through the interpretation or otherwise in the research process by being transparent and sincere (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012).

Applicable was the ethical review process where the ethical review committee gave approval; action research involves human participation, and there was a rigorous procedure for obtaining approval. The process came with fulfilling the requirements of the full ethics application form. This process involved all necessary information required for the researcher and the study for the consideration of the participants. Also included was the ethics response form. It provided additional clarity to any grey areas and for further correspondence between the researcher, supervisor and the review committee.

A site authorisation letter was provided by the project leader to give formal access to participants, make observations and to other relevant company documents that may apply to the research. A complete thesis plan was also attached to the application. The ethics approval is provided as Appendix 1.

The participants agreed to participate after collectively studying the terms and conditions of the research as contained in the information sheet. The primary criterion for the selection process is belonging to the leadership team. This criterion is in line with the action research approach of undertaking an inquiry by a concerned group sharing a common problem (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Here the consent was gained through sending an email of acceptance to the researcher.

On agreeing to participate voluntarily, an interview schedule was given to the participants; it contained information about the number of meetings and the duration of each session. Additional time was allowed for the participants to discuss and secure sufficient information that guided them in making a decision. For instance, the minimal risk involved that is not beyond the daily risks of working life. There are however no reimbursements for taking part; the main benefit comes from the advantage of the learning process. The learning process is a training exercise for leadership necessary for the organisation that is willing to improve its effectiveness (Perry & Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). For instance, the choice of appreciative inquiry, an action research methodology used to appreciate what best can be achieved given the organisation's strengths. Away from looking for problems and blaming people in the organisation - the ineffective and traditional approach to organisational problem solving (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stravos, 2005).

The interviews were held at the head office of the project organisation away from the site office which is in a new area about ten kilometres from the Head office on the Outer-Northern expressway. The reason for the isolation from the site is to avoid distractions from the ever-busy site activities. The Head office itself is located in the central business district of Abuja, the capital of Nigeria in West Africa.

There were three discussion sessions for the interview – once in a month with every participant. Action research inquiry involves the cycles of constructing, planning, taking action and evaluation. As a result, each cycle per month is used as the yardstick of making improvements; since the study is doctoral level research up to three action research cycles were sufficient to complete the process (Perry & Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). The discussion sessions took just under 60 minutes each.

The interviews were electronically recorded and later transcribed. The soft copies of the recording and transcription were kept in password-protected computers only accessible to the

researcher. The data generated in this way is held at the University of Liverpool and managed according to the data management services for between 5-10 years.

For the researcher, the process brings the challenge of trying to generate data sufficient for actionable knowledge. This challenge is in addition to ensuring the requirements of rules guiding ethical research. For instance, maintaining closeness and distance to the participants and the tension between the researcher and organisational roles (Holian & Coghlan, 2013). However, here authenticity was the main aim. Attention is closely paid to experience through sensing and imagining. Again in being intelligent by understanding what is gained from inquiry; being reasonable in judgment by reflecting and evaluating evidence and finally, being responsible for taking decisions (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010).

The process of engagement has started over three years now in a working relationship with the participants that utilises CAL processes. These processes include insightful questioning, sharing experiences from theory and practice and overall reflection; activities connected to the coursework of the researcher's doctoral journey. These activities have been intensively practiced by the researcher and other learning peers and from time to time also the participants of this research. The researcher has also taken additional training; ten-week coursework in Ethics, Sustainability, and Social Impact. This module assisted in providing a suitable method of leading change in an ethically based environment.

Finally, additional layers of protection for participants were provided not only by the researcher and the ethical review committee alone. There was also the involvement of the first and second supervisor, the project-progress panel, the academic director and also the chief academic officer of the University of Liverpool.

3.5. The validity and reliability of the interview questions

The research question is about developing a method to support leadership effectiveness: a typical complex situation. The reason for the complexity is the non-linear process of solving the problem in a continuous planning and action mode. The research question is expansive while the interviews aim towards satisfying the most critical empirical criterion of what is the actual data required in answering these questions (Punch, 2006). From the context of the problem that is

mainly in the deficient collaborative aspects, the leadership collectively agreed to rethink its processes (Raelin, 2015).

The process primarily involved mutual collaborative behaviour that results in win-win situations for stakeholders in both easy and hard times (Raelin, 2003, 2010). These win-win situations are outcomes of right value creation strategies- for instance, from good analogical reasoning. However, analogies are from generalisations and have to be critically reflected upon before adapted in making effective decisions. These are the areas of consideration that inform the crafting of the interview questions and are meant to draw out useful insights (Mintzberg, 2004).

The three action research cycles maintained the core of these questions from thinking in the way the main elements were used before and how they are used now. Again these activities were with the aim of utilising them deliberately for change in future leadership activities. Table 3.3 below provided the link between the research objective questions, interview questions and sub-questions for the first action research cycle.

Table 3.3. The first ARC interview questions

Research Objective Question	Interview question	Interview Sub-questions
How can collaboration be used to constructively to improve leadership?	Describe a high-point when you engaged in mutual collaborative behaviour?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is it necessary to rethink leadership in this way? - In this activity, what is new? - What is to be improved? - What is to be dropped?
How can analogical reasoning be used towards value creation?	Describe a high-point where analogical reasoning was used to create value with stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you see this as necessary to improve effectiveness? - What is new here? - Would you recommend developing this skill and why?
How can leadership effectively utilise critical reflection towards effective decision making?	Describe a high-point where critical reflection was used in making a very good decision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you see critical reflection to mitigate biases? - How do you see critical reflection in mitigating project escalation?

What is required is careful attention and preparation of questions that will draw out some useful insights from the engagements. The learning aim takes away the need for a pilot study. Action

research involves dynamic processes that bring clarity from fuzziness, so it is an acceptable procedure to start with broad questions and revise them in subsequent cycles (Gummesson, 2000). However, there is the consideration that the evolving process produces outcomes not particularly desired. These undesirable effects demanded the researcher's ethical considerations, and managing power and ideology issues in the interaction (Stacey, 2011). The requirement was to participate as a political entrepreneur that ensures managing key business relationships (Bjorkman & Sundgren, 2005). Awareness and thinking in these areas provide validity and reliability of the interview questions.

The development of the interview questions indicated a pre-structured approach in an emergent study (Punch, 2006). Since the emergent theory was unfolding, the study started from the left (closer to pre-structured approach) of the Pre-structured-Unfolding continuum and ended on the right (the unfolding approach) as the study progressed. The pre-structured approach was through structuring the research questions and objectives together with developing pre-structured interview questions and first data generation. At the data generation phase and in connection with the continuous planning and actions the study transits to the unfolding phase which involves more open-ended questions and more freedom to discover the emergent theory embedded in the data. See figure 3.2 for the prestructured – unfolding continuum.

Finally, the validity and reliability of the interview questions are further enhanced by triangulation (Creswell, 2013). Triangulation denotes the consideration of several perspectives; these perspectives are the context of the research and the collaborative rethinking by the leadership of the project organisation facing a business environment in a recession. This is in addition to leadership team's experience and background (tacit and explicit knowledge), the theory from the literature, the persistent reflection as a scholar-practitioner and the appreciative undertone to energise and motivate the participants.

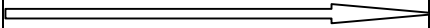
Pre-structured	Continuum	Unfolding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prespecified research questions - Tightly structured design - Prestructured data 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General open ended-questions - Loose design - Data not structured

Figure 3.2 Prestructured to Unfolding interview questions as the study progresses from first to third ARC's (adapted from Punch, 2006)

3.6. The qualitative data analysis process of the inquiry

The onerous task that appeared after data collection was the analysis; the analysis was in such a way that it made sense from the two-way connection between data to theory and vice-versa. An additional connection was a consideration for additional perspectives. Here the collection of qualitative data was from in-depth interviews and observations; the next step was the examination of what was the response to the question; was the right information gathered? Did it provide the necessary insights required for proper actions such as to develop actionable knowledge (Tenkasi & Hay, 2004)? These are the set of questions that guide the process towards qualitatively analysing the data. For clarity of the data analysis process, a question was taken from the first objective of the study. It was given a run on how the collected data was organised, framed to give meaning and again whether it satisfies the requirements of the objectives Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, (2012).

The research is case study where the interviews were the primary source of data; however, on instances, there were areas where the researcher's journals were applied as observations (Creswell, 2013).

3.6.1. Data collection to data analysis in action research

The two phases of data collection and data analysis are connected in action research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Since this research is about three AR cycles (Zuber-Skerritt & Fletcher, 2007), there were three bouts of data collection, analysis and application of the findings to practice in a continuous cycle before a final and integrated analysis of the whole process. The integration is

from combining the collaborative data generation in the action inquiry phase (chapter four) and the researcher's individual Template Analysis (chapter five).

The appreciative approach to the first research question was;

Describe a high-point when you engaged in mutual collaborative behaviour?

The participant responds by narrating a story where collaboration happened, while the researcher listens to the narration and asks follow-up questions. The follow-up questions were to give clarity and understanding in the way the storyline is summarised. The summary contains details such as was it a mutually collaborative behaviour? What is emerging out of the story? From the participant's perspective, what is to be done going forward on the way to improving some activities and dropping some to achieve collaborative behaviour. Additional questions in collaborative practice are left with the participant to go and reflect upon in preparation for the next ARC. For instance, in the next month before the next interview think and work towards answering-

How you engaged in mutual collaborative behaviour?

Again the final cycle asks the question-

How has mutual collaborative behaviour enhanced your leadership activities?

The questions have indicated a progression in the first cycle and prior experience of mutual collaborative behaviour, the second cycle has intensified its importance and finally the way towards continuous improvement in the last cycle. Consistent thinking and acting on the process brings significant development through getting embedded into practice and subsequently becomes organisational culture. This intent is in addition to the hope of engaging the participants away from the other modes of engagement, for instance, avoidance (Raelin, 2003; Thomas, 1977).

3.6.2. Analytical strategy

According to Huxham (2003), action research serves the aim of bringing an intervention at the same time it is a source of data generation. In this case, it was bringing the three areas of interest with a bigger picture of the way towards improving the effectiveness of the participants. As earlier mentioned the primary source of the data generation is through semi-structured interviews. The method has the features of influence from both the researcher and participants in the way the social, cognitive, identity, cultural, self-esteem, motivational, representational factors are brought to play (Alvesson, 2003). A typical example is to understand the situation that is problematic and bringing a positive note of appreciative inquiry into the mix of thinking. The reason is mainly from the positive effect that it brings to all the participants (Mittal & Ross, 1998). There is an implication for the researcher through this bias; at the same time there is bias in the way the participant responds. Additionally, there were observations which Thomas (1993) argues, assist in defamiliarising the data from apparently mundane to something new especially as the researcher is an insider and comes with experience and understanding of the organisation and its context (Coghlan, 2001). An additional reason for using observations is to complement interviews; the researcher is a participant and observes without concealment, as a result, draws additional insights from the engagements (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012).

The strategy is mainly directed at developing actionable knowledge from this single case (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The process necessitates a two-phase analytical strategy.

3.6.2.1. The first phase of analysis – The Action Inquiry Phase

Chapter four represents the first phase of analysis. It is the presentation of the story from the three action research cycles: each entailing the discussions around the three questions and their sub-questions. The outcomes of the interviews are then discussed in-depth. For instance, a narrative of interpretations that involves quotations from the participants as supporting evidence: there are further reflections from the researcher as outcomes of observations. The reflections were aimed at revealing the salient areas and toward the next cycle; after the third and last cycle, the significant areas highlighted were furthermore combined with the second phase of analysis. The main reason for presenting these three cycles is to show how the cycles progressed and

evolved (Creswell, 2013) together with the development of the participants working on the organisational problem in line with action research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010).

3.6.2.2. The second phase of analysis – The Template Analysis

Chapter five represents the second phase of analysis. In this phase, the researcher did an individual Template analysis on the data generated in the action inquiry phase, in other words, the interview text. The main reason for doing this analysis is to deepen the analysis towards new insights (King & Brooks, 2017). Additionally, Cassell (2008), suggest the use of the Template analysis as it provides an avenue to explore a vast amount of data through taking a structured approach. The research questions of the study in addition to the action inquiry phase provided the structuring of this analysis phase.

3.7. Summary

The aim of the methodology was first to connect conceptual thinking with the process of researching the organisational problem. Secondly, was the focus on the dual objectives of carrying out a successful research study and the analytical strategy. The action research was carried out through using an appreciative inquiry with the main advantage of seeing problematic situations in positive ways. The analytical strategy involves the way the two-step process of firstly carrying and describing the action inquiry phase of the research (chapter four) and then carrying out a template analysis of the interview text (chapter five).

Finally, the methodology has provided an extended discussion of the main elements so that the step by step consideration can guide other researchers willing to conduct similar studies. Next is the action inquiry phase that deals with the actual implementation of the action research cycles.

Chapter 4.
Action Inquiry Phase

4. Introduction

Holistically, my DBA thesis is one action research cycle. In this chapter, I report the smaller cycles of implementing the action through appreciating the area of concern, developing it and understanding it as an evolving process. I achieved this through using the three cycles of interview questions to discuss the main content or objectives of the research in addition to working in the action research mode of identification, construction, planning, taking and evaluation of the interview questions in a cyclic manner of development (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). These sessions served the dual purpose of generating data and also served as an intervention tool for the organisation (Huxham, 2003). In other words, the interviews brought avenues for collecting data at the same time leaving the participants with assignments of practising the areas of concern.

Coghlan & Brannick (2010, p.11) depicts the concurrent relationships between the action research cycles as similar to the hands of a clock. Firstly, the hours' hand of the clock is represented by this DBA thesis and has taken more than three years. Secondly, the minutes' hand of the clock represents the three AR cycles that are the developmental interview questions and discussions presented in detail here in this chapter – the action inquiry which has taken about four months. The seconds' hand of the clock is represented by the day to day activity of the continuous identification of smaller operational organisational issues. It is the movement of the seconds' hand of the clock that builds the movement of the minutes' hand of the clock which in turn builds the movement of the hours' hand. Figure 4.1 describes the relationship of the AR cycles with the emphasis of the main action presented in this chapter – that is the minutes' hand of the clock.

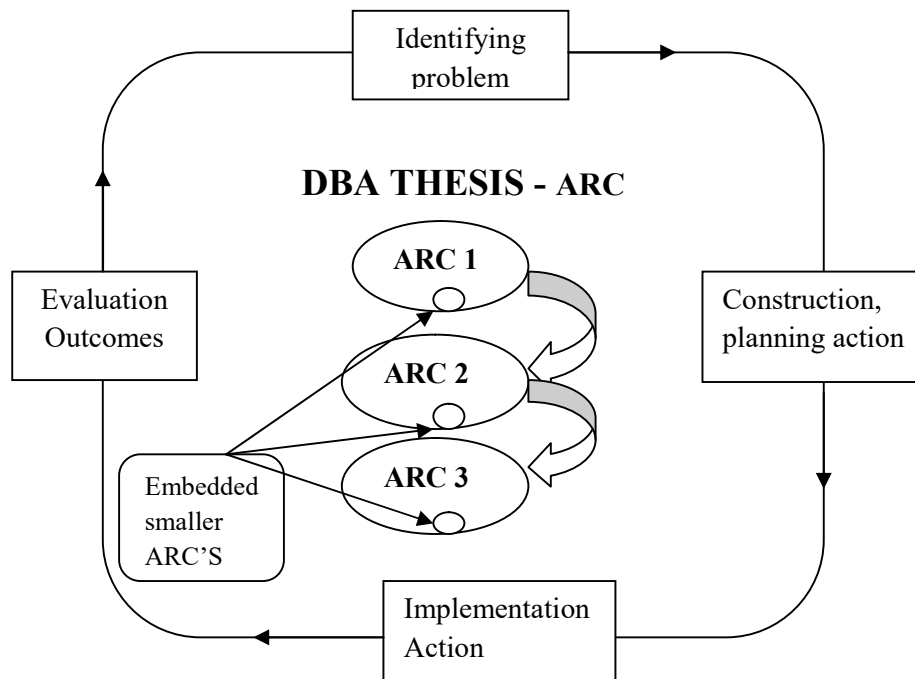


Figure 4.1 Relationship between the Action Research Cycles

4.1. The first AR cycle report: Appreciating Leadership Effectiveness

4.1.1. Introduction

In this action research report, I introduce the action inquiry phase. The phase includes three cycles each of continuous planning, taking action and evaluation (Coghlan & Brannick. 2010). The first phase is called appreciating Leadership effectiveness. I aim to try and answer the questions of what is the organisational challenge? What is the action taken and by whom? Finally, what is the outcome of the activities and what can be done about it?

4.1.2. What is the organisational challenge?

I am an action researcher and also a project leadership consultant of the project leadership team. This team is the leadership of the project and is seeking to improve its overall effectiveness

through learning and taking appropriate actions. Therefore, we asked ourselves the research question: How can a method be developed to improve leadership effectiveness in the construction project organisation?

4.1.3. What is the action taken to overcome the challenge?

The action I brought to this significant challenge is to rethink the leadership approach – a transition from being individualistic to a more collaborative leadership (Raelin, 2015). I derived this reason to act from the understanding that contemporary leadership approach involved the utilisation of soft skills of leadership and deals with messy and complex problems. It differs from the hard skills of management used in critical or tame issues that require a direct and objective approach (Grint, 2005).

This action was broken down into the objectives of the study. Part of the planning and taking action has already been taken in developing the three objectives which are; developing mutual collaborative behaviour, value creation from analogical reasoning and effective decision making from critical reflection. The storyline draws out insights from the participants from using direct quotations to illustrate the thinking and actions when using these objectives. Furthermore, I provide my reflections that were derived from my observations.

4.1.3.1. Mutual collaborative behaviour

Improving leadership effectiveness is achieved here through seeking ways to contribute to the leadership process and hence make it more useful. In the interactions I held with participants, mutual collaboration was seen in several ways. For instance, a participant mentioned;

“Working in this mode ensured we had maximum impact on our managerial jobs- unfortunately it did not last as my colleague was transferred...”

The method of approach indicates high assertiveness and cooperation and towards mutual collaboration which continues to develop over time (Raelin, 2003).

In another vein, another participant gave the narration of always negotiating using facts and figures - a typical indication of technical professionals. A quote in the discussion says:

“I always say this is calculated! This is what is on ground. This is what it should be. And that is all. I hardly change my mind. I now understand that once you go back - what the other person is saying is fair- you see things differently”.

The conflict management skill displayed is competitive behaviour- where there is high assertiveness and low cooperation –this does not always work with messy problems (Grint, 2005). There was recognition of improving collaboration which balances the high assertiveness and towards better business relations. Further explanation is that people with technical backgrounds are objectivist in background – in other words, put much weight on facts and figures in decision making (Johnson & Duberley, 2000).

My reflection: I used appreciative inquiry traits in this AR - that is focusing on the positive aspects of the organisation (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stravos, 2005). The development of the positive elements started at the beginning of the project where a new set of technical professionals were assembled to manage and lead the project. From my observation, there is high efficiency in the team with a proper procurement procedure in place. It was the mutual collaborative behaviour that assisted the new members of the group to work with a high level of synergy. A participant says it was this high degree of synergy that gave the confidence to continue operating in a manner that involved professionals who are new to each other and had minimal experience; however, they all had integrity in their values.

“We were going into a multi-million dollar project with professionals that do not have many years of experience - practical experience but with the zeal, their focus; that energy they came with, and the guidance and confidence given to them. We were able to meet the set deliverables and know ourselves in a short period”.

4.1.3.2. Value creation from analogical reasoning

In my discussion with a participant about analogical reasoning, this example made the point:

“I play Chess. When I am doing things, such as talking to someone I am always thinking of the other person’s next move or thinking – you know when you are playing chess you are always taking several perspectives of the opponent in addition to your alternatives”.

Good analogical reasoning does not come better than playing chess as it involves value creation; how? – By considering alternatives and seeing the move that will give the most benefit. Thinking

in this line requires both analytical and reflective thinking that is good, for instance, in negotiations. The action here is to deliberately question and improve on using the chess playing analogy in professional practice.

According to Simpson (2017), a global leader is one that initially understands his values and more importantly the ability to create value that provides profit, takes care of the people and the planet. This understanding means that the organisation has to build value on the economic, social and wider environment. A further indication is that there is much value that can be crafted for the benefit of the organisation not only in monetary terms. For instance, a sub-contractor after initially agreeing on a contract sum later came back informally to complain. The organisational member (a research participant) informed him of the benefits of not only working for the money alone, but there are many other advantages:

“I had to make him see value in not only working for the single direction of money alone but to consider certain aspects of the opportunity to take up the whole job if he does it well. Another area was that he could advertise his job for other people to see.”

My reflection: The quotes illustrate two different sources of value creation all from analogical reasoning. While the chess analogy signifies the importance of creating value from analytical thinking in chess, as chess provides a unique skill in relationships and strategy development (Morgan, 1992), the second situation signifies the use of analogy from experience (March, 2010). Both are sources of evidence that with proper thinking, suitable insights can be taken from diverse scenarios and applied to another especially in situations of complexity (Stacey, 2011). For instance, the consistent non-negotiation between the leadership and client’s earlier highlighted in the second organisational issue that signified a lack of value creation.

4.1.3.3. Effective decision making from critical reflection

My engagement with the participants revealed that value creation from analogical reasoning and effective decision making from critical reflection go hand in hand. Analogical reasoning comes from identifying similarities from a different situation and bringing the salient activities to the current situation. It is the critical reflection that refines the analogies that become suitable for application. Superficially taking away from analogies leads to drastic mistakes (Gavetti et al., 2005). For instance, a participant said that previous work provided the confidence to delve into a project of this magnitude.

The quote that links value creation from analogical reasoning and effective decision making from critical reflection is:

“I think before we started this project we x-rayed the whole industry, including individual organisations and people in this business- their strengths and weaknesses... their modus-operandi and that is what made it easier for us”.

The effort towards value creation was derived from experience. According to a participant, it was a right decision to go into the project, and there was critical reflection on the project before commencement even after considering the high uncertainty at the time. These uncertainties are for instance - Oil & Gas being the mainstay of the Nigeria economy has seen its value go down by 60%. Similarly, there was a general election where the opposition eventually won resulting in a change in leadership that comes with changes in government policies.

4.14 What are the outcomes of the actions?

I started doing a preliminary analysis of the data from seeing the responses of the participants along the three objectives. From the outcomes, there is a direct connection between mutual collaboration and value creation. How? There has to be an understanding of collaboration from being different and working creatively to develop a solution (Wood & Gray, 1991). Again value creation from analogical reasoning demands critical reflection so that effective decision making can be achieved. According to Kahneman (2011), even with collective critical reflection, human beings can be highly inconsistent - this inconsistency is a primary reason why facts and figures are still very reliable. What happens if facts and figures are not available, for instance, the leadership effectiveness that is being sought? There is then a need for additional exploration for a better way of connecting these objectives in a fashion that will lead to the quest for learning.

The first AR cycle has reinvigorated the leadership team. This motivation is through framing the challenges in ways that are suitable for actions and evaluation. Another significant outcome is the development of management and leadership thinking for the participants. These are in the areas of better teamwork (from mutual collaboration), analytic and reflective thinking (critical reflection), creativity from analogical reasoning, higher-level thinking from connecting theory to practice and vice-versa (for me the researcher).

I pre-structured the interview questions in the first AR cycle (Punch, 2006). In the next cycle (ARC 2), I provided more freedom towards open discussions to allow further exploration. Further inquiry is expected to progress to the third AR cycle. This aim was with many intentions on how leadership actions affect the immediate organisation.

The participants answered my interview questions in different ways. For instance, some sub-questions were not even asked and were dropped in the next cycle. The reason being they were not very critical to the objectives of the study. Again it takes time to become proficient in these activities, and I encouraged the participants to practice in real professional scenarios – against the notion of espousing actions and not putting them into use (Argyris & Schon, 1996).

My reflection: Value creation from analogical reasoning and decision making from critical reflection are intertwined. As the quotes indicate, it was an effective decision to go into conceiving and developing the project, since value was created. It follows that the problematisation of the problem was right in combining these issues to form the organisational problem. This is from a broader perspective, coming closer however, the analogy used from experience, for instance, the self-funding model of financing the project was not working as it did not serve the organisation well given the circumstances.

4.1.4. The cycle representation of the ARC 1

In this first ARC, I demonstrated the preliminary stages of carrying out an intervention. This demonstration is mainly from using interview questions suitable for engaging participants on the way towards change. In trying to improve leadership effectiveness, we discussed the three objectives on how they were used before with the aim of using them more effectively in future. Figure 4.2 describes the appreciation of leadership effectiveness from a unique perspective. We have all been enlightened on using mutual collaboration, value creation and effective decision making. In a specific example, for instance, the exercise caused the participants to think on the best way to collaborate with an understanding of their trait, how to think of a useful analogy or experience and create value, how to combine these and filter out personal biases towards effective decision making. The interview process and the whole activities in the cycle served as data collection points from both interview talk and through my observations.

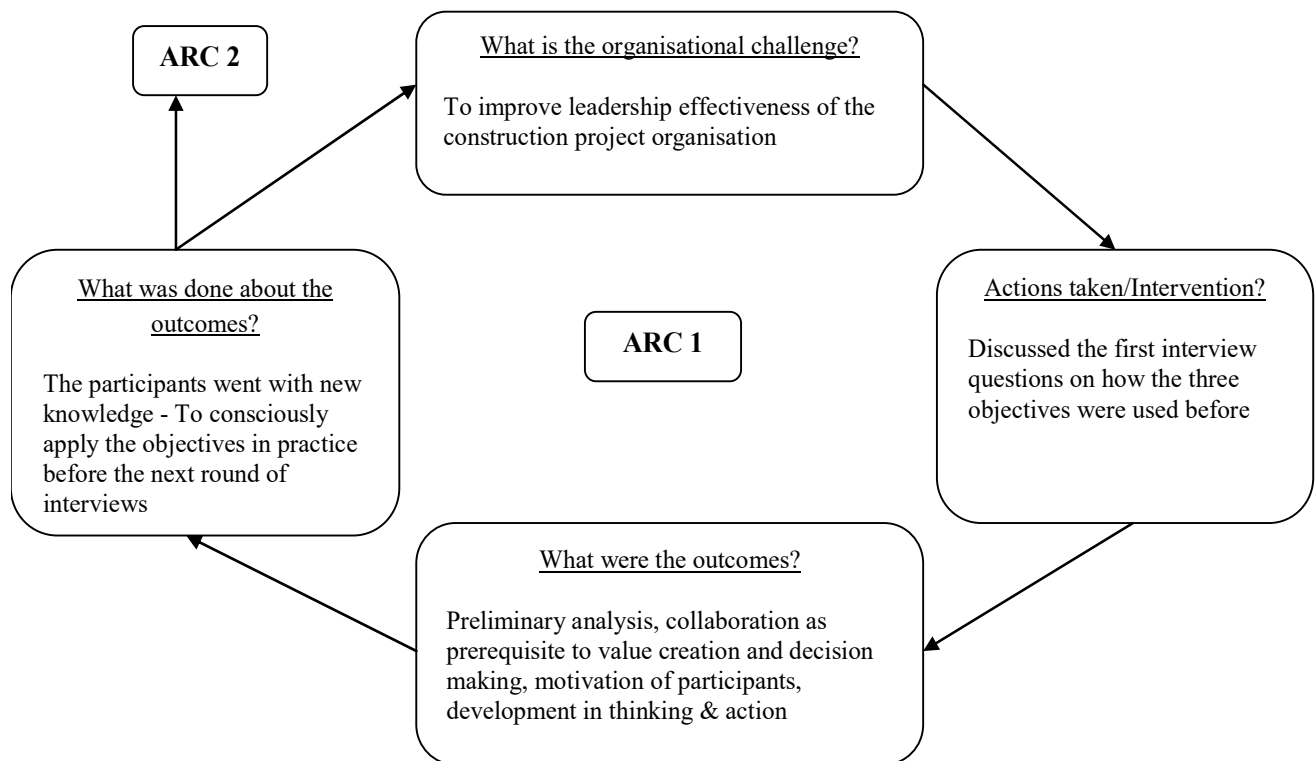


Figure 4.2 The ARC 1 – Appreciating Leadership Effectiveness

4.1.5. Summary

We made an attempt at answering the questions of what was the organisational challenge requiring action and what were the actions and their outcomes. In the first cycle of interviews, discussions were held on the objectives currently in use and the way towards improvement. These preliminary analyses also served as an introduction and sensitisation of these objectives although they have been used somehow in previous CAL activities in the organisation. Now in the interview phase, I ensured that there was an additional focus on collecting what is being said and maintaining attention on the ethical considerations of research. Finally, this cycle has

revealed an appreciation of leadership effectiveness when viewed from the three objectives of the study and in the appreciative words of one of the participants:

“I will like a situation shortly where we are collectively drawing up the picture for the organisation rather than the pictures usually drawn mostly by an individual at the moment.”

4.2. The second AR cycle report: Developing Leadership Effectiveness

4.2.1. Introduction

In this second cycle report, I continued to intensify on the individual and collective attributes that lead to better leadership effectiveness in the project organisation. There were; however, new challenges in this phase as going down into the second interview discussions revealed a more in-depth understanding. These challenges were complex and according to Greenwood and Levin (2007), are part of AR that requires consistency in philosophical, methodological, political and economic thinking and actions.

4.2.2. What are the outcomes of the first AR cycle?

My primary challenge in the first AR cycle report was to start implementing the resolution procedure of the main organisational problem defined for this research. Here and on a broader view, the primary challenge remained the same; however going closer to the methodology I shifted to focusing on the outcome of the last cycle and what to do about it. The process was in line with evaluating the results of the previous cycle which was a combination of taking actions, research, observations, interviews, further discussions, thinking and reflections (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010).

An organisational challenge in this cycle continued in the direction of combining quantitative and qualitative thinking. The challenge was linked to the first and second organisational issues; taking an opposing perspective as questioned by a participant - what can be used to make an

effective decision in the absence of facts and figures. I found this question to be a highly challenging task as it was one of the areas where in 2011 the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in the UK provided guidelines. The guidelines require that supervisors in doctoral level research must ensure their candidates can be able to draw significant insights from incomplete information and furthermore, articulate and communicate understandings towards useful judgments (Anderson et al., 2015). Therefore, I needed to balance advocacy and inquiry (Raelin, 2010) as to what can be done to improve in this area with the participants with the knowledge that it is a mandatory requirement for me a doctoral level action researcher.

4.2.3. What are the actions taken to overcome the challenges?

The actions we took remain to rethink the current leadership approach (Raelin, 2015) with the rethinking developed as the practical challenge of creating value in the midst of scarce resources, for instance, in value creation and effective decision making. These were all interconnected as seen in the first and second AR cycles: the discussion of which went around the objectives of the study. The questions we discussed were generally on development in thinking, actions, and reflections; the activities of which are inseparable in AR (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Azhar, Ahmad & Sein, 2010).

4.2.3.1. Actions derived from the objectives of the study

The project organisation does aggregate planning for weekly, monthly and quarterly periods. The requirements are for different materials usage, person-hours, equipment-hours and all their corresponding costs. A certain amount of funding was available, and in a brainstorming session, there were questions on the way to use these resources to give the maximum impact on the site. Several ideas were given with the best one arrived at through mutual collaboration and according to the participant:

“It was about using a certain amount of money to provide the most value for the site. Since funds were scarce, we were all there to decide the best way to use it in a condition of several ways of utilisation. For instance, either to cast F3, SD8, roof T2 (names of houses) or to start the earthworks of cutting the road level. One of us suggested roof D2 instead. To cast SD8 will

require ordering too much material, e.g., reinforcement, aggregate, stone-dust..., As per roofing T2 – the roofing tiles will not be sufficient and cutting the level will require cutting twice, one now and the other much later when the earthworks start for the primary infrastructure. Hence the decision to roof D2 was chosen. The roofing tiles are just adequate to cover that block – all there is to do is to order wood for rafter and then the labour costs.”

The participant reporting this was not the one who provided the main idea. It means there was a focus on mutual collaboration through operating at the same level of high assertiveness and high cooperativeness - that everyone contributed to the problem resolution. Again, the issue collectively reflected upon by all the participants in- what ways can we use the available resources? What are the alternatives for consideration? These combined to arrive at the best decision the participant admitted seeing mutual collaborative behaviour in action together with value creation and effective decision making. The impact was seen on the personal and organisational level on one side and from the economic and social level on the other side.

Another participant reflects on improving interpersonal skills. The objectives have assisted in thinking of ways to improve self and towards the effectiveness of the whole team. For instance, in continuously questioning self on being fair in daily engagements:

“I am always appraising myself whether I am fair- because like if I am ...Umm like I said that other time when I think I am sure about something – I don't like to back out, I don't see the other person's perspective, but this time around when I am arguing, whether I am wrong or right, now I try to listen and understand so that I will be fair while I weigh the situation”.

My reflection: From the illustrations narrated, I saw collaboration that led to value creation and effective decision making. The most benefit comes from socially interacting in a way that does not only aid in making the right decisions but brings synergy and collective reflection. These activities proffer solutions to complexity and confusion (Stacey, 2011; De Bono, 1999). The confusion is either from personal biases (Beshears & Gino, 2015) or group biases (Szanto, 2017). As De Bono (1999) reiterates confusion leads to the cloudiness of thought and is the most significant factor that leads to making bad decisions. The effort usually made in such circumstances is the simplification of the whole situation; as a result, blocking the consideration of some critical factors (in this case the uncertainty and anxiety from the slow business). A typical example I observed is the day to day opposition between quantity surveyors and engineers. The opposition comes from the professional backgrounds where quantity surveyors are trying to reduce cost while the engineers are working to improve quality. Cost and quality are both critical project management deliverables that require holding opposing views and still be able to function optimally (Riel & Martin, 2014).

4.2.4. What are the outcomes of the actions taken?

From the participants' comments, the outcomes of the action inquiry have so far been positive. However, there are more challenges to deal with in this phase - for instance, the observation of organisational politics (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). The full report on organisational politics during the action inquiry phase is reported later in chapter seven- the personal reflections chapter. However, going forward I observed that specific observations required additional exploration. The outcomes were collectively developed with the participants.

4.2.4.1. The intermingling of the second and third objectives: Currently, there is no clear-cut difference between value creation from analogical reasoning and effective decision making from a critical reflection in the context of this research. However, my focus on providing actionable knowledge remains the main aim and hence, the assessment of the similarities and differences is trivial concerning the outcomes. The importance remains using these objectives in such a way as to contribute to leadership effectiveness.

4.2.4.2. Leadership effectiveness as a journey: From the first to the second cycle, leadership effectiveness is a journey and time as a critical resource in project environments (Chitkara, 2009) should be utilised to make that journey faster (through conscious practice on improvements). According to Kahneman (2011), it is hard to think and separate decision making: type 1 thinking is instant and intuitive as compared to the more strategic type 2 thinking that requires insight, reflection, and imagination (Drummond, 2001). Practically the challenge is: How to quickly decide the weight of the decision, before using a fitting analogy (for value creation) and critical reflection to make an effective decision.

4.2.4.3. The improved understanding between members of the leadership team: The action inquiry processes of this cycle revealed further understanding between individual members of the leadership team. For instance, a participant narrated the thought of being pushed too hard before later understanding that the requirement was to improve proficiency in management and

leadership skills in addition to the previous technical expertise. In another vein, there was a consistent self-reflection by another participant to ensure mutual collaborative behaviour. For instance, to reduce competitive behaviour to a more collaborative behaviour with the knowledge that it is only win-win situations that bring long-term value creation and effective decision making. Both examples demand the use of the ‘thinking brain’ rather than the ‘emotional brain’ (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2012) that usually gets in the way of collaboration. Luckily further understanding is derived from the processes of trying to change the mindset of the participants in rethinking the leadership approach to more collaborative approach (Raelin, 2015). How is this improved understanding contributing to leadership effectiveness?

4.2.4.4. Improved stakeholder management: Leadership effectiveness from the organisational problem is about consistently overcoming the challenges of the dynamic external business environment. In our case, the external business environment is primarily made up of the stakeholders of the project organisation (such as the individual and institutional investors). The challenges, therefore, translate to personal, professional, organisational, economic or social values; a participant reports:

“So coming to relationships like I said- it is not only growing wealth, but about maintaining these relationships since at the end of the day they keep you in business - it is most important.”

My reflection: Wang & Huang (2006) reiterate this quote by saying that a major criterion for project success is not the traditional cost, quality and time deliverables alone but the quantity and quality of meaningful relationships developed over the life-cycle of a project. Hence the importance of the improved understanding of the stakeholders and how engagements with them will contribute to the overall strategy and corresponding leadership effectiveness. The outcome of the improvement remains further considerations for the values and ethics contained in these stakeholder engagements (Freeman et al., 2010).

4.2.4.5. Preliminary analysis: The qualitative approach I used is required to analyse the meaning rather than calculating the mean in quantitative analysis (Saldana, 2015). In this line of thinking, I found it hard to narrate the story and evaluate the outcomes without a preliminary analysis of the interview data. This outcome resulted in several reasons for the initial analysis.

For instance, I was consistently thinking and writing analysis memos together with drawing out my reflections (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Also, I was always developing interview outcomes or what Cooperrider, Whitney & Stravos (2005, p. 99) call a “summary sheet” that comes after every interview session. The interview outcomes form was designed in a similar pattern to the summary sheet especially as it contains the “appreciable quotable quote” from every interview (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stravos, 2005, p. 108). I used this kind of quote to maintain the positive core of this research and has assisted immensely in the initial analysis of interview transcripts. Again as the action researcher, I have been in this doctoral journey for more than four years now; it was a big challenge to read or observe a situation without bias to reflecting towards an insight. However, I tried to maintain a “*critically independent mindset*” as one of the main attributes of an action researcher (Harris, 2008). This mindset involved sharing the understandings of the participants not just my reflections. Finally, the preliminary analysis assisted in writing these reports while the interviews were still fresh and towards providing input for the next cycle.

4.2.4.6. Political dynamics: Our journey so far has not been very smooth, and according to Coghlan & Brannick (2010, p. 139), political dynamics is the most significant factor when it comes to researching your organisation. This factor has been seen in various ways especially in the observation of group dynamics. For instance, I observed that competitive behaviour still appears in the pattern of communication which indicates the use of positional power (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008). This outcome is an unintended consequence although there is the awareness of the objectives of this study especially in working on the quality of relationships (Coghlan & Shani, 2014). I used this awareness to sew the fabric of the aims of this study. For example, we have seen that mutual collaborative behaviour does best when the quality of relationships is at the centre; so does value creation, effective decision making and complex problem-solving. This has been admitted severally in the comments of the participants.

4.2.5. The cycle representation of the ARC 2

The first cycle revealed an appreciation of leadership effectiveness, here in the second cycle and going deeper into the action inquiry; we observed mixed reactions in line with the developing leadership effectiveness. In Figure 4.3 below, I represent the movement from the organisational challenge, actions taken, outcomes and what was done about the outcomes. These activities served as the intervention in the organisation at the same time serving as data collection for me the researcher. The specific activities were after appreciating leadership effectiveness; the participants used the ideas from the objectives in order to enhance their leadership activities. For instance, the participants in this stage; now considered leadership effectiveness as a journey and that every action had consequences; as a result, the participants now do more individual and collective analysis on issues all aimed at superior judgments. The responsibility remained with me in collaboration with the participants to carry the outputs of this cycle to serve as inputs into the last cycle.

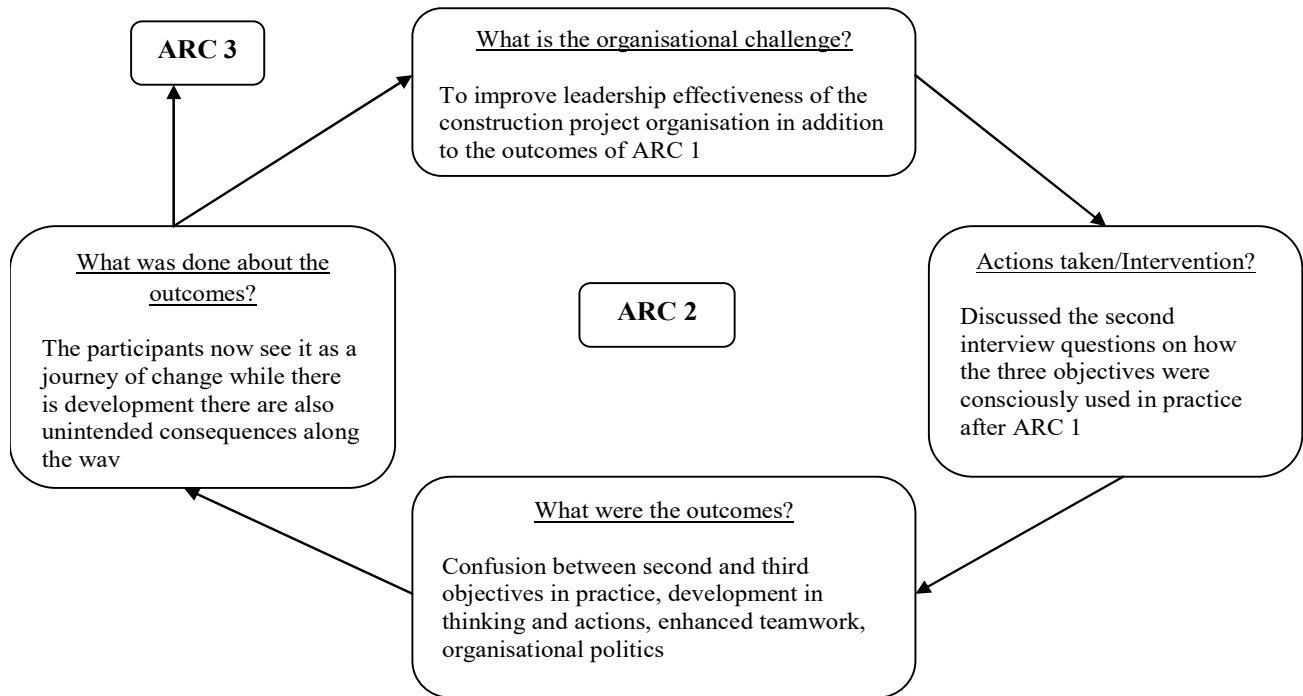


Figure 4.3 The ARC 2 – Developing Leadership Effectiveness

4.2.6. Summary

We derived significant revelations in this cycle that were either intended or unintended. The revelations came out of the different impacts of the study on us - the leadership team, and therefore we called the cycle - developing leadership effectiveness. For instance, we intended to improve our understanding of each other. We achieved this by working transparently. Again we worked on our personal and collective inquiry such as listening and probing assumptions, to even the knowledge that the objective approach of facts and figures can be complemented with qualitative thinking towards making better judgments.

Going further is not to finalise the inquiry but to understand that the processes involved are dynamic and will continue evolving. This challenge was quite a difficult task to follow mainly from the way interpretations change as organisational changes develop over time (Isabella, 1990). Additionally, I managed the unintended consequences that came with the evolving nature of AR (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). These consequences were in the way participants avoided the discussion on power issues related to decision making. The avoided areas are at the centre of the research activities of moving from individualistic to collaborative efforts. The rethinking has not been achieved although the inquiry towards it has caused a serious rethink on the issue as Lewin reiterates, the best way to understand a situation is through trying to change it (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012; Azhar, Ahmad & Sein, 2010).

4.3. The third AR cycle report: The Evolving Leadership Effectiveness

4.3.1. Introduction

The AR continued to evolve mainly from the continuous actions and reflection carried out in the action inquiry phase. The evolving nature confirmed one of the fifteen characteristics of action research (Eden & Huxham, 2006). I have presented a further discussion of these characteristics in chapter seven (personal reflections). This section is the outcome of our activities in the third AR cycle gained from the study objectives and additional insight from the AR process.

4.3.2. What are the outcomes of the second AR cycle?

There are implications from the last cycle that form part of the input and primary challenge of this cycle. For instance, we decided to explore the connection between second and third research objectives further. Again, inside the leadership team, there was the requirement to gain a deeper understanding of stakeholder management; this requirement is from having a better knowledge of ourselves. The outcome of the second AR cycle was a socially constructed approach to developing the final interview questions in areas that required additional action. In other words, similar to the last two cycles, the questions and discussions were collectively developed with all the participants.

4.3.3. What are the actions taken to overcome the challenges?

The questions we discussed in this cycle were open-ended in a similar fashion to the second AR cycle. However, I ensured that they still maintained a central connection to the objectives of the study. The central connection involved consistent revisiting in ways these objectives improve leadership effectiveness.

4.3.3.1. The understanding between members of the leadership team and stakeholder management

I facilitated actions in previous cycles – this has assisted us in having a better understanding of each other. The impact is not only on the bottom line or economic value of saving costs but also in social value. Specifically, our collective activity of focusing on win-win negotiations has resulted in the transfer of knowledge - the outcome is better stakeholder management. For example, in the narration:

“We have differences with my colleague while being more accommodating the other person is more competitive, and that helps us in negotiations. For instance, I listen and observe the negotiation and see how I can contribute meaningfully without hurting the two parties. Although we are (me and my colleague) on the same side, I try to bring stories that will help the other side to see other hidden benefits of the interaction.”

On a comparative note, there was minimal collaboration before, and now, we have understood ways of complementing each other. The analogy of this comes in sports where team members contribute to the success of the group at the same time compete for the position of play (Bar-Yam, 2003). So far, we have seen that it was desirable to be collaborative; however, in certain conditions it was impractical. These impractical situations demanded a holistic approach; for example, the understanding of when to collaborate or when to compete - a situational and contradictory approach (Raelin, 2003).

Overall there was an improvement in the way our team operates. In other words, the developing organisational culture, and according to a participant:

“There is impact. The confidence level I have seen on the whole team has considerably improved my effectiveness; it improved my focus and forecast of the entire industry. Without that confidence and encouragement, certain things would not have happened to take the project to this stage.”

4.3.3.2. Value creation from analogical reasoning and Effective decision making from critical reflection: What is similar and what is different?

Through the first and second cycles, there seemed to be an underlying connection between these two objectives. In the second cycle notably, there was some confusion between them which led to decline the need to compare and contrast them as far as they contributed to leadership effectiveness. From the inquiry activities, we saw it necessary to make a clear distinction between them. The distinction is to enhance our awareness when it comes to being more effective. Again this is in line with AR that requires revisiting of prior assumptions and correcting as the situation demands (Christenson, 2007).

We derived the similarity and difference, not from abstract definitions but were drawn out from our practical engagements and seen from the eyes of the participants. The main similarity is that both objectives were seen to have a common requirement; that is deep thought and reflection. Analogical reasoning demands the analysis of the closest scenario or specific case that is derived from a particular experience. Critical reflection, on the other hand, requires a holistic analysis of the situation taken from the perspective of the individual (that differs with personality).

Practically, the difference between the two objectives arises from a background that is either in social traits such as culture (Ely & Thomas, 2001) or individual traits like experience, thinking, interests and motivation (Greenwood & Levin, 2007):

“Ok they are similar because both of them require thinking: that analogy you are thinking has to be similar to the scenario you are comparing. So also in critical reflection, there has to be thinking before making a suitable choice. Both of them require critical reflection before making a suitable choice- they are very similar in that way.”

and in another vein...

“They are basically the same regarding your thoughts. However, they differ based on personality.”

The two objectives have thinking as a central element. In the context of project management and this project, in particular, the paradox is that professionals in the project environment are mostly occupied with optimising variables. The aim to consistently optimise does not allow sufficient time for thinking. Again project optimisation activities are operational, and according to a participant, optimisation brings additional congestion when thinking in the leadership effectiveness sphere.

4.3.3.3. Differentiating between operational and strategic decision making

We took another action to highlight the difference between instant and instinctive elements of operational decisions and the more creative, insightful and reflective elements of strategic decision making. It is important to us because time as a resource is a very scarce commodity in the project environment and there is a need for proper utilisation (PMI, 2013). The engagement in this direction was a starting point for some participants as there was insufficient knowledge in understanding between operations and strategy in a project context, especially in the weight of the decision to be made. A participant responds...

“I am not sure, a bit confusing. It is new to me. How else can we know the difference?”

In this situation, it took us time to highlight the difference by giving examples and having extended discussions through deeper questioning. These questions were to see why they belonged to either operational or strategic decision making. The outcome came both as a surprise

and a drawback. It highlighted the heavy weighting of facts and figures on both operational decisions and strategic decisions. It is often our leaving out the qualitative part that demands the art of creativity and is more applicable to strategic decision making (Austen, 2010).

The upside is that there is a clear understanding of the difference from another participant as seen in these words:

“I think operational is more short-term while strategy is long-term. When you are making a strategy, it involves everything directly or indirectly related to the business. Operations are the day to day aspect, which you can create at any time to suit that condition. Strategic decisions take cognizance of variables that do not exist at the moment; you have to forecast certain variables and scenarios so it will guide you in taking that decision. Simply put I could say operational decisions are more instinctive and guided or programmed knowledge. As opposed to strategy that is carefully focused- that will give you the bigger picture and even mould your vision in the long run.”

The critical aspect is for us the project leaders to know the difference between these types of decisions: for instance, when to make operational decisions either automatically or when to do more analysis. The analysis is more applicable to the time consuming strategic decision making. Mutual collaborative behaviour, value creation from analogical reasoning and effective decision making from critical reflection were the three objectives of this study. They provided the analysis process for strategic decision making and leadership effectiveness.

4.3.4. What are the outcomes of the actions?

We focused on the useful areas that were connected to the three objectives of the study. According to Perry & Zuber-Skerritt (1992), there are two projects. Firstly, is the practical AR project as applied to the organisational problem and secondly, is the thesis research project of developing actionable knowledge directed at this particular context.

4.3.4.1. Improved leadership effectiveness from mutual collaborative behaviour

The outcome from this objective highlighted the difficulty to change our trait. However, the trait could be slightly altered towards a better situation. For instance, a compromising trait

characterised by supporting and bargaining can put more pressure and persuasion to become a more competing trait. This alteration in behaviour improves collaboration for win-win and better problem-solving situations (Raelin, 2003). Another outcome is the situational demand for operating from two or more modes of conflict handling skills. These skills are competing, compromising, accommodating, avoiding and collaboration (Raelin, 2010). For instance, it is suitable to be competitive in one situation while accommodation is more appropriate for another situation. This outcome is an indication that mutual collaboration behaviour is essential, but there are some instances where it is not practically possible.

My reflection: From observation, a client may want to buy a house where the leadership has calculated a loss in the transaction, in such circumstances the deal can be cancelled after trying several ways of creating value for both parties. However, the right relationship should be maintained with this client as there are other possibilities of value creation that may come after some time. For instance, the client referring other investors to the leadership team; this had happened when a long-gone client referred a group to come and buy some houses.

4.3.4.2. Improved leadership effectiveness from value creation and effective decision making

The outcome of the two objectives cannot be separated, and from our practical situation, we combined them to form part of integrative thinking although Riel and Martin (2014) describe integrative thinking as the ability to hold two opposing views and still be able to function optimally, here our value creation from analogical thinking and effective decision making from critical reflection both required high-level thinking. It is improved thinking that is useful for leadership effectiveness. The high-level thinking involved a combination of understanding one's situation towards creating value from leadership activities. These activities are supported by a collaboration that entails the sharing and reflecting on assumptions and experience to ensure effective outcomes.

4.3.4.3. Improved leadership effectiveness from understanding complexity and stakeholder management

From my research design, understanding complexity from stakeholder management is not an objective of the research study. However, it was critical for us to manage the non-linear

relationships discussed earlier such as the tensions of opposing views like the cost/quality dichotomy, more closely, it is at the centre of collaborative relationships (Raelin, 2003). It has become an input to forming the new theory and will be discussed further in chapter six. Complexity in our situation is the outcome of the dynamics of change that have produced other areas of concern such as managing politics, an area I discuss further in chapter seven. Stakeholder management is a complex phenomenon where an action in one area brings an unintended consequence in another.

4.3.4.4. Improved leadership effectiveness from the appreciative inquiry approach

It is imperative to mention that our use of the appreciative inquiry approach was the bedrock of success in carrying out the action inquiry. According to Beshears & Gino (2015), there are two leading causes of poor decision making, and they are a lack of motivation and cognitive biases. Our positive approach to the study has immensely provided sufficient motivation for change. The result is for us to see every situation from an opportunistic point of view rather than a problem-solving alone that brings de-motivation (Marquardt, 2014).

4.3.5. The cycle representation of process ARC 3

We consolidated the journey on improving leadership effectiveness in the third and last ARC. The consolidation comes from understanding the issues involved in organisational change from an AR approach. We maintained an overall focus on improving leadership effectiveness while managing the use of the three objectives in addition to the new areas that came out during the process. We developed a deeper understanding of ourselves and the three objectives in such a way that the next line of action was to continue refining our thinking in these areas – in other words, an endless process of developing a permanent attitude to inquiry. This process is dynamic; as a result, we all developed capacity to continue working in this mode that has made us understand ourselves, others and the wider business environment. Figure 4.4 illustrates the way the cycle progressed to serve as an intervention, for data collection and what we all went through.

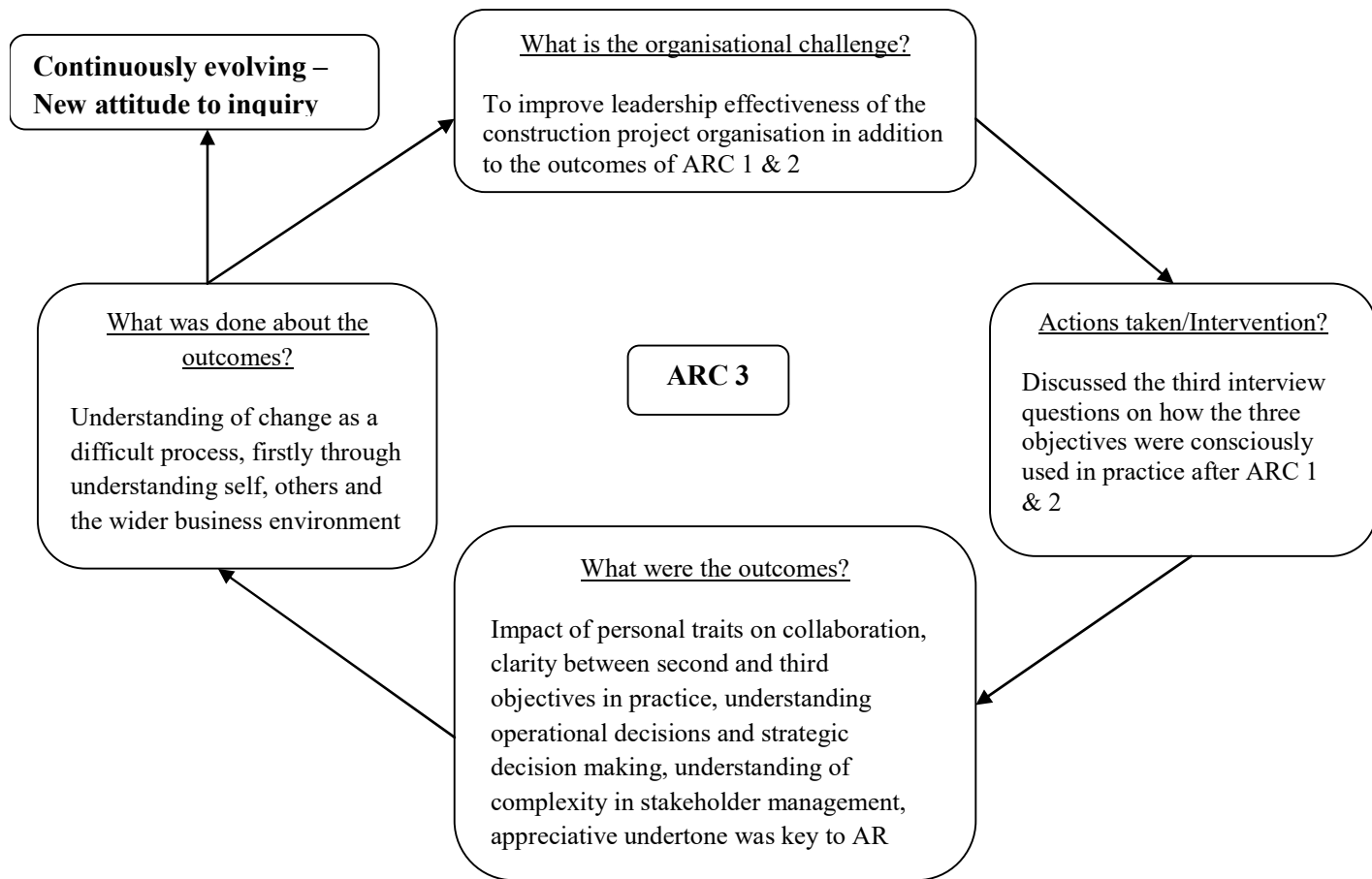


Figure 4.4 The ARC 3 – The Evolving Leadership Effectiveness

4.4. An overall evaluation of the action inquiry phase

The action inquiry phase has revealed a method to support the leadership effectiveness of the project organisation. As we are interested in action, we ask how? As Sveiby (1997), reiterates after five days just about 10% of conventional classroom learning is remembered as opposed to about 60-70% of learning by doing that we used for a continuous period of four months. In using AR as intervention, the decisions we made involved real-time technical, social, political, behavioural and cultural issues all combined in action (Raelin & Coghlan, 2006).

From contemporary process theory, management is a process – this process is similar to the improvement of leadership effectiveness activities in this study (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). That is the reason we called the third AR cycle report - the evolving leadership effectiveness. The process began with a solid foundation of knowing how to define a challenge that requires action, taking appropriate action/s and evaluating the outcomes of the measures in preparation for another action in a cyclic manner. The process broadly suits the cogenerative AR model of joint problem definition, communication, mutual reflection, learning and problem resolution through action (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, p. 94).

It may be recalled that the organisational challenge was to improve leadership effectiveness since there was efficiency. The overall effectiveness is for us to deliver the project, and the suitable action is to develop ‘soft skills’ of leadership at the individual, interpersonal, team, organisational and network level (Raelin, 2010). We had several outcomes in each, and while most of them were desired, a few were unintended. The most significant unintended consequence we got was managing politics during the whole phase- a further discussion is provided in chapter seven.

4.5. The findings of the action inquiry phase

The action inquiry phase has assisted us in analysing the data from the perspectives of context and process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Table 4.1 and below shows the findings from the three cycles of the AR.

In the transition from one cycle to another, we had continuity on some aspects, for instance, in the collaborative effort there was in-depth understanding which continued from the first through the third cycles. Alternatively, in other situations, we had an initial understanding then confusion and back to clarity again, for instance, in the interrelationship between value creation from analogical reasoning and decision making from critical reflection. In other instances, we had new subjects, for instance, the importance of stakeholder management. Overall, our broad view indicated a smooth transition in first appreciating then developing and then viewing leadership effectiveness as a continuously evolving process. The process in the action inquiry denoted the

dynamic nature of AR (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010), where we discussed mundane activities with particular attention paid to the change happening.

4.6. Summary

In this phase, description and analysis were provided. The process involved a recap of the interview questions that is after opening up the discussion and then coming back to the focus of the research. Development is seen in the way we used theories in practice to overcome the problematic espousing theories and theories in use (Argyris & Schon, 1996). Similarly, using and understanding the theories has taken us to a higher level. The higher-level is a persistent effort towards win-win situations, aiming to create value amid scarce resources and making effective decisions from desiring and achieving.

The cyclic nature of the AR process demanded the collaborative evaluation of each cycle and an overall evaluation of three cycles (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). I evaluated with each participant at the end of every cycle and a further debriefing with each of the participants at the end of the three cycles. Next, I present an individual template analysis (chapter five) with the collective findings with this chapter discussed in chapter six.

Table 4.1 Summary of findings of the three cycles of the AR

ARC1	ARC2	ARC3
<p>1)There was collaborative preliminary analysis at this stage</p> <p>2)Collaboration is a prerequisite for value creation and decision making towards the organisational problem</p> <p>3)The research participants were reinvigorated by the appreciative approach</p> <p>4)There was development of leadership thinking in the participants</p> <p>5)Overall appreciation of Leadership Effectiveness that prepares ground for change to happen hence the naming of the cycle ‘appreciating leadership effectiveness’</p>	<p>1)There was confusion between value creation from analogical reasoning and decision making from critical reflection (a diverse understanding shown by the participants even though there was the collective identification of these areas as organisational issues)</p> <p>2) Improved understanding between participants (the leadership team)</p> <p>3) The observation of organisational politics by the researcher (tacitly demonstrated by the participants)</p> <p>4) Leadership effectiveness as a process and journey hence the second cycle description as “developing leadership effectiveness”</p>	<p>1) Understanding the impact of personal traits on collaboration</p> <p>2)Understanding the similarities and differences of value creation from analogical reasoning and decision making from critical reflection</p> <p>3)Understanding when to make fast operational decisions and when to do more analysis towards strategic decisions (this is important in project management environments where time is a critical resource)</p> <p>4) Broader understanding of complexity in stakeholder management (from the integrative and collaborative underpinnings)</p> <p>5) The appreciative undertone is key in improving leadership effectiveness in this particular situation</p> <p>6) Leadership effectiveness is an evolving process and requires to continue changing through learning new ways hence naming the cycle ‘evolving leadership effectiveness’</p>

Chapter 5.

Template Analysis

5.1. Template Analysis of the data generated

As introduced in the analytical strategy (section 3.6.2.2), the second phase of analysis is the Template analysis. It involves the coding of the complete interview discussions (in the Action inquiry phase) and drawing them into themes that fit the research questions (Gersick, 1994). More specifically, is the coding of the interview transcripts, categorising them into sub-themes and then aggregating them into central themes (Crockett, 2015; Creswell, 2013). The analysis is a type of thematic analysis that is a way of seeing the data from the observation of patterns from both observations and interpretations (Boyatzis, 1998).

5.1.1. Maintaining philosophical position

The research is a social constructionist philosophical position as earlier discussed in section 3.2.1 (the preference for social constructionism). The researcher is doing an individual analysis in this phase, and therefore there are objectivity and reliability concerns (Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000). The result is that there is a bias from the researcher although an effort is made to connect the findings of the action inquiry that was collaboratively done with the participants. That is a primary reason why the a priori themes of the template analysis were useful (King, 2004) - coming to this analysis with a preset mind while remaining open to new insights. In other words, the Template analysis was found suitable mainly from the way it was used to secure a balance between a structuring of the data and giving room for flexibility (King & Brooks, 2017). The structuring of the data was drawn from the objectives and questions of the research – that is theory and structural driven and also in alignment with the action inquiry phase (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall & McColluch, 2011). The credibility triangulation of the analysis hence comes with comparing the action inquiry findings with the findings of the template analysis (Stiles, 1993). The credibility triangulation is further discussed in chapter six after the discussion of findings of the two analyses.

Template analysis has the main advantage of application in areas irrespective of their ontological and epistemological underpinnings (King & Brooks, 2017). It correctly aligns with the contextual constructionist rather than the realist and the radical constructionist position described by Madill, Jordan & Shirley (2000). In addition, the contextual constructionist position is inter-

subjective through bringing the researchers subjectivity, and that brings a complete story, rather than taking the story objectively not considering who told the story (Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000). The researcher and participants were all immersed in the organisation; therefore, bring an understanding that can bring credibility only on the context and not in a general sense. This reiterates the point that all knowledge is local and situational (Jaeger & Rosnow, cited in Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000). Characteristically, the contextualist constructionist uses a priori themes in this template analysis together with the researchers reflexivity consistently employed as seen in the action inquiry phase (King & Brooks, 2017). Only this time the reflexivity is not written as explicit reflective pauses but as implicit ways of questioning the data towards the research objectives.

5.1.2. The Template analysis procedure

The procedure used is in adhering to the seven steps of the template analysis (King & Brooks, 2017; Brooks et al., 2015; King, 2004). The first step was getting familiar with the data by reading the transcripts. The next step was a preliminary coding informed by the organisational issues and research objectives. King and Brooks (2017) call this step using a priori themes following the interest of the research. There were nine in-depth interviews in all and as a rule; the recommendation at this step is to use a small part of the data to develop the a priori themes. Here the first three interviews were used. The third step was clustering the data in meaningful ways demonstrating the interrelationships; for instance a hierarchical relationship between several levels. Here there were up to four levels – from higher a priori themes to fourth level codes. At this point, the shape of the initial template has taken place, where all the codes have been captured around the a priori themes and the emergent themes. Here three a priori themes were developed and one emergent theme that captured other areas not necessarily belonging to the theoretical and pragmatic interests of research but happen to add value to the research. Table 5.1 illustrates a single linear relationship between a priori theme and the fourth level code.

Table 5.1 Linear relationship of the a priori code to the fourth-level code in the initial template

A Priori theme	First-level code	Second-level code	Third-level code	Fourth-level code
Decision making and Leadership effectiveness	Operational thinking and action	Fast, highly technical and efficient individuals	Individualistic	Heavy work schedule/ Optimising project variables

The a priori theme is linked to the third objective of effective decision making from critical reflection. The first-level code indicates information from the data in an operational decision. The second-level code shows a characteristic of the code also from further information. The third-level code shows an individualistic approach, while the fourth-level code further explains the reason for the individualistic approach that is because of the lack of time in project environments. Operational decisions have to be made quickly by highly technical and efficient individuals. All the four codes were extracted from the narration of a technical problem by a participant and end with...

“I took the decision quickly, to improvise the example I just gave, of using the total thickness of the reinforcement to meet the specification, these types of decisions are always in demand- it is my responsibility”.

This is just one scenario; other scenarios may describe a collaborative approach or a strategic one. The initial template presents the findings at this level in the form of emergent codes on what should be done to be more effective as a leader in this project organisation. In step five of the template analysis, the rest of the data from the remaining interviews are applied to the initial template for development into the final template. See Appendix 3 for the initial template.

After the initial template, there is further development by applying the rest of the data in such a way that the initial template is modified. The modification is through inserting new information, deleting some because of redundancy or insignificance, and moving the codes to higher or lower levels in the hierarchy (King, 2004). For instance, in the initial template there were only four main themes, but in the final template, there are six main themes. The first level code 1.3. “Personal/Group behavioural objective” was deleted and its second level codes moved from the

first theme to the fifth theme. The modification was done to improve understanding and assist in giving the analysis more meaning. Here there is a combination of deletion, changing the scope and moving to a lower level code. The operators of insertion, deletion, changing scope and movement to higher level codes were applied consistently throughout the development of the template from the initial one to the final one (McDowall & Saunders, 2010). See Appendix 4 for the final template.

The last step of the template analysis process is the interpretation of the findings. It is useful to note that the researcher would have preferred to use the collaborative approach to the analysis and interpretation; however, the participants were not prepared for this part and this is a limitation of the study. The reason was due to insufficient time to learn and apply the process with some level of proficiency. The participants expressed their appreciation for taking part in the action inquiry and were satisfied with the learning and development derived from the process.

5.2. Template analysis - Findings and discussion

The template analysis started with the categorisation of the a priori themes (King, 2004). The a priori themes were coded about the three objectives of the study that is mutual collaboration, value creation from analogical reasoning and effective decision making from critical reflection. More specifically, the themes are Personal/Group behaviour in leadership effectiveness, Organisational/project value in leadership effectiveness and Decision making in leadership effectiveness. The main reason for the a priori themes is from one of the leading advantages of the template analysis that signifies the structural approach to data categorisation at the same time keeping the door open for emerging themes in the data (King & Brooks, 2017). Three other themes emerged outside the three a priori themes: Integrative approach to leadership effectiveness, Questioning approach to leadership effectiveness and Other areas of improving leadership effectiveness. Table 5.2 lists the six main themes of the final Template.

Table 5.2 Six main themes of the final template

No.	Theme
1	Personal/Group behaviour in leadership effectiveness
2	Organisational/project value in leadership effectiveness
3	Decision making in leadership effectiveness
4	Integrative approach to leadership effectiveness
5	Questioning approach to leadership effectiveness
6	Other areas of improving leadership effectiveness

As King (2012) reiterates, the coding in template analysis was both descriptive and analytic. Here in the coding of the a priori themes – the first three themes, the coding was more descriptive, however, in the emergent themes – the last three themes, the coding was more analytic since more analysis was done before the emergence.

5.2.1. Theme 1 - Personal/Group behaviour in leadership effectiveness

The theme – Personal/group behaviour in leadership effectiveness is described as the behaviour of the participants which is either individualistic/competitive or collaborative and aims to align the differences of the participants towards a win-win situation. Thus a process of naming the theme, describing it and illustrating it (Boyatzis, 1998); in the illustration, a participant narrates;

“I try to understand people so that I can make the best out of them as the main area of improving my effectiveness.”

The participant understands personal behaviour and makes an effort to interact with others collaboratively mainly to improve effectiveness. Alternatively, another participant acknowledges being competitive that is a win/lose approach. There is the demonstration of altering behaviour through critically reflecting on self and towards collaboration and the participant narrates:

“I am always appraising myself whether I am fair, like I said the other time when I have done my calculations I do not want to back out or listen and understand.”

These are just two scenarios where the participants irrespective of their behaviour they still strive to understand the situation so that a good outcome is gained. The individualistic/competitive and collaborative perspectives are the first level codes of the theme. Taking an example of the collaboration as a first level code and going to the second level code there is the effective collaboration that is described by the third level code. In other words, being aware of the usefulness of collaboration with the fourth level code going further to describe the way participants have to pay attention to collaborative efforts to be effective. Table 5.3 describes the theme and the way it is interrelated from holistic behaviour right down to actions useful to leadership effectiveness.

Table 5.3. Theme 1 and collaborative interrelationships with lower level codes

Theme 1	First level code	Second level code	Third level code	Fourth level code
1. Personal/Group behaviour in leadership effectiveness	1.1. Collaboration	1.1.4. Effective collaboration	1.1.4.1. Awareness of collaboration is key to improving practice	1.1.4.1.1. Paying attention to collaborative efforts

Another route is taken to describe the interrelationships between the theme and the lower level codes. Taking the competing/individualistic first level code is connected to the second level code which is the behaviour of technical specialists that find it difficult to change because of their background as the third level code. The reason is provided by the fourth level code which derives from the behaviour developed in previous employment. Similar to the first situation, the holistic theme has connected to the lower levels. As a result, explaining the root of the behaviour and since information is now available; the participant may know what to do about it. Table 5.4 presents the theme in connection with the lower level codes.

Table 5.4. Theme 1 and competing/individualistic interrelationships with lower codes

Theme 1	First level code	Second level code	Third level code	Fourth level code
1. Personal/Group behaviour in leadership effectiveness	1.2. Competing/individualistic	1.2.1. Technical background/specialist	1.2.1.1. Challenging because of background/experience	1.2.1.1.1. Previous employment based on technical solutions, now addition of managing and leading responsibility

The two behaviours depicted here belong to the five behaviours found in conflict management. The five behaviours are mutual collaborative behaviour, accommodating, compromising, competing and avoiding (Thomas, 1977; Raelin, 2003). This theory was discussed in the literature review. It has gotten the participants thinking about how to adjust their assertiveness and cooperation towards mutual collaboration. Although it is challenging to change behaviour, a situational approach has brought awareness to thinking and actions in that direction.

5.2.2. Theme 2 - Organisational/project value in leadership effectiveness

This theme is described as the way the participants think and act in the direction of creating value. As described in the literature review it builds on collaboration and seeks to add value to an economic and social perspective. For instance, one perspective is making negotiations that are beneficial for both parties, while another perspective sees it as using analogies from the combined experiences of the leadership team, analogies from the construction project industry or even entirely from non-related sectors. Furthermore, another perspective looks at the factors that drawback value creation with the aim of correcting them for the overall benefit and leadership effectiveness. The quote signifies theme 2:

“As an individual, I was propelled to go into this project; one of the major forces that drove me was my personal experience with a former client.”

The creation of value is seen from reflecting on previous personal and professional experience to go into this project. Table 5.5 depicts the relationship between the theme and the interrelationship with lower level codes.

Table 5.5 Theme 2 and the interrelationship with lower level codes

Theme	First level code	Second level code
2. Organisational/ project value in leadership effectiveness	2.2. Analogical sources	2.2.1. Experiences of Leadership team

Unlike in the first theme, the second theme in this part has only two lower-level codes – the first and second lower codes. The reason is in describing the theme from creating value from the previous experience. Another participant, however, narrates sources of creating value from playing Chess. Chess as a game has two opposing parties trying to beat each other, and although it is used in alternative thinking and analysis it does not lead to win-win situations - there is most often a winner and a loser – or at least coming with an aim to beat the opponent. Table 5.6 illustrates the way the lower code is related to the theme and also crucial in the way it does not assist the collaborative efforts sought for in this thesis.

Table 5.6 Theme 2 and the lower codes- Analogy from different sources

Theme	First level code	Second level code
2. Organisational/ project value in leadership effectiveness	2.2. Analogical sources	2.2.3. Other diverse sources e.g. Chess

Table 5.5 and 5.6 indicate the different sources of analogy and the way they can be useful or not. In the first instance, the experience gave the confidence to develop the project. March (2010) says that intelligence can be used in creating value and it comes from two sources. Firstly, it comes from the ability to read and experience the environment before adapting to it. Secondly, it comes from the interpretations of the experiences of life. The most critical type of experience is

its ability to provide replication (March, 2010). Although the replication was carried out in this project and indeed in any other project what is critical is the exploration of the circumstances surrounding the context. That makes experience or any other analogy sometimes useful and at other times misleading. The experience used in this project has been useful in planning the efficiency measures and less so on the effectiveness. Being effective is the reason where the next theme was important – making decisions in leadership effectiveness.

5.2.3. Theme 3 – Decision making in leadership effectiveness

The third theme is about making the right decisions that illustrate leadership effectiveness. Decision making as characterised by the lower level codes indicates being either operational or strategic. The main reason is that the project management environment in construction as described by the participants is always dynamic and characterised by being fast and requires quick responses while the strategic decisions are slower and more analytic. The engagements brought about this discussion by highlighting the confusion that is held by practitioners. The confusion is in when to be fast and intuitive and when to take more time to do more analysis as illustrated in this quote:

“The difference between operational and strategic decisions, am not sure, a bit confusing, give me instances of operational and strategic decisions.”

The confusion here signified the importance of differentiating them as seen in the Table 5.7 Theme 3 and the interrelationship with lower codes.

Both operational and strategic decisions can be taken from an individualistic and collaborative position. Although operational decisions are faster and do not allow time for collaboration, strategic decisions are more collaborative as they are more demanding when it comes to analysis before implementation. Similarly, the biases held are more pronounced in individualistic situations than collaborative. This instance can be seen on the way the leadership which was individualistic through overconfidence and illusion of control (Bazerman & Moore, 2012) to delve into two new projects even without delivering the first project - in other words, project escalation (Drummond, 2014). In the midst of the challenging project, two new other projects were negotiated. The main reasons given to support the new projects as provided by the

leadership are that the new sites will provide economies of scale at the same time new product offerings to clients. These advantages are in addition to longer-term business relationships guaranteed for sub-contractors and suppliers. According to a participant, this is without the consideration for the imperfect timing of the market from the Nigeria economy being in a recession - an ineffectiveness of the leadership team.

Table 5.7 Theme 3 and the lower codes in operations and strategic decision making

Theme 1	First level code	Second level code	Third level code	Fourth level code
3. Decision making in leadership effectiveness	3.1. Operational thinking and action	3.1.1. Fast, highly technical and efficient individuals	3.1.1.1. Individualistic issues	3.1.1.1.1. Personal biases
	3.2. Strategic thinking and action	3.2.1. Type of leadership	3.2.1.2. Collaborative, aiming for win-win	3.2.1.2.1. Groupthink in the leadership team

The first three themes came from the pre-design or the a priori themes to structure the data. More interesting, is what came out of the emergent themes outside the structured data. The extra information provided additional insight from these new areas that emerged from the engagements and are in the direction of what to do about the organisational issues and shed more light on the organisational problem.

5.2.4. Theme 4 - Integrative approach to leadership effectiveness

The integrative approach is one of the most important insights of the study. The theme is called integrative because of the thinking and acting on the three objectives of the study. There are four first level codes: collaboration from options thinking towards value creation and decision making: all forms of collaboration from a personal perspective to a broader organisational application: considering the impact of a positive approach to managing politically and finally the

consideration of these factors right from the recruitment process. The first level codes are wide-ranging and in the organisational context towards achieving leadership effectiveness the two main operational areas were considered. They are second level codes that involve looking at the high efficiency of the team and creating value for the organisation and taking the value creation more broadly to improve effectiveness. The other second level code entails personal and group behaviours that require sustenance. Table 5.8 - depicts a part of the template that reiterates the discussion on the integrative theme.

Table 5.8 Theme 4 Integrative theme and the lower level codes

Theme 1	First level code	Second level code	Third level code
4. Integrative approach to leadership effectiveness	4.1. Collaborative options/alternative thinking in value creation and decision making	4.1.1. Value creation from a technical view in project efficiency 4.1.2. Value creation from holistic approach to effectiveness	
	4.2. All forms of collaboration towards advancing project	4.2.1. Personal and organisational effectiveness as a journey	4.2.1.1. Commitment, attitude, social interaction, optimism, resilience and reliability

The integrative theme is useful in leadership effectiveness as it enhances options/alternative thinking. Options' thinking is useful in making long-term decisions, the primary importance is the flexibility to adapt the decision as situations change, and that is why inaction is a weak response to decision making (Stacey, 2011). The situation of the first project has led to capturing an exit clause in the new projects more explicitly. That is in a situation where a project cannot be delivered due to unforeseen circumstances the project can be transferred back to the owner of the land towards finding and negotiating with a different construction project organisation. This single action has dampened the tension of the project escalation earlier described – the case of delving into new projects in succession without delivering the first one (Drummond, 2014).

In collaboration, participants are different and hold opposing views. As a result, they use integrative thinking to hold these opposing views (Riel & Martin, 2014) and still be able to create value and make effective decisions. A quote from a participant illustrates:

“When I am in challenging situations, I do not contribute immediately, I listen hard on the various views presented, I then borrow ideas, refine and combine them with my thinking- this has been working for me lately...”

The primary requirement for leaders and managers is to work comfortably with complexity (Stacey, 2011). The tension came from the diverse requirement of opposing parties – such as the leadership and clients working creatively to advance the project following Gray’s definition of collaboration (Wood & Gray, 1991). The comfort is to be able to work objectively and not to be carried away by emotions. Practically, the complexities are, for example, the dichotomies of competitive/compromising behaviour, cost/quality optimisation, quantitative/qualitative approaches and so on. In this line of thought a participant states:

“My thinking always goes deeply on what can I do in this line to achieve an integrated solution. So in personal or organisational life I always want both of us to win – not only for me to win. That is my nature”.

A personal trait has depicted the way to achieve an integrated solution from an accommodating perspective that comes with less assertiveness and more cooperation (Raelin, 2003). However, in the words of a more competitive participant that tries to balance the cost/quality paradox:

“I am thinking of the best way since both are useful- is to try and balance them and have a meeting point. Where you do not inconvenience either side; for example, it does not hurt the cost element at the same time it satisfies the quality while ensuring there is no bias. Everyone will feel he has won.”

These two quotes make for better understanding of personality types and see the way effectiveness can be improved. Personality is difficult to change mainly from the biases we exhibit, these biases come from personal experience and more naturally, from the individual differences in our brains (Beshears & Gino, 2015). Therefore, the aim is not to change individuals altogether, but to assist them to be more effective. For instance, we are using Gray’s definition of collaboration, where different parties (having different personalities) work creatively towards a solution (Wood & Gray, 1991).

In negotiations with clients, there are always differences in opinion as to what should be agreed upon. For instance, in negotiating the sale of houses in the midst of scarce resources; according to a participant, what is working well is the exchange of building material that adds up to the figures of selling a house. In such circumstances, there is an indication of mutual collaborative behaviour, through the parties winning in negotiation. That is the leadership team selling a house by collecting building materials that will advance the project. Here integration is illustrated high up the main integrative theme and to the lower codes where the actual activities of the negotiation are held. Currently, this type of exchange has been carried out with success. The challenge is that it is not frequent enough to finish the project since it can only be done with building material suppliers. As a result, consistent creative ability is required for completion.

Since leadership effectiveness is a journey and not time specific like the construction project there is time to continue improving endlessly in this direction. In this realm, the participants mention that personal and organisational effectiveness is tied to consistent improvements in commitment, attitude, social interaction, optimism, resilience and reliability. Lacking in these areas are sources of ineffectiveness in construction projects (Toor & Ogunlana, 2009; Fraser, 2000). It is the continued focus of looking at the big picture of improving leadership effectiveness from the smaller thinking and actions that matter.

In the realm of the integrative theme, there were also the political elements of managing situations. The participants note that decision making especially at the strategic level is not only about being calculative and analytic, but personal interests also are common and is a reason why not all of the members can make certain decisions. A quote from a participant-

“I overheard a group of artisans complaining about not being paid, I knew at that point it was difficult for the organisation, so I used my network to refer them to another site where work was going on and they were given a sizeable job, and payments which my organisation could not afford at that time”

The quote indicates that as a member of the leadership team, the participant was in a position to understand the financial situation of the organisation and offer a solution to the aggrieved artisans. An effort was made to maintain quality relationships with them by providing an alternative source of income. The political element was that the participant was not in a position to influence their payment but rather sought for an integrative solution.

5.2.5. Theme 5 - Questioning approach to leadership effectiveness

The second emergent theme from the findings of the template analysis is the questioning approach to leadership effectiveness. The theme was useful in a way the leaders of the project critically reflected on experience to arrive at the design of this project (March, 2010). The effectiveness was seen through the analytic first level code of questioning all the variables that constitute a construction project (Chitkara, 2009). Most of the questioning was directed at the efficiency measures of the project (PMI, 2013) - although consideration was given to the qualitative aspects, it was not with the same magnitude as earlier described in one of the three organisational issues that make up the organisational problem. Table 5.9 describes this theme and its first level codes.

All effort was made to ensure that the project was planned from a detailed approach. The detail was using a questioning approach as a participant narrates-

“I sought an audience with that renowned economist and business school director so that we can have a useful conversation and gain some useful insight...”

and again-

“before we went into this project we x-rayed the whole industry remember...”

These quotes signify the confidence to go into the project even with the envisaged challenge of the upcoming elections and subsequent change of government. The questioning approach of asking learner type questions, not judgmental type led to confidence and determination to go into the project (Marquardt, 2014). The response to the ill-structuring of the project indicates that experience is useful only when closely analysed from the questioning approach. The same applies for analogy where situations are taken it is the questioning that ensures leadership effectiveness through considering the variables in the planning while leaving open, further options to consider (Copeland & Keenan, 1999; Gavetti & Rivkin, 2005, Marquardt, 2014).

The same questioning approach applies to decision making from critical reflection. While decision making is cumbersome, it is the critical reflection that assists in being sure an effective decision is made. The same quotes above are useful as evidence to making good decisions most importantly in questioning oneself against personal biases and groupthink for the whole team

(Bazerman & Moore, 2012). The organisational issues presented such as the individualistic and lack of collaboration is a typical example. However, according to Stacey (2011), collaborative efforts can only be useful with proper maintenance of power and ideology. As earlier described not everyone in the leadership team can speak for the organisation, this is useful due to the disparity in the experience of the members. However, in other circumstances, it becomes of utmost importance because of the inclusion and exclusion of decision making in the organisation. This criterion often limits creativity, collaboration and responsibility for leadership development because of the enabling and constraining elements of relationships (Elias, cited in Stacey, 2011, p. 387).

Table 5.9 Theme 5 and first level codes

Theme	First level code
5.1. Effectiveness from consistent questioning on why, how, what, where, when, who...	5.1.1. Seeking information from industry experts 5.1.2. Consistent questioning of self/group on biases 5.1.3. Enhancing teamwork through constructive criticisms and productive debates 5.1.4. Seeking clarity between operations and strategy as important because of process and outcomes 5.1.5. Macro-managing - Less individualistic to more collaborative
5.2. Questioning in the subject areas	5.2.1. Economic - through advancing the progress of the project 5.2.2. Social - through building long-term business relationships

A questioning approach to being more effective is the enhancement of teamwork from having suitable avenues to criticise and engage in productive debates. A participant narrates-

“Teamwork has greatly improved this learning attitude. It is usual to have conflicts – but we are looking for healthy conflicts...one that will add value to the organisation.”

The questioning approach is integrated into improving effectiveness where the environment allows questioning in a manner that adds value rather than a competing stance as a participant goes on to say –

“I used to give information on what I was doing, but my colleague will argue that I was crossing my boundary, that I want to know and do everything, this I have heard severally... we had to settle through a confrontation...”

The situation shows that with the misunderstanding of the questioning approach, there is the suspicion that comes from a wrong approach to questioning (Marquardt, 2014). Rather than asking in a manner that brings thought and reflection, it brings defence and closing up of discussions (Argyris & Schon, 1996). That is an additional reason where there had to be clarity in the action inquiry phase between operational decisions that were more individualistic to more strategic reasons that were complex and require collaboration (Grint, 2005).

On the whole, the questioning approach is useful in two areas in what are either the economic or social benefits towards improving leadership effectiveness. As reminder effectiveness in this context is about asking- What are the resources that will advance the level of the project towards meeting delivery? Similarly, on the social side, what are the thinking and actions that can build long-term business relations?

The first question on economic value has led to many other smaller questions in daily meetings and, as a result, to several insights. For instance, the project was designed to be self-funding. This is an organisational issue due to the current external business environment. There have been several marketing and advertising efforts including the creative exchange agreement discussed earlier. The options are too numerous to mention, and the moment there is the consideration for equity investment in the organisation – an avenue that can bring sufficient funds to complete the project. A participant narrates-

“Sales has been a big challenge, are we getting the right people? Who are they and how do we get them? What kind of value are we getting next to move this project?”

The second question on social value has raised the level of building a trusting relationship right from the paying attention to personal integrity, interpersonal, group and organisational relationships to wider network level that provides the main advantage of pooling resources and sharing of risks (Raelin, 2010). The quote below supports this discussion.

“Value is created from good negotiation skills and trusting business relationships- they are key, ...at the moment all our clients are happy with us given the circumstances”.

5.2.6. Theme 6 - Other areas of improving leadership effectiveness

The participants of the research see three main areas of improving effectiveness outside the five themes earlier discussed. These areas are also developmental and are; looking at self and identifying what will be done in such a way that absence of individual (member of leadership team) will be felt in the area of broadly assisting the organisation positively. The second area describing this theme is the awareness and readiness to invest time to learn and grow. The last area of description is that the organisation is relatively new and entails the risk tolerance of the leadership team. Table 5.10 illustrates theme 6 and the lower level codes.

The first area is the thinking of what to do consistently in such a way that absence will be felt. While it looks like individualistic thinking, it comes with collaborative thinking. Collaborative in line with Drucker (1999) who says that rather than asking how can I be a better leader, it is about asking how best to contribute to the leadership process. This assertion is especially true where all the participants are professional, and again Drucker (2010) says that professionals cannot be managed, but preferably can be made to be more productive. Furthermore, the thinking is in line with the researcher's objective and a phrase used in the curriculum vitae for more than fifteen years in -

“What can be done continuously to make a positive contribution to accelerated growth and broad-based development of an organisation?”

Working on this background ensures continuous development that will result in leadership effectiveness. Leadership effectiveness has been described and understood to be in both operations and strategy. Operationally it is about the continuous examination of personal behaviour such as moving from an individualistic to a collaborative stance and strategically is about doing all that will bring progress to the organisation both economically and socially. In this line of thought, a participant narrates-

“Really before I was going without direction. Now I am getting focused; I pay attention to what is important... In a nutshell, this area of discussion has shown me the direction to go.”

The participant indicates moving in the right direction. More specifically, from further training such as getting professional certification, and more importantly the understanding that leadership and management can be built on technical background. The evidence is seen in this transition of the researcher with a first degree in Mechanical Engineering followed by a Master's degree in

Engineering and Management and now finalising a Doctorate in Business Administration – from a purely technical to a technical management professional developing into a social scientist.

Table 5.10 Theme 6 and lower level codes

Theme 6	First level code	Second level code	Third level code
6. Other areas of improving Leadership effectiveness	6.1. Improving effectiveness so that absence will be felt by the organisation	6.1.1. Use personal resources to correct technical error	
	6.2. Development driven approach, readiness to invest time to serve and learn	6.2.1. Modification of personal habits e.g. time utilization	6.2.1.1. Examining and altering personal or professional habits on a situational basis
	6.3. Risk tolerance of leadership team	6.3.1. High risk team with capability to live with uncertainty	6.3.1.1. Experience supports the high risk taking

Adeola (2009) in his book described why engineering is development in Nigeria. The perspective is from taking the areas of development such as oil and gas, power, agriculture, irrigation, housing, manufacturing, construction all based on engineering. However, these areas of development are not led by engineers mainly because of lacking in capacity to lead in areas of high uncertainty. It is in this area that the development of this construction project suggests a solution to this significant issue. The issue is answered by the second level code of this theme; the area where the risk tolerance of the leadership team was built on focused attention on experience and enhanced a proper understanding of each other in all the members of the team.

Closer to the organisational problem is what the insights are from experience- the experience of a relatively new leadership team aiming to overcome its challenges through improving effectiveness in the construction project organisation. The useful elements include all that constitutes the personal/organisational behaviour, thinking and acting on creating organisational and project value that all come with effective decision making. More importantly, it is utilising the integrative and questioning approach to improving leadership effectiveness while opening up areas that come with creativity and adaptation. That is why the consideration for other areas is

critical and away from closing down perspectives, but instead opening new frontiers. In a participant's words;

“There has been an evaluation on what the issues are, so what is the right approach to go – the most effective way to achieve is to identify the steps, and then take the steps one at a time...”

5.3. Summary

The chapter has presented a detailed template analysis procedure while managing the balance between structure and emergence (Waring & Wainright, 2008). The findings were discussed resulting in highlights of improving leadership effectiveness. For instance, understanding collaboration and how best to use a personal and situational approach to be more effective and even creating value from paying particular attention to experience. The findings and discussion are taken further in the next chapter by combining the findings of the action inquiry with resultant development of actionable knowledge for this organisation.

Chapter 6

Discussion of Findings and Actionable Knowledge

6.1. Introduction

The action inquiry phase and template analysis have been presented. Here the findings are integrated into answering the research questions and serve as a solution procedure for the organisational problem. The integration is from a triangulation for the two analyses methods through cross-checking the findings against each other to ensure the quality of the research process (Stiles, 1993).

6.2. Findings of the research

What is of interest in the findings is not the confirmation of the theories but the discovery of new ideas on thinking and action directed at the organisational problem (Starkey, Hatchuel, & Tempest, 2009). It is still maintained, however, that the new ideas are offshoots of the theories used to illuminate the study although in an innovative and less standardised procedure (Bartunek, Rynes & Ireland, 2006).

6.2.1. Findings from the Action inquiry phase

The action inquiry indicated a direct connection between the three objectives of the study. That is effective decision making is built on value creation and collaboration – all integrated to improve leadership effectiveness (Avolio, 2007). While this is a significant finding, it is not alone in achieving effectiveness. The participants have demonstrated the significance of other factors albeit in a story like fashion (Garman, 2011). For instance, the organisation has slowed down activities mainly from the impact of the external environment. The indication is low morale on the participants, but the reinvigoration of the team was sought from taking an appreciative approach to the study as a prerequisite for all that followed (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stravos, 2005). The sole measure has had a significant impact on working on the organisational problem (Mittal & Ross, 1998).

The appreciative momentum gained from the first cycle brought about a more profound understanding between members of the leadership team. There is now a focus on self and others on what can be done continuously to improve effectiveness (Goleman, 2013; Drucker, 1999).

This understanding is built upon personal and organisational behaviour taking the sensemaking viewpoint (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). Additionally, it has brought awareness among participants that similar to management; leadership is a process. The illustration is seen in the progression of the AR cycles (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012).

Collaboration has been identified as a solution to the modern challenges of leadership in the business world (Grint, 2005; Bennis, 2007; Raelin, 2003). Building on collaboration is mainly to make effective decisions through overcoming the complexity involved such as managing the project deliverables and the diversity of the clients (Stacey, 2011). The problem has been seen throughout the engagement with the participants through interview talk and personal observations of the researcher. The response to the situation has triggered a development process of learning from either experience or other situations such as analogy (Gavetti & Rivkin, 2005; March, 2010). In this realm, the caution is to understand the inevitability of making mistakes taken in the development-driven organisation - this is away from the time-driven organisation that is urgent and does not allow for learning and development (Vroom, 2000). The implication for the organisation is that in the midst of scarce resources, there is no chance to allow time for making mistakes and learning from experience (Lundmark, & Klofsten, 2014).

Finally, the action inquiry phase has revealed that the process is a journey of development but on a non-linear scale. That is during the phases of development the challenges were continuously evolving. These challenges were requiring different approaches such as the one just described above (Coghlan, 2001).

6.2.2. Findings from the Template analysis

Similar to the action inquiry a significant finding in the template analysis is the integrative theme. The description of the integrative theme involves the thinking and acting on the three objectives of the study – these are in the areas of collaborative efforts, value creation and decision making. The theme incorporates these objectives in addition to personal behaviours that can contribute to effectiveness; for instance, commitment, attitude, social interaction, optimism, resilience and reliability as some of the terms mentioned explicitly by the participants. While these are broadly effective on a personal and organisational basis, it is especially important for

the participants of the organisation (Raelin, 2010). The reason being that technical professionals are not proficient in personal and interpersonal skills (Turner & Muller, 2005) and lower performance may have been from the ineffectiveness of the leadership (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008; Toor & Ogunlana, 2009; Fraser, 2000).

Another significant finding from the template analysis is theme 5 or the questioning approach to leadership effectiveness. It is the questioning approach that assisted the leadership team to plan and go into a construction project of this magnitude. Although the initial step was the experience, it is the questioning approach that refined the thinking and actions. A questioning approach is a form of critical reflection (Raelin, 2003; Rigg & Trehan, 2004) that is majorly supported by the appreciative undertone of asking positive questions (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2005). In this specific case, it was useful to adopt the appreciative approach to questioning built on a major strength of the team- that is efficiency. It has also assisted in overcoming the adverse effects of problematic situations from asking learning type questions and not judge type that closes up discussions (Marquardt, 2014). The adverse effects could result in defensive routines (Argyris & Schon, 1996), organisational silence (Morrison & Milliken, 2000) and resistance (Ford & Ford, 2010).

Finally, there were additional findings from the template analysis that were useful. These are the readiness to invest time for development and the consideration of the risk tolerance and maintenance of the leadership team. The developmental approach is also a finding of the action inquiry phase with the discussion presented earlier. The synthesis of the findings of the research is turned to next - through credibility triangulation (Stiles, 1993).

6.2.3. Credibility Triangulation of the findings of the research

In a general sense, triangulation does not make up for a defective study, what it does is to provide a better understanding of the way the findings were achieved while taking more than one view- for instance, in taking the dual analyses here (Thurmond, 2004). The action inquiry phase was carried out by the researcher and the participants. The template analysis was carried out singly by the researcher even though a participant and member of the leadership team went through and confirmed the findings of the final template. This section is about maintaining

quality on the findings by combining the findings that are common to both analyses phases together with integrating the others; in other words, credibility triangulation (Stiles, 1993). The credibility of qualitative research is different from the objectivity of quantitative findings where truth statements are sought (Stiles, 1993). Here the aim is about developing an understanding of a case study which is about improving leadership effectiveness in a construction project organisation (Stake, 2010). In line with understanding this single case, Schegloff (1991) suggests that due to the intertwining of the components of social behaviour, it can only be understood in specific situations. That is an additional reason why the study did not take a quantitative approach that reveals standard laws or regularity. Table 6.1 illustrates the common findings of the research based on the two analyses methods.

Table 6.1 Findings common to the two analyses

S/N	Action inquiry phase	Template analysis
1	Direct interconnection between collaboration, value creation and decision making	Theme 4 – Integrative approach to leadership effectiveness; that is about thinking and action on the three objectives of the study
2	The appreciative undertone to the questioning approach produced extended discussions on leadership effectiveness	Theme 5 – Questioning approach to leadership effectiveness; the positive approach to questions
3	Development and learning element as critical to leadership effectiveness	Theme 6 – Other areas of improving leadership effectiveness mainly on development and learning towards improving leadership effectiveness

From the illustration above the three significant findings come out from both the action inquiry phase and the template analyses. As a result, the findings are combined and named as the significant areas of understanding the way to improve leadership effectiveness in this project organisation, and these are; the Integrative approach to leadership effectiveness, the Questioning approach to leadership effectiveness and the Development and Learning approach to leadership effectiveness. The third finding – the developing and learning was evident in the action inquiry but was a first level code in the template analysis, and like any other analyses, the template can improve the level of the code if it can add value to the overall research (King, 2004).

While the labels of the outcomes sound generic- they are very specific. They are specific because the participants of the research took almost three years to arrive at the organisational problem worthy of research. The process entailed the consideration of the varying perspectives and interpretations of the participants that continuously changed over the extended period (Isabella, 1990). Also, the participants are dealing with a crisis at hand (Avolio, 2007) with a unique characteristic of asking questions on the leadership approach (Hackman & Wageman, 2007).

At the end of the literature review (chapter two), research questions were developed based on the research objectives. Next is the way the findings in this section were used to respond to those questions and towards the overall research question.

6.3. Research questions and findings of the research

The findings of the research depict an analysis and synthesis; here a discussion is provided on the way the results are used to answer the three research questions.

6.3.1. Mutual collaborative behaviour and leadership effectiveness

The first research question was: How can collaboration be used constructively to improve leadership effectiveness?

As a reminder, the main action was to rethink the individualistic leadership approach to a more collaborative approach (Raelin, 2015). However, before any collaboration can take place, there has to be either a common goal or in this case getting outcomes that are win-win for each other. Mutual collaborative behaviour is having win-win situations for both parties in a stakeholder management setting (Raelin, 2003). What precedes these favourable conditions are the personal understanding of one's conflict handling skill; that is one of a competing, accommodating, compromising, avoiding or collaborating behaviour (Thomas, 1977).

The outcome of the mutual collaborative behaviour after three cycles revealed varying results. For instance, the participants mostly showed competitive behaviour with an exception for accommodating behaviour. The competing behaviour mostly seen may have resulted from the

survival instinct of areas with dense populations such as Nigeria. Nigeria with a population of over 180m (one hundred and eighty million) people and a diversity of over 250 ethnic groups exists amidst scarce resources (Kistruck et al., 2016). Although the resources might not be scarce, the proper explanation is the under exploration and development of resources resulting from weak social and institutional infrastructure (Adeola, 2009). The participants all being Nigerians and having being brought up in such environments are naturally competitive possibly from the reason given above. The study aims to always have win-win situations from having high assertiveness and collaboration (Raelin, 2003); there still exists a significant challenge of evaluating the mutual collaborative behaviour in practical terms even though the evaluation is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Another possible reason for the highly competitive and individualistic behaviour is that the professionals belong to the applied sciences: such as engineers, architects, quantity surveyors, and builders. This background issue is very reliable to these professionals as mostly the technical abilities are based on the philosophical approach of positivist and objectivist thinking (Steiner, 1995). The outcome is leaning towards programmed knowledge from facts and figures (Pedler, 2008; Kahneman, 2011). Similarly, Ignatius (2014) says that although there is this reliance as engineers are also good at architectural thinking and logical problem-solving. However, this approach is short of solving complex and messy problems such as improving leadership effectiveness which involves managing diverse stakeholders that come with varying backgrounds and interests (Huff, Tranfield & Van Aken, 2006). These types of messy problems require collaboration from sharing broader perspectives and continuous refinement of solutions. This notion is one of the areas where the appreciative approach in this study was most helpful; through a continuous search for opportunities (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stravos, 2005).

The research intended to see how mutual collaborative behaviour can assist in leadership effectiveness from learning and the achievement of business results. The significance is seen in the former and not the latter as the confirmation of the business results is beyond the scope of the study. After the three cycles of the action inquiry phase and template analysis, the intention was broadly achieved as the outcomes holistically indicated. For instance, the individual elements of accommodation, competition, individualistic, objective thinking reiterated that action was needed to improve collaboration. The achievement gained practically was the understanding of each

other, teamwork and always towards win-win irrespective of differences. The description still suits the type of collaboration which entails stakeholders who share different perspectives agree to improve the situation for an overall benefit (Wood and Gray, 1991).

6.3.2. Value creation from analogical reasoning and leadership effectiveness

The second research question is: How can analogical reasoning be used towards value creation?

After gaining the awareness of achieving mutual collaborative behaviour, the next question seeks to build upon creating value by an analogical reasoning process. In another sense, it is going towards finding creative solutions without using any form of force; whether economic or positional power (Malhotra, 2016) - this brought about new outcomes. These outcomes were the difficulty in understanding what analogies were. For instance, are previous learning experiences the only ideas applied to organisational situations (Gick and Holyoak, 1980)? In this line of thought, Hofstadter (2016) says that all thinking is from analogy and that analogies are the fuel and fire of thinking.

The conclusion was that every thought that was worth it required deep thinking, and through this outcome, there was clarity between this objective (value creation) and the third objective (effective decision making). While this objective builds directly on mutual collaborative behaviour, the first objective, it also links to the third objective - effective decision making from critical reflection. This sequence was not apparent until after the third AR cycle. The further understanding was that while the creation of value from analogical reason must be critically reflected upon before application, effective decision making could also come from analogical reasoning. The major similarity is the requirement for advanced level thinking. This advanced level thinking is a prerequisite for leadership effectiveness. For the action researcher, high-level thinking and decision making is a primary skill for managers that are doctoral level learners, thinkers and leaders (Anderson, 2013).

Similar to the first objective the situation of the organisation is in Nigeria has an impact on the sources of analogical reasoning. In addition to personal experiences and interests, there was a practical implication that many of the analogies cited came from traditional and cultural

teachings. Igusi (2014) in his thesis described the traditional values of Nigeria as getting in the way of modern business practice and leads to leadership ineffectiveness. The implication is that cultural diversity plays a significant role in the behavioural elements that shape organisations (Pieterse, van Knippenberg & van Dierendonck, 2013). These analogies come from many cultural beliefs and from different countries that are still applicable today (Hofstede, 1993) even though there are closer analogies from contemporary business sectors like in entertainment, sport, health and information technology (Hirsch, 2014). These sectors borrow from each other to answer complex and uncertain challenges that require action. This action is not taking the activities superficially but after thorough and critically reflective activities (Cunliffe, 2008).

The primary challenge that came as an outcome was the lack of awareness that most creativity comes from analogical reasoning. Now with this new knowledge, there is a consistent application that has brought confidence (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2004) and potentially could improve effectiveness as a participant has noted. What is not determined yet is a method of quickly sourcing a fitting analogy and applying it with resultant organisational outcomes that are relevant. This area can also be explored as a further research area so that leaders can quickly scan their environment and make a suitable choice of analogy and application more effectively. The further research area suits what Freeman et al., (2010, p. 290) ask in what new disciplines are required to bring a better understanding of business.

6.3.3. Effective decision making from critical reflection and leadership effectiveness

The third research question is: How can leadership effectively utilise critical reflection towards effective strategic decision making?

The purpose of the third objective was to ensure effective strategic decision making. More specifically, critically reflect on the inhibiting effects of personal and group biases (Bazerman & Moore, 2012; Kahneman 2011). An outcome of the process revealed a connection with the first objective or mutual collaborative behaviour with this objective. The connection is the pre-requisite of being collaborative from high assertive and cooperative behaviour (Raelin, 2003).

An even more important outcome is the little participant awareness between operational and strategic decisions. In the project organisation, the operational decisions come from programmed knowledge (Pedler, 2008) of optimising the project deliverables such as cost, quality, time and other project resources. Strategic decisions, on the other hand, are characterised by the social, cultural, economic, and broader considerations and most importantly overcoming the challenges of complexity (Stacey, 2011; Shenhar, 2004). It means that a knowledge pool is required to put together a big picture for the organisation. The performance of the organisation regarding these variables was coming short mainly due to the current economic recession in Nigeria as described in the organisational problem. The effort in this study is then both operational and strategic through the understanding at personal and organisational levels to enhance the skills that will bring better effectiveness and hence achieve the long-term vision.

From the literature review, effective decision making comes from critically reflecting on the decision. This information led to the questions on the difficulty of reflection (Rigg & Trehan, 2008) and whether it could be taught (Russell, 2006). The outcome was that the practice of reflection takes considerable time to perfect and although it is confirmed to improve team performance (Schippers, Homan & van Knippenberg, 2013); there is a quick improvement from a collaborative approach. The improvement is seen in practice in not trying to simplify situations (Kahneman, 2011) to avoid confusion (de Bono, 1999), but in being open on the assumptions taken and critically reflecting on them. Again the improvement is in line with Mintzberg (2004) that organisational members have hidden knowledge and the only way to draw the information out is through critical reflection.

At the beginning of the action inquiry, there was some discomfort in using critical reflection. The discomfort comes from the exposure it gives to saying out one's feelings that are usually closely held. However, with a further understanding, it gave more confidence in approaching situations as it prepared the thoughts to narrate a way of arriving at a decision. These activities were either focused inward on questioning oneself or focused outward on questioning the organisational processes (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010).

Overall the effective decision-making process revealed conforming to evidence-based decision making. This kind of decision-making comes from four sources of enlightenment: practitioner expertise, local context, research evidence and perspectives from people affected by the situation

(Briner et al., 2009). From the outcome of this study, there was a lot of decision making from critically reflecting on the practical experience, understanding of the organisational context and a thorough evaluation of facts of figures. The three areas were already satisfactory although improvement is needed, what was less present is the consideration for wider perspectives from stakeholders. The stakeholders come with personal traits, culture and human nature (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010); an additional discussion on culture and the leadership behaviour is provided below.

6.3.4. Culture and the leadership behaviour

Culture is described as the thinking, feeling and acting of an individual or group and is made up of two connected types: national and organisational cultures. National culture is derived from early stages of learning such as family and school while organisational culture is learnt in practice at work (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). In this sense, culture has affected the leadership effectiveness of the organisation. How? From the discussions given above (section 6.3.1.), competitive and individualistic behaviour stood in the way of collaboration. Similarly, the analogies used in value creation (section 6.3.2.) were derived from traditional (cultural) sources rather than more contemporary areas like sport, health, and business.

The competitive and individualistic behaviour are personal traits, and according to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) are both learnt and inherited and are based on a culture that is learnt - Culture itself is based on the inherited human nature. Since personal traits can be learnt and inherited it means that culture can be developed to be more useful. The usefulness is in learning new ways of doing things that will result in a better organisational culture.

The national culture in Nigeria is complex. The country has the highest population in Africa and is made up of over 250 ethnic groups and is about 50% Muslims, 40% Christians and 10% having indigenous beliefs (Zagorsek, Jaklic & Stough, 2004). The multi-cultural society in Nigeria means that values and practices differ and this organisation is located in the Nigerian capital, Abuja - where all the stakeholders of the organisation come from all over the country. In improving effectiveness, there has to be a certain level of awareness of what Bennett (2017) calls intercultural sensitivity and competence. These intercultural theories are about understanding and

moving from ethnocentrism (Denial-Defence-Minimisation); that is against other cultures, to ethnorelativism (Acceptance-Adaptation-Integration); that accommodates other cultures.

On a broad view, English is the official language in Nigeria and unites the nation. On a narrower view, there are similarities in the educational background of the participants – all being technical professionals. Although the technical background enhances individualistic traits from facts and figures, the participants understand the weight of the organisational goals and objectives resulting in an organisational culture that supports performance (Nwibere, 2013). The implication is that with this enlightenment, the analogies used for value creation may be improved. The improvement may be from utilising more contemporary and tested approaches towards enhanced leadership activities; for instance, effective decision making.

Previous studies have shown that the Nigerian culture is midway between individualism and collectiveness: an indicator of the power distance index - one of the dimensions used to view different cultures (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Alternatively, the finding in this research indicates more individualism than collectiveness. Why? The reason may be partly explained by the educational level and experience of the participants. As earlier discussed there is high efficiency in the organisation – an indication that facts and figures are still very reliable. The over-reliance has closed part of qualitative thinking that is desired in this study.

Qualitative thinking is useful for working on complexity issues that differ from right-answer facts and figures. The aim here entails the integration of cultures (Bennett, 2017) from the social creative abilities (Aceros, 2012) of the participants to use their differences and creatively arrive at better results (Gray, 1989; Pieterse, van Knippenberg & van Dierendonck, 2013). Consistency in these activities is expected to develop a better organisational culture through reducing delays in construction (Arditi, Nayak & Damci, 2017) that come with adverse effects (Aibinu & Jagboro, 2002). Summarily, it is the role of leadership to understand, build and sustain an excellent organisational culture since it is directly tied to performance (Warrick, 2017) even though here there are other cultural diversities to consider such as gender, class, and generation (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

6.4 What is the actionable knowledge?

The discussion above has thrown more light on the way to improve leadership effectiveness while taking the perspective of the three research questions and an additional discussion on culture. The aim here is to provide an in-depth description of the case towards better understanding and problem resolution (Stake, 2010).

The primary research question was:

How can a method be developed to improve leadership effectiveness in the construction project organisation?

According to Saunders (2011) answering this type of question requires the development of actionable knowledge mainly from the revealing rich insights useful for messy problems such as improving leadership effectiveness. That is from giving a more encompassing approach beyond answering the three research questions. These are the three main findings of the research and embedded in them were the three research questions. These three major findings were; the integrative approach, the questioning approach and the development and learning approach to leadership effectiveness.

Actionable knowledge entails not only knowing what to do but how to do it (Tenkasi & Hay, 2004). In this line of thought, the work in this research has highlighted what to do in the areas of not only collaboration, value creation and decision making as suggested by the organisational issues and literature (Bartunek, 2008). The research has revealed the way these subjects have brought about new findings such as the leadership knowing and acting in a way that entails integrative thinking, questioning and a broader development and learning.

The interest here is the actionable theory – where Van de Ven (2007) defines theory as an explanation of relationships among concepts or events within a set of boundary conditions. The relationships here are the engagements inside the collaborative efforts. The concept or event is the improvement in leadership effectiveness desired while the boundary conditions are the context of the research; for instance, the construction project organisation in focus that is situated in Abuja, Nigeria.

6.4.1. Integrative Approach

The Integrative approach involves integrative thinking and acting. Riel and Martin (2014) describe integrative thinking as holding two or more opposing views and still be able to function optimally. Furthermore, this description of integrative thinking as understood through the findings of the research indicate that collaboration towards win-win, value creation and effective decision making are all interrelated in such a way that the integrative approach links them up. The linking is through understanding the way these elements work linearly and at certain times non-linearly. According to Stacey (2011), these relationships are dynamic and continuously changing with circumstances. These circumstances are, for instance, the unpredictable nature of power and ideology that are in the general engagements within the leadership or with clients. It is the focus on these engagements that are useful in business relationships and require complex responsive processes (Stacey, 2011). Complex responsive processes are human actions that function amid complexity issues- for instance, effective responses to confusion (de Bono, 1999) and wrong decisions (Kahneman, 2011).

According to the findings, the Integrative approach also entails options thinking (Copeland & Keenan, 1998). It was useful in making fruitful negotiations; for instance, in negotiating the new project sites with the landowners, several exit options were brought up and discussed. In the end, the negotiation was closed successfully while leaving some options open – this had the main advantage of adapting the project as new situations unfold. In this sense, the leadership used previous information and knowledge (Sage & Small, 2006) to shape the negotiation. In other words, the way old information was used in a different way (Mumford et al., 2000).

In another vein, the integrative approach takes the personal and organisational effectiveness from the daily activities of commitment, attitude, optimism, resilience and reliability. These came from the participants even though there is the tendency as Argyris & Schon (1996) reiterate “espoused theories” rather than putting the theories into use. This is a significant challenge to organisational development and comes from mental maps that make individuals act in the ways they mainly do (Bartunek, 2008). To overcome these challenges is to understand the way leaders ask questions (Marquardt, 2014); an area that is discussed in the next section - the questioning approach.

The leadership in this organisation requires the integrative approach mainly to combine the technical background of the professionals and members of the leadership team in construction management with qualitative thinking (Austen, 2010). The reason comes from the complexity of the challenge in the organisational problem, for instance, in the absence of a direct answer to the recession in the business environment. As a response, time may be deployed in practising integrative thinking and applying this new knowledge in a cyclic manner of collaboratively identifying problems, seeking appropriate actions, connecting with relevant stakeholders and making evaluations (Riel & Martin, 2014; Martin, 2007).

Summarily the integrative approach is actionable from three perspectives; firstly, through the integration of the three objectives, secondly, from the way to integrate the technical background of the participants with a broader leadership view, thirdly, the integration of these two elements together with the two findings of the questioning approach and development and learning.

6.4.2. Questioning Approach

As mentioned severally there was caution in asking the type of questions that suited the research with part of the solution being the use of the appreciative approach of questioning the participants. From the theoretical guide, it became even more important to consider the power of questions (Marquardt, 2014; Mumford, 1996). The theoretical guide was used to explain the way a lack of critical reflection affected the implementation of the project- but critical reflection is about questioning and in a broader view away from this organisational issue even business schools are guilty from this point of view (Muff, 2012; Mabey, Igri & Parry, 2015). For instance, the choice of the self-funding model- that is previous experience was directly applied not minding the current circumstances (Schon, 1983). The current circumstance included the upcoming external changes in the business environment and a lack of questioning of the leadership team on whether it can see the project through (Toor & Ogunlana, 2009). On this organisational issue, the experience was an imperfect instrument (March, 2010) that may have resulted from personal and group biases (Hammond, Keeney & Raiffa, 1998; Coghlan 2001).

From the findings of the research, effectiveness from the questioning approach was beneficial from two ways. These were firstly the engagements within the leadership team directed at

personal and group biases and secondly with clients and other construction industry experts (e.g. Goldsmith, 1996). These engagements involved questions directed at constructive criticism and productive debate sessions usually looking at the daily activities. More generally, it is looking at the economic and social benefits of the way questions lead to improvement in the bottom line (Badaracco, 1992). Marquardt (2014) insists that effective questions be those that accomplish their aims and also improve positively, the relationship between the participants. In this case, the questioning approach has improved the understanding between members of the leadership team. The perspective is seen through the alignment of the team towards effectiveness by cyclically and collectively working on the same areas of concern (Greenwood & Levin, 2007).

In another vein, the questioning approach was useful; firstly it was used on the content that is directly on the areas of concern and secondly on the process of problem resolution (Spitzer & Evans, cited in Marquardt, 2014, p. 97). In line with this thought, Dick and Greenwood (2015) suggest that in AR, there is no separation between theory and method. Practically here the questioning has supported both the actionable knowledge (theory) and its deployment through the AR (method).

In the introduction of this research, the identification of the problem came from CAL activities that span for more than three years. The primary tool was continuous questioning through critically reflecting on issues from a collaboration that came from diverse sources. Similarly at the solution phase or the AR is also from questioning and inquiring. These activities are what Revans called the alpha and beta philosophy (Rigg & Coghlan, 2016). The significance is the learning (Revans gamma philosophy) that comes out of the combination of programmed knowledge and insightful questioning (Revans, cited in Pedler, 2008). Mumford (1991) takes this further and says it is insightful questioning from the participants that is added to programmed knowledge and another bout of insightful questioning that leads to real learning. Insightful questioning is not simple questioning; it involves listening, reflection, research and participation (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010) – all this over an extended period.

Summarily the questioning approach is actionable and can assist in overcoming self and group biases, carrying out the research itself, and according to Marquardt (2014) questioning is the ultimate leadership tool mainly from the way it empowers, develops and assists leaders. Central

to the questioning approach is for developmental and learning purposes; the next section is a discussion in this area.

6.4.3. Development and Learning approach

Although development and learning are continuously advocated in organisational development (Raelin, 2003; Argyris & Schon; 1996), it is most critical here where a suitable narrowing down has been identified. As a reminder, the project is behind schedule, and a quick recovery is required for progress to be seen. One participant sees the development and learning in a way that not only assists the organisation broadly in taking specific steps that contribute continuously to the advancement but in such a way that absence will be felt immediately. While this appears from a competitive perspective, it is a high leadership aspiration – for instance, asking insightful questions that always lead to a quick resolution (Marquardt, 2014).

Even as all the participants were seeking advancement in their professional fields for instance, from a professional certification, they were more focused on finding an immediate solution to the organisational problem. There is the deployment of interactive thinking on focusing on self, others and the wider business environment (Goleman, 2013; PMI, 2013). This is evident in the competitive behaviour in some participants- the insight is that collaborative behaviour is not always effective and a times situational approach to leadership is suitable (Vroom & Jago, 2007). Most effectiveness is then from an understanding of behaviour in conflicts and knowing what to apply. In other words, the participants' choice of whether to avoid, accommodate, compete, compromise and collaborate with other parties (Raelin, 2003).

The understanding between members of the leadership team has brought additional confidence such as the risk tolerance of the team. The participants have not worked long enough and lack the necessary requisite skills, such as knowledge, performance and personal effectiveness (PMI, 2013), although the level of proficiency in project management was commendable. However, from a holistic perspective of leadership, the effectiveness of the team fell short mainly from the inability to evaluate the risk involved in the main construction project. There are two risk areas quantitative and qualitative (PMI, 2013). It is the qualitative risk that was deficient through an

insufficient analysis of the occurrence of particular concerns and the impact they may have on project delivery.

Summarily, the development and learning approach in this sphere is actionable from the way the participants can develop professionally (e.g. from professional certification and problem resolution). Again it is beneficial to take a situational approach to leadership (e.g. when to compete or collaborate) and also in the development of the actionability of the whole research process itself that is more pronounced in the development of researcher as discussed on the next chapter.

6.4.4. A method to improve leadership effectiveness in a construction project in Nigeria

The method to improve leadership effectiveness in this organisation is a journey, and there are a vast number of ways of enacting the process (Curphy & Hogan, 2011; Overfield, 2016; Prati et al., 2003). The journey combines the utilisation of the personal and organisational knowledge system (Austen, 2010; Kloppenborg & Tesch, 2015), the organisation, and the external business environment. The knowledge systems are made up of the application of the knowledge that has already been developed or programmed knowledge and moving towards the development of new knowledge or new insights (Pedler, 2008; Candy & Edmonds, 1994). There are three types of knowledge involved; directional, conceptual and experiential (Austen, 2010). The directional knowledge here is the broad improvement of leadership effectiveness. The conceptual knowledge is thinking about what the organisation can become while enacting the daily activities narrated in the findings and the experiential knowledge of the participants that is drawn towards sound decision making.

The three organisational issues were collectively identified to be the inability to collaborate, lack value creation and effectiveness decision making. These problems are specific to the organisation with the main action being to collaborate with the potential to create value and make effective decisions. While this was the expectation and the aim broadly understood, it was the significant insights that assisted in developing this actionable knowledge. The actionable knowledge entails being aware of these organisational issues and taking an integrative, questioning and development and learning approach. Similar to the three issues that combined to

form the organisational problem, the insights of the three main findings also combine in different ways to assist the efforts of the leadership team that relied on trusting relationships (Turaga, 2013).

Effectiveness, unlike efficiency, cannot be measured on a scale but be seen to meet the requirements broadly. The requirements are in designing and implementing a study that will get the organisation to growth and advancement through meeting the set deliverables and beyond. In line with the purpose statement of this research, leadership effectiveness is not achieved at a go; it is about beginning the journey and moving in a learning sphere as the main achievement. In between is the management of complex, technical and multi-disciplinary teams (Ofori & Toor, 2012). Figure 6.1 describes the contribution made to practice in the construction project organisation with the actionability areas further illustrated in Table 6.2.

Corley and Gioia (2011) presented a two-dimensional matrix of contribution to theory and contribution to practice. One dimension is called the utility of research, the other being its originality that is either in small steps or revelatory. The research here can be said to be high on practical relevance and low on contribution to theory at the same time it is incremental and not revelatory. The conclusion is that actionable knowledge is proficient in demonstrating what to do and how to do it as the method developed to achieve effectiveness in the construction project organisation.

The method developed is in line with Strategic Project Leadership® (Shenhar, 2004, 2015) earlier discussed in the literature review (chapter two). The similarities are broadly on improving leadership and the project portfolios from a project perspective in addition to the art of the service perspective (Hogan, Curphy & Hogan, 1994). Most importantly, the similarity is in the creation of energy that brings excitement. The appreciative inquiry method utilised in this study has significantly impacted the outcomes. The outcomes are from taking positive steps and seeing the opportunities in a business sector that is characterised as down and flat at the moment.

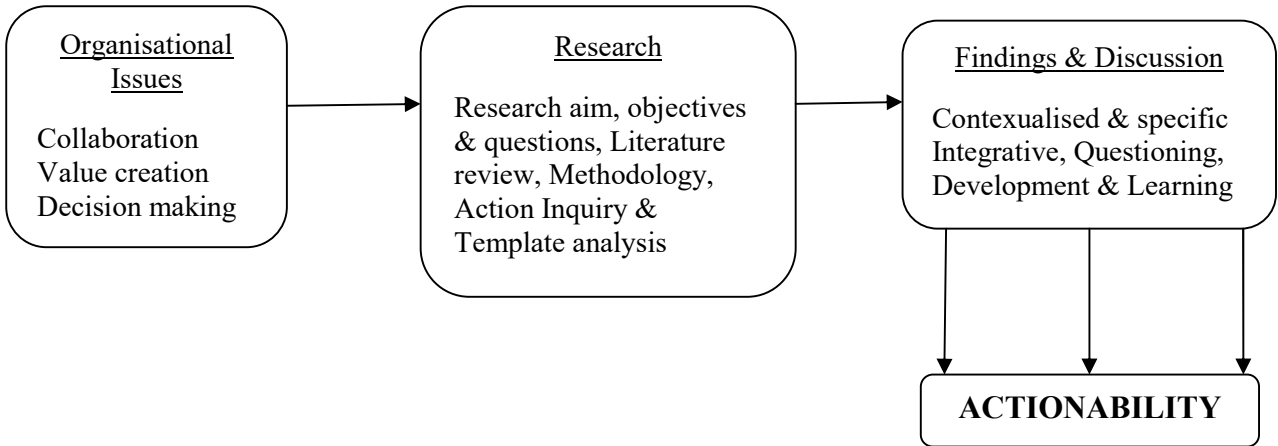


Figure 6.1. Contribution made to the construction project organisation

Significant progress for the organisation is that the challenging times were utilised towards the development of an internal response to an external challenge. The external business environment has improved from the excitement of news on the end of the recession in Nigeria (Inyang, 2017). Although the exchange rate to the US dollar remains high, it has improved. In September 2016, it was \$1 (United States Dollar) to N480 (Nigerian Naira) in the parallel market. Now in February 2018 (time of writing this report), it is \$1 to N365 a significant improvement of twenty per cent gain for Nigerian naira on the US dollar. The appreciation of the naira is directly from the favourable government policies to stabilise the exchange rate that has impacted the building construction industry. Again the price of oil which is the mainstay of the Nigeria economy has risen from \$29 in January 2016 to almost \$70 in February 2018 (Ycharts, 2018). As earlier mentioned, the United States Dollar is critical to the construction industry as sixty percent of the building materials are bought with the currency (Okeke, 2016). The hope remains a very positive approach to the challenging times, and proper utilisation of time to improve leadership effectiveness expected to yield fruit in future.

6.4.5. Actionability

Single cases like this one have limitations in the way we can draw out implications that lead to recommendations (Bartunek & Rynes, 2010). These limitations are in agreement with AR principles that are mainly concerned with actionable knowledge that is specific, contextual and particular (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Alternatively, I have evidenced in many parts of this research, the way to adapt situations, for instance, in the critical reflection of analogies. In this line of thinking it means we may use the Actionability illustrated in Table 6.2 to improve leadership effectiveness in other situations. The Actionability may enlighten our thinking from causing us to have heightened awareness of situations; highlight areas where we need additional training; provide us learning opportunities; cause us to redesign or restructure our organisation to even having criteria for recruitment purposes (Bartunek & Rynes (2010). A point to note, however, is that Bartunek & Rynes work was done on scholarly research articles rather than practice-based articles (Doh, 2010) – an encouraging sign that either as scholars or practitioners, we may contribute to each other’s work (Jenlink, 2009).

6.4.5.1. Actionability of the Integrative approach

1. The three objectives (Collaboration, Value creation and Decision making)

In this organisation, we are now aware of the value of the three objectives. The leadership of other organisations needs to understand their organisational culture and personal traits. These elements may assist the individual or group to have a better way of collaborating to create value from useful analogies all directed at making effective decisions for their organisations. However, the recommendation is that we do need training through consistent practice on these objectives.

2. Technical background and integrating leadership thinking and action

As mentioned in the introduction, all of us in this study are technical professionals; this indicates a positivist background. For instance, we have all demonstrated a high level of efficiency in our leadership activities. New thinking has brought us the awareness that leadership effectiveness requires qualitative thinking that comes from deep thought and collaborative critical reflection. Our transition in thinking from positivist to a social constructionist epistemology has opened up

avenues for the consideration of multiple perspectives (Kember, Hong & Ho, 2012) that has the potential for producing better situations.

3. Three objectives in combination with questioning, development and learning

We found the three research objectives to be beneficial. However, from further analysis, I developed three new areas; these are the Integrative, Questioning and Development and Learning approaches. These areas have provided additional capacity to improve leadership effectiveness from the integrative perspective taken in this study. The insight is that leaders are saddled with the responsibilities of dealing with messy problems. The integration of these areas into leadership thinking provides an additional toolkit to be used in having desired outcomes.

6.4.5.2. Actionability of the Questioning approach

1. On Self and group biases

We all come with biases either as individuals or groups. The questioning approach has shown us the way to minimising the adverse effects of these issues. For instance, positivism is a bias we brought to the research; however, the specific type of questioning brought openness and the desire to discuss our previously held assumptions. These assumptions are full of bias; collaborative exploration of these biases has assisted in understanding ourselves and others (Raelin, 2001). Although, the participants resisted openness in the beginning, what made it more appealing came from trusting relationships, the anxiety to learn and the desire to achieve. The implication is that interpersonal, team, organisational and network level relations may be improved from this kind of openness (Raelin, 2010).

2. Inquiry/problem definition

Similar to the way we questioned our assumptions, we used the questioning approach to inquire into problematising the situation. The activities were to collectively identify the organisational issues and then combine them to form the organisational problem. This is no easy task as many would say that identifying and defining a problem goes a long way in providing a solution. As leaders of the organisation, our challenge is compounded as there are other areas like power and

ideology (Stacey, 2011), political dynamics (Holian, 1999), ethical issues (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010), cultural considerations (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010) all resting on underlying economic, social and environmental aims as centre of attention for our business (Simpson, 2017).

3. Understanding of questioning as the most effective leadership tool

As leaders, the questioning approach has assisted us in many of this research endeavours especially in the way it provided assistance, development and empowerment (Marquardt, 2014). In this sense, we can assume that questioning does not only lead to fresh perspectives; it also invites participation (Greenwood & Levin, 2007) and resultant collaboration. Of importance is for us and others to understand that the questioning is of a particular kind – it has the main features of being appreciative, learner type and always seeking to open up opportunities.

6.4.5.3. Actionability of the Development and Learning approach

1. Professional certification and capacity for problem resolution

As participants of the research, we are all seeking to improve our development and learning. The development is from obtaining professional certification or through higher educational qualifications in the various fields of the construction industry. The aim is to continue professional development that is combined with ongoing experience; the development and learning are practically directed at improving effectiveness. Odusami, Iyagba and Omirin (2003) studied the different professional fields in construction such as engineering, architecture and quantity surveying. Their findings suggest that there was no significant difference in the performance between these professions; conversely, there was a higher performance from having an added qualification/certification and experience related to the construction industry.

2. Taking a situational approach to leadership (when to compete or collaborate)

As higher-order thinkers, we are expected to make decisions based on the situation. The higher-order thinking differs from emotional thinking that gets in the way of effectiveness (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2012). Although I have argued severally towards collaborative aims, there are certain instances when competition is more appropriate. For instance, as participants, it will

be fine to be competitive in earning higher educational certificates or specialised professional certifications at the same time collaborate to lead the organisation effectively. At times it will be suitable to choose to be in either collaboration or competition. The main aim is to use the thinking ability to know when to collaborate, compete, collaborate and compete, compete and collaborate as the situations demands. According to Baryam (2003), this kind of situational approach is dynamic and assists leaders in handling complexity issues.

3. Actionable knowledge itself (especially on the researcher)

This finding has important implications for individuals aiming to develop their effectiveness. How? As leaders, there is no contention on the importance of making decisions – and in this context, it is through making logical arguments. As a researcher, I have learned to make these kinds of arguments. Specifically, as Booth et al., (2016) presents, I make claims that are backed up by logical reasons while giving suitable evidence. This mode of argument does not work against my collaborative efforts as I acknowledge and consider alternative explanations. Furthermore, I step back to see whether my arguments are warranted by the claims I make. The implication is that it did not take me a day or two to have an acceptable level of proficiency in making arguments. It took several years to arrive at the actionable knowledge described in this thesis.

Table 6.2 ACTIONABILITY

Integrative approach	Questioning approach	Development & Learning approach
1.The three objectives (collaboration, value creation, decision making) 2.Technical background and integrating leadership thinking and action 3. Three objectives in combination with questioning, development and learning	1.On Self and group biases 2. Inquiry/problem definition 3. Understanding of questioning as the most effective leadership tool	1. Professional certification and capacity for problem resolution 2. Taking situational approach to leadership (when to compete or collaborate) 3. Actionable knowledge itself (especially on the researcher)

6.5. Summary

The findings from the action inquiry phase and template analysis have been discussed in such a way that actionable knowledge has been developed. However, as with the subjective nature of qualitative research (Boyatzis 1998), the interpretation is not without the bias of the researcher (Coghlan, 2001). Interestingly, the live nature of action has assisted in mitigating the adverse effects of the bias through the collaborative approach to the research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Again AR is full of choices that are made to suit the situation and quality demands being transparent throughout the process (Reason, 2006). The researcher's position is brought in the next chapter before the concluding comments.

Chapter 7

Personal Reflections: My Doctoral Journey

7.1. Introduction

I started this thesis with the awareness that the knowledge economy is the backbone of contemporary management. Success in this type of economy belongs to those who understand themselves, their main strengths and values and most importantly in how they can make the most significant impact (Drucker, 1999). To understand myself means to use reflexivity which Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) describe as “*the interpretation of interpretation*” - another layer of analysis after the discussion of findings. In other words, it is to know as an individual, what I bring to both the process and the outcome of this research study (Anderson, 2008). While attention on the course of the research entails the methodological reflexivity, the outcomes of the process are resultant effects of epistemic reflexivity (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). In methodological reflexivity, I aim to improve the methods, in this instance, the multi-paradigmatic approach to the action research methodology. On epistemic reflexivity, I deal with becoming an effective doctoral practitioner through using the outcomes to see the impact it has on me the researcher and the leadership team as a whole.

To present reflexivity in this context means to analyse what I bring to this research, from my professional or practice background to the doctoral journey that ends with this thesis. I continue here with reflexive activities on using action research. These activities are with an added discussion on managing organisational politics as the most challenging aspect of the research. Finally, I present a discussion on not just being a doctoral practitioner but an illustration of being an effective one. The illustration is through setting out to achieve desired outcomes of improving leadership effectiveness in a practical setting and achieving it.

7.2. What do I bring to this action research?

As a personal reflection, it is worthwhile to provide information on what were the skills brought into the development of this inquiry. Can I sit down and think of a situation and decide to act on it? The answer does not lie in a yes or no but in first describing my professional journey followed by the doctoral journey all embedded in actual practice. These journeys are narrated below.

7.2.1. My professional journey

Being born and brought up in Nigeria more than four decades ago, I have an acceptable level of understanding of the culture and the diversities of people in the West-African country. However, the full understanding is in hidden form or tacit knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2011) of knowing the environment in addition to my background and interests.

I trained as a Mechanical Engineer in a Nigerian University and graduated at the end of 1995. Throughout 1996, I served in the National Youth Service Corps – a mandatory service year after graduation in Nigeria. At the beginning of 1998, I joined a manufacturing organisation that produces currency notes and security documents; here I stayed for twelve years. In that employment, we went to Japan for training in preparation for a new production line to be opened in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria. The opening of the new production line opened up opportunities and challenges in project management. That was my initial involvement with project management although I had done some part-time work in road construction in summer employment before and after graduation.

Part of the opportunity was the requirement for trained personnel in project management. I saw this opportunity and in 2002, went for a Masters Degree course in Engineering & Management at the University of Exeter, United Kingdom. The aim was not only to learn project management but also to develop the management skills required in manufacturing. For instance, management and professional skills and working knowledge of companies like accounting and finance, computational analysis, personnel issues and the legal framework for businesses to operate.

The Master's thesis written that time was a quantitative study of developing a method that can assist the operations in agile manufacturing organisations. In continuous employment, I felt this approach was grossly inadequate to handling messy issues – in this context, a weak approach to project management (Shenhar, 2015). It does not deal with the ever-changing business environment, characterised by being uncertain, chaotic and non-linear. My requirement was for a more strategic approach that deals with this kind of complexity. The strategic approach was intensified while representing my organisation and working with consultants like Accenture, Phillips Consulting, and Ernst & Young. The insights from the engagements with these

consultancy firms left me with more questions than answers. The result is resigning my appointment and starting up a consultancy business.

In consultancy practice, I now saw an additional requirement for further studies as I have always had the urge to serve the phrase always written in my curriculum vitae. The phrase is what can I do to make a positive contribution to the development of an organisation that is interested in growth and broad-based development. Trying to answer this question led me to this doctoral journey.

7.2.2. My doctoral journey

As a Mechanical engineer with additional training in Engineering and Management (including project management), I have an appropriate level of skills in managing organisations. In other words, being proficient in the measurable aspects of project management and less so in being effective. For instance, a lack of proficiency in framing and acting on messy problems (Pedler, 2008).

The outcome is that I have to change myself before bringing change to the organisation. The change is mainly to rethink the leadership approach from working individualistically to more collaboratively (Raelin, 2015). It is in a collaborative setting that insightful questioning makes more impact as a wide variety of alternatives are considered before application. Asking questions is described as the ultimate leadership tool (Drucker & Maciarello, 2004) most especially when the right questions are asked (Marquardt, 2014).

What gave rise to this AR study is the insightful questioning approach found in CAL and AR activities. These activities gave the confidence to develop an action inquiry through probing an organisational issue in connection with the vast information in doctoral level coursework. Doctoral level coursework has the challenge of choosing theories from a vast amount of resources that would be relevant to my practice. To improve my practice was to improve in thinking before acting while paying attention to the outcomes and what further actions to take. So what do I bring to this research? I bring critical thinking and reflection or what Cunliffe (2004) calls critical reflexive practice.

7.2.3. Critical reflexive practice

As an Engineer and a consultant in Engineering, Projects, and Manufacturing, I bring with me a positivist and objectivist background (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). In other words, I rely too heavily on the objectivity of facts and figures. However, coming this far on this doctoral journey my position has changed. Now I look at practical situations more critically in connection to theory and the tension within this connection (Lee & Greenly, 2010; Hughes, O'Regan & Wornham, 2009). The tension is in areas like what are the parts that make up the sum? What are the variables? In what ways are they similar or different? How do they interact? What is the big picture? What are the other perspectives to consider? Again I think reflectively; what are my thoughts about the situation? Why am I thinking that way? What are the actions to change the situation? What if I get unintended consequences? What do I do and make the situation better? What do other perspectives suggest? These are questions from critical and reflective thinking (Academic Skills Centre, 2011).

While Johnson and Duberley (2003) try to describe reflexivity from the ontological and epistemological perspectives, the aim here is to show how becoming a critically reflexive practitioner is essential in management education (Cunliffe, 2004). The importance is from questioning our assumptions, values and how we affect others. This practice is similar to double loop learning – where learning brings a change in theories-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1996) to even the more challenging triple loop learning (Tosey, Visser & Saunders, 2012). A practical example is a way I questioned my previous positivist approach to taking a more social constructionist approach (Keegan, 2009).

Critical reflexivity is delineated from three positions: that is from an Existential position – that is the kind of person I am and the kind of person I want to be? Relational – in how do I relate to others and the environment around me? Praxis – that is to be conscious of self and being ethical on thinking and actions (Cunliffe, 2004). The summation of these positions is what I bring to this study. For instance, understanding my background and personal traits to achieve higher effectiveness, in contrast to the efficiency measures alone used in previous practice.

Finally, the process of my development in critical reflexive practice has been challenging. The challenge is in transforming from a manager that desires efficiency to a leader that desires

effectiveness. A kind of effectiveness achieved through designing activities towards overcoming an ever-changing business environment. Not only is the uncertainty causing the anxiety to learn continuously (Coutu, 2002), but in knowing that leadership effectiveness is not a destination but an ongoing situation towards improvement. It is working towards a better situation that has led to using AR as the most suitable methodology to study this organisation.

7.3. Researching the organisation using action research

In the methodology, a lengthy discussion was provided on AR. Here the discussion is based on the fifteen characteristics of AR (Eden & Huxham, 2006) as initially introduced in the third AR cycle. The aim is to give a thought on the characteristics as provided in the discussion below: it also entails rigour, reflection, and relevance as essential elements of the AR process (Coghlan & Shani, 2014).

My response to the fifteen characteristics of AR (Eden and Huxham, 2006):

1) *Was there active involvement between the researcher and participants on the organisational challenge?*

As the action researcher, I was deeply engaged with three other members of the leadership team as participants (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). We collectively defined the organisational issue and took action to improve the situation. I took the time to assist the team in developing CAL activities and AR skills for myself. This development was over a two and half year period. The leadership team has been highly enlightened although the impact of the research has not been thoroughly evaluated.

2) *Are there wider implications beyond the domain of the research?*

There are useful implications beyond the specific knowledge generated. For instance, the use of Integrative approach can broaden the thinking towards value creation and effective decisions making. A specific example is using chess as an analogy; it supports quickly thinking and acting in situations where multiple possibilities exist (Morgan, 1992). Although this method simplifies situations (Kahneman, 2011) and advances competition rather than collaboration (Raelin, 2003), it assists in developing a quick scanning of environment that brings effectiveness in critical

decision making. This method is widely applicable and can assist managers in any business setting.

3) *Are there relevant explanations of situations that are informed from existing theory and also the developed theory?*

Our work has been practically relevant. For instance, understanding a personal trait assists in mutual collaborative behaviour. This finding modified the theory that personality traits are fixed (Raelin, 2003). Again our results reiterated that personal traits could either be altered to suit the situation or combined to achieve better results or the win-win for collaboration. Exploration of the three objectives in the action inquiry led to the development of actionable knowledge (Bartunek & Rynes, 2010).

4) *How was action research methodology justified? What were the suitable methods used and why?*

In designing the research and the action inquiry phase, there had to be the justification of each methodology or method used. For instance, what is the justification for using action research? Why the social constructionist view? Why appreciative inquiry? How was the interview questions designed as the instruments for data generation? These areas were extensively discussed in chapter three.

The theoretical constructs were justified: For instance, the process of research and development of the three research objectives aimed to answer the research question. The analysis of the outcomes of the action inquiry and template analysis; such as supporting the objectives, modifying them for improvement, taking them much further and most importantly highlighting the insights as demonstrated in the findings.

5) *Was a theoretical framework developed? What informed the process of theory development?*

A theoretical framework was developed in the literature review as part of bringing the organisational problem to light. These are the three objectives of the study that combined with practical engagements in the action inquiry. These activities were continuously and cyclically conducted. The cyclic manner is what makes AR non-linear and is also a reason why it is different from traditional social science research (Coghlan & Pedler, 2006). For instance, the

analysis is dynamic: that is data-driven to theory-driven and back to data-driven analysis methods (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

6) *How was the theory built? What steps were used?*

The three AR cycles have shown how leadership effectiveness was appreciated, developed, and finally demonstrated as an evolving process. These incremental steps have demonstrated how the outcomes varied at the end of every cycle, how the next phase was reconstructed continuously (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010) and how the development showed more understanding for practice (Corley & Gioia, 2011). These steps led to the achieving the bigger picture of practically improving leadership effectiveness through a synthesis of the findings of the action inquiry (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010) and the template analysis (King & Brooks, 2017).

7) *Has the outcome of the AR produced a complete exploration and explanation of the organisational challenge? Has there been philosophical enlightenment?*

The research study aimed to show how leadership effectiveness can be improved. In trying to achieve this aim, an in-depth exploration and explanation of the organisational issue were made through the effort to bring change to the leadership approach. For instance, there was an improved understanding among the participants from viewing the different personality traits.

The several processes in research resulted in useful information such as information from the literature and practical outcomes of the intervention. As a result, the information produced is crafted in between a deductive and inductive approach, also called an abductive approach (Anderson et al., 2015). Similarly, it suits both the AR process and assists the participants in the research in their practice endeavours (French, 2009). For example, in the way theories were discussed from a social constructionist perspective (Cunliffe, 2008) at the same time paying attention to the practical outcomes from analysis and reflection; this writing is also an analytic and reflective process (Jenlink, 2009).

8) *A significant challenge in AR is maintaining attention on the data to develop theory- how was this process achieved?*

As discussed earlier, I bring with me critically reflexive practice (Cunliffe, 2004). Throughout this research, I have used CAL and AR activities. The activities come with learner type questions (Marquardt, 2014) that require a collaborative approach to leadership (Grint, 2005). The aim is a

dual purpose of carrying out a successful AR project and practically producing new insights into improving leadership effectiveness (Perry & Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). The main activities in the thesis demanded a systemized approach due to the challenge of maintaining attention on the data coupled with the management of political and ethical issues.

9) *Is the AR process of achieving leadership effectiveness replicable, can it be applied to other situations, is it clear and transparent?*

The research questions were developed in the literature review. Next were the methodology and methods of inquiry before the actual action inquiry phase and template analysis. I have also provided a detailed description of the way the findings of the research can improve leadership effectiveness (chapter 6). These are replicable activities although it has to be carried out by someone with substantial training in AR. This training provides tolerance in emotions that is away from the objective thinking in traditional qualitative research (Holian & Coghlan, 2013).

10) *AR is a dynamic process; as a result, there is writing and re-writing continuously, how was attention maintained to ensure fluidity in writing and theory development?*

The full process of writing this dissertation involved the main phases of identifying the organisational issue, seeking literature that will inform the problem at micro and macro levels, designing the methodology and enacting the action inquiry phase and template analysis. The action inquiry itself is made up of interconnected cycles before trying to make sense of the whole exercise. A further personal learning and thinking approach is presented which is about skills required to achieve this aim. These activities provide learning opportunities for me as a researcher and for the participants of the research and broader learning for others that may read this report. This segmented approach made it possible to write and re-write the thesis that is based on the cyclic processes (Anderson et al., 2015).

11) *The features of AR already discussed are not a guarantee for a successful inquiry, what other factors are considered?*

I am aware that the outcomes above are not enough to prove a successful inquiry. Even though credibility triangulation that involved a comparison of the findings of the collective action inquiry and the individual template analysis was carried out (Stiles, 1993) - there were other issues to consider. For example, the context, quality of relationships and how well the expectations were met as a sign of effectiveness (Coghlan & Shani, 2014). This effort is through

having quality relationships with the participants in a study like this one where the participants were at first sceptical of the approach. Impliedly, part of the objectives of the study was in cementing relationships, teamwork and overall awareness which brought further understanding between the participants (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2011).

12) *How well were the objectives achieved? How does it compare to other approaches, say quantitative studies?*

It will be difficult to improve the leadership effectiveness from traditional social research mainly for two reasons. Firstly, the subjective approach is used to observe and report, however, action research is suitable from the organisational member's active involvement in participating in a change process that includes our collective development (Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Toegel & Barsoux, 2012). Secondly, is the complexity involved in leadership decision making (Stacey, 2011) where the best achievement comes from consistent practice. For instance, how do you test the first objective of using mutual collaborative behaviour without initially understanding your trait and observing the outcomes in actual practice? Again these achievements cannot be met by quantitative methods since they belong to efficiency alone without effectiveness (see section 2.6.1 leadership efficiency and effectiveness in chapter two). Finally, much justification for using AR was provided in chapter one - the introduction and chapter three - the methodology.

13) *How was triangulation used to validate the action research study?*

Triangulation opportunities have been thoroughly explored as seen in the illustrative quotes discussed in the action inquiry phase. For instance, in the cases where quotes translate to depict meaning and confirmed/disconfirmed by the relevant literature. A participant narrates that everything about the thinking in the industry is from analogy; this is supported by Hofstadter (2016) who says that analogy is the fuel and fire of thinking. Triangulation is provided through the first person-practice from personal reflections in this chapter (and template analysis in chapter five), second person-practice from the action inquiry phase in chapter four and third person-practice in chapter six - the discussion chapter (Chandler and Torbert, 2003). The three-step practice process provided in these chapters give professional doctorates integrity (Coghlan, 2007). Finally, credibility triangulation was used to compare the results of the findings in the action inquiry phase and the template analysis (Stiles. 1993) - while the action inquiry phase was

carried out collectively the template analysis was done by the researcher alone although the findings of the final template were confirmed by one participant.

14) *Although AR is dynamic, the outcomes might not necessarily be so? How dynamic is the outcome so that the study remains valid?*

The duration of the research was over two years. Initially, there was the consistent practice of CAL activities for about three years before intensifying on the action inquiry phase that took about three months where actual data was generated. The findings of the research will remain valid for many more years as the Nigerian economic environment gets better and out of recession. Improving leadership effectiveness will continue to be an ongoing area of development using the objectives and findings developed as they take considerable time to mature. As a reminder, the leaders of the organisation are seeking to develop their integrative, questioning and development and learning approach to leadership effectiveness; these are timeless activities in the applied behavioural sciences (Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007).

15) *Are the outcomes valid enough to apply to situations? Has the methodology and data been thoroughly analysed to give meaning?*

The development of organisational problem (know what) and (know how) resulted in the development of actionable knowledge (Tenkasi & Hay, 2004). With these achievements, there was the additional aim of meeting quality issues. For example, there is relevance in improving leadership effectiveness within or beyond the organisation (Coghlan & Shani, 2014) not mentioning the critical reflexive practice I bring as a doctoral-practitioner. There is validity from being attentive to the methodological process and practical outcomes. These meet the quality criteria, and that is from developing the objectives of the study to a contribution to the professional practice and the systematic use of methods (Bradbury-Huang, 2010); all these criteria were met at varying levels in this study.

7.4. Managing politics – the most challenging outcome

This AR study will not be complete without discussing the most challenging and unintended outcome. The results of the second research cycle evolved in such a way that tension was created. The tension is with me the Action Researcher that holds not only a dual role as in the

case of Holian (1999) who had a researcher's role and a senior executive role. Here I have a triple role. Firstly, being an action researcher; secondly, working as a consultant that is interested in the growth and development of the project organisation. Thirdly, an experienced professional giving advice to friends and family to buy the houses that are under construction by the project organisation. The challenge lies in assisting the leadership of the organisation and ensuring the proper application of critical reflection. For instance, a decision to go into a new project that generally would undergo a rigorous qualitative analysis (PMI, 2013).

Due to the current slow progress of the first construction site, a new approach was required to bring in customers that will invest in the two new locations. A further indication is that going into two new projects in quick succession is showing an escalation of commitment (Drummond, 2014). The escalation is a sign of mental sprint from simplification (Kahneman, 2011). Starting the second and third projects may hinder delivering the first project which began two years earlier.

On the positive side, the new projects could bring a variety of products to prospecting clients that comes with improved designs and affordable prices. Additionally, the new projects were more suited to the external business environment that is characterised by the current recession in Nigeria. The dilemma of presenting new products in the midst of the previous experience challenged me in not knowing what to do. The tension required managing politically, the internal and the external stakeholders (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Political dynamics was a significant issue when it came to researching this organisation. So what was done to overcome this tension?

Actions taken: Holian (1999) had too much on her hands and could not handle the dual roles that were too politically dynamic and consequently resigned. Here I did not withdraw my consultancy services and research activities. I relied on the new knowledge as a doctoral level leader and learner. The capability assisted me in thinking and acting; this was to go from this messy situation of fuzziness to clarity (Gummeson, 2000).

Collaboration: In responding to the situation, I saw the need to collaborate rather than to avoid or compete (Thomas, 1977). The avoidance will only bring resistance (Morrison & Milliken, 2000), and defence (Argyris & Schon, 1996). The proper action was to think and approach the situation

head-on by being highly assertive and cooperative towards win-win (Raelin, 2003). To do that I have had to ask the leadership team insightful questions that will hopefully lead to suitable choices from several alternatives. For instance, calling for a brainstorming session on –What are the desired objectives of the project organisation given the additional two new sites while the first one has not yet been delivered?

Value creation: The aim was to improve social value by engaging the right stakeholders in redefining the operational and strategic organisational design. The design was to suit the change in objectives which was earlier to deliver one project and now three although at different times. The analogy was in applying the governance and capture model – similar to the way Rome survived and prospered in time immemorial (Carmeli & Markman, 2011). The main feature of this model is the efficient and effective governing of territory under control and then capturing additional regions for expansion. Since the first project is governed efficiently, the new projects were captured to improve growth and market share for the organisation. This framing has assisted in seeing ways that were possible to have a successful leadership journey since the situation demands to lead in a highly uncertain business environment (Kaplan, 2008). Again there was renewed confidence from dreaming, discovering and designing the future (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stravos, 2005) from being artistic (Austen, 2010) and articulating this vision for a project organisation (Christenson, 2007).

Effective decision making: The project leadership did admit not critically reflecting enough on the third project. I believe it happened subconsciously as it has become part of thinking and acting- the knowledge was stored in tacit form. What was not done was the joint exploration and critical reflection that has brought doubt to the leadership. This oversight is away from gaining the benefits of decision making in a socially interactive manner (Pentland, 2013). In other words, the decision-making process did not challenge assumptions and most importantly did not engage existing internal and external organisational relationships (Anderson et al., 2015, p. 175).

The outcome has exposed the thinking on the three objectives which has brought confidence mentally in handling the situation. The requirement is to use time and the available stakeholders (project leadership team) to delve into the murky waters to find a solution. That is to have a better situation through improvement in the quality of relationships (Coghlan & Shani, 2014).

Furthermore, there was the outer challenge of understanding the political behaviour of others and internally in the thinking and feeling about the political dynamics (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). The recommendation here demands to know the more prominent patterns of political action, weighing and judging the outcomes and taking responsibility. Such practice has already been in place through the previous processes of political entrepreneurship (Bjorkman & Sundgren, 2005) such as being both a friend and critique at the same time (Anderson et al., 2015). Table 7.1 depicts my triple roles.

Outcomes: There is complexity in AR activities. The complexity is confirmed by the power and ideology issues present (Stacey, 2011) that are being maintained from the preunderstanding of the action researcher in the midst of the triple role. Currently, the thinking and reflections on measures are in place. Additionally, the outcome is looking positive as the previous knowledge of the organisational culture has assisted in collectively developing questions which if appropriately answered will lead to benefit and achieve clarity out of the complexity earlier explained. Examples of the questions include, what is/are the plan/s? What is the skill set required to assist on a permanent or contract basis giving the lack of knowledge in the organisational culture that has been the success of this organisation? Already there are fruitful suggestions as a new organisation structure has been drawn together with the outsourcing of activities like professional marketers. With all the effort in politically managing the triple roles, I strongly rely on Raelin's (2015, p. 96) words: "*leadership is not about the leaders themselves but about the collective practice among people who work together.*"

Table 7.1. Triple roles of the action researcher

(Adapted from Anderson et al., 2015)

Role	Action Researcher	Project Leadership Consultant	Client Advisor
Aim	To develop actionable knowledge for the organisation and generalised knowledge that can be used by other groups e.g. academia, managers etc	To make positive contribution to the organisation; Example bringing change through improving the leadership effectiveness	Ensuring family and friends get short and long term value from the houses they buy
Expectation	A model or framework that will assist the leadership	Assist the change in leadership behaviour from essentially an individualistic to a more integrative and collaborative approach	Stakeholder management from engaging to collectively create value, negotiations for win-win approach
Context	What is the pressing organisational and research issue at the moment?	What is the organisational issue?	What houses can be bought at affordable prices and with what specifications?
Action	Using the findings of the research to improve effectiveness, for instance building on collaboration, value creation and decision making to a more integrative, questioning and development and learning approach	Extracting the practical value of the three objectives, Example aiming towards win-win	Looking and working on the short and long term interests of the clients, e.g. working on personal and group biases.
Assessment	Does the outcome produce actionable knowledge? Example has the leadership been rethinking its leadership what is the justification?	What are the immediate implications for short and longer term economic and social value – performance using specified organisational targets, growth, market share	Have the clients been satisfied? Are they ready to be in long-term business relationships? Can they advertise the products to others?

7.5. Being an effective doctoral practitioner – Implications for practice

The rate of project success is showing a trend that is going down rather than climbing (PMI, 2013): What is the cause? The reason is that project leaders are too reliant on the efficiency and scientific objectivity such as the general tools and techniques used like PMBoK, PERT, CPM, WBS. These scientific tools only cover twenty per cent of success. The remaining eighty per cent comes from art; such as uncertainty, change, context, innovation, business focus, strategy, leadership, politics and other behavioural aspects (Shenhar, 2015). As a result, an encompassing approach is required, and that approach is called Strategic Project Leadership®. By definition, this approach involves all-encompassing activities involved in the applied behavioural sciences found in the qualitative realm towards achieving the project outcomes (Aronson, Shenhar & Reilly, 2010).

For me to become an effective doctoral practitioner, I have to meet the description of SPL® and go beyond. While I work in the project management sphere, I also work in engineering and manufacturing. The implication is that SPL® applies to project management and is also applicable to any business sector.

The journey has made me engage in much theory on practice and practice on theory (Hodgkinson & Rousseau, 2009) including the contradictions within (Kieser & Leiner, 2009; Weick, 2001). What is important is the approach I take to overcome any business challenge either in the project environment or indeed any situation that demands leadership. The leadership approach is through collectively and cyclically defining the problem, taking action, evaluating the outcomes and taking further action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Do remember that I am not looking for an answer; I am looking for a better situation (Pedler, 2008).

The discussion in this section has highlighted an improvement in thinking and actions (practice). Scholarship has also been enhanced through various discoveries, in addition to the integration and application of findings. Finally, the participants were taught; which Boyer (1990) says is an indication of the highest form of understanding.

7.6. Summary

So what do these personal reflections say about me? What it says is that being an individual I bring certain traits and attitudes to the research. As a result, I see things in the way I just described. I used to see things from only an objective and individualistic view; for instance, in approaching project management as a science and applying the conventional techniques and tools (Shenhar, 2015). Now I have an additional understanding that project management is also an art, success of which depends on developing unique ways of qualitative thinking (Austen, 2010). The type of thinking and actions has been described in the development of actionable knowledge; not only through a linear method of application but in considering the challenges of overcoming political and ethical issues. These problems are managed through the proper use of AR, more specifically, critical reflexive practice, where everyone surfaces their assumptions. While the assumptions are critically examined the outcome is expected to yield better results. Finally, I have understood life itself is an inquiry (Marshall, 1999) since there is always a new issue requiring action, depending on the perspective you take to define and act on it.

Chapter 8.

Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

At the beginning of the study, the main aim was to answer the research question: how can a method be developed to improve leadership effectiveness in the construction project organisation? Now at the end of the study, the question is - how successful was the action research methodology towards improving leadership effectiveness in the project organisation? The following paragraphs answer the question by highlighting the significance of carrying out this study that comes with some implications. There are also limitations; as a result, new areas have been opened up for future work.

8.2. Significance and key findings of the study

There was much contemplation by the leadership of the project organisation on what is required to improve the current situation. A current situation where there is difficulty in financing a particular project – majorly caused by the unfavourable external business environment, for instance, the recession in Nigeria. The aim was to frame the situation towards achieving the desired outcomes. The findings are discussed below.

8.2.1. Practical significance

The study has been practically significant to the organisation from the findings of the research. There are four main areas in which this practical significance was evident:

8.2.1.1 Understanding of the organisational problem from the three objectives

The AR process has led the participants and researcher to a better understanding of the three issues that make up the organisational problem. This involves the CAL and AR activities suitably defining the organisational problem, researching the problem and developing the three objectives that assist in enlightening the situation. These three issues were a lack of collaboration, value creation and effective decision making. There is now new knowledge of identifying and problematising organisational issues going into the future.

Similarly, the findings have assisted in having a big picture of improving leadership effectiveness and more closely on the daily activities on personal and organisational behaviour that will lead to achieving the aim. There is now an overall understanding of the method to develop leadership effectiveness in the construction project organisation. While this is not the only method, it is a significant one majorly from the insights derived from the enlightenment used to carry out the several phases of the study. This is in line with the aims and activities of AR (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Greenwood & Levin, 2007).

8.2.1.2 The understanding and application of the Integrative approach

The study has also revealed the importance of the integrative approach to leadership effectiveness. It is integrative because the findings have shown that collaboration, value creation and effective decision-making work together to bring the best about leadership effectiveness. The integrative approach includes combining the current technical background with leadership qualities. Finally, the integrative approach also requires that the participants connect the two significant areas of a questioning approach and development and learning approach to leadership effectiveness.

8.2.1.3. The understanding and application of the Questioning approach

There is an understanding that the questioning approach is the essential leadership tool especially when it comes to inquiry and problem resolution. It is through questioning that the issues were problematised and critically reflected before combining with suitable literature. Similarly, the questioning approach is the area that directed effort in aiming to minimise the adverse effects of personal and group biases that have been in the way of making effective decisions - one of the issues that make up the organisational problem. However, it is not any questioning- it is questioning that is appreciative, learner type and always seeking to open up opportunities.

8.2.1.4. The understanding and application of Development and Learning approach

The last practical finding of the research is also significant. The participants have variously identified development and learning as a key to achieving effectiveness. The research being social constructionist has identified several perspectives on development and learning. For instance, the importance of developing professionally through certification – this is in addition to the various ways of improving self towards strengthening the capacity to solve organisational problems. There is also the understanding that leadership desired is of the collaborative nature – although, in some circumstances, a competing approach is necessary. There is then the requirement for the development of taking a situational approach to leadership. The development and learning approach is in line with the development of leaders towards effectiveness (Gronn, 1997).

8.2.2. Methodological significance

There is a significant indication of development for especially the researcher and then the participants in the alpha (problem definition), beta (problem resolution) and gamma (learning) philosophy of Revans; that is through the extended period of CAL activities and AR (Rigg & Coghlan, 2016). While the primary aim of the research was to develop actionable knowledge, there was also the development of methodological significance. This knowledge came from an in-depth understanding that AR is a dynamic process and continues to change (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). This continuous change is the primary reason why particular attention is required to carry out a successful study. AR is not a one size fits all: this is a significant reason for the requirement of extended doctoral training before the action inquiry phase. In other words, the coursework taken by the researcher has provided grounding for delving into this kind of study.

The actionable knowledge developed is practically useful as tried in the organisation. For instance, an exchange programme that involves the selling of houses and taking building materials in replacement. Since funding is not readily available, this idea was a creative way of advancing the project. In this process, there was collaboration, value creation and effective decision making. Additionally, there was the integrative approach from combining the thinking

on these objectives and questioning approach and critical reflection on how the negotiation will assist both parties. These also form distinct ways of improving the project from a development and learning perspective.

The style of the process of the AR developed is widely applicable to any organisation for economic reasons and in general administration (Van Maanen, 1995). However, there has to be proper contextual understanding before applying the theory since it requires the action operators of knowing what to do. The leadership of any organisation has the responsibility of defining these action operators.

8.2.3. Broad contribution to knowledge

The research on leadership development cannot be timelier than now when the Nigerian economy is in recession (Umoru, 2016). From the research process, there is a broad knowledge that can be drawn to serve the broader academic and practitioner community in a developing country like Nigeria. For instance, the more extensive consideration to improve the construction industry as a whole that is currently providing just 8% of the GDP in Nigeria as opposed to 30%-70% in developed nations (Kelly, 2015). On a smaller scale, the method developed here can assist other projects or other organisations in overcoming similar challenges.

The input to the contribution of knowledge comes from the integration of the first (personal reflections) and second person-practice (action inquiry phase). It seeks reflection from the three elements of context, process, and premise (Coghlan, 2007). The context of the situation here is; based on the impact of the recession on the economy- what is happening to our organisation? The process is - what suits the situation from the strategies, techniques, and tools available? The premise reflection is - what has been our response and why are we responding that way?

For many professional doctorates, there is the general requirement for the research to contribute to the broader body of knowledge- in other words, to the academic and practitioner community (Anderson et al., 2015). In this DBA, however, the primary aim is the development of actionable knowledge directed at the organisation. Action research many authors warn is aimed at resolving an organisational issue, and careful attention should be paid when drawing out the broader

contribution to knowledge (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Hales & Chakravorty, 2006).

In this subject area, there is a shortage of research on the effectiveness of leadership in construction project organisations in developing countries (Ofori & Toor, 2012) mainly because researchers in social science are uneducated in the construction industry (Langford et al., 1995). Furthermore, few researchers have the necessary skills to carry out this type of research that also sees inadequate funding (Chinowsky & Diekmann, 2004). Again project management practice in Nigeria is still in its infancy (Odusami, Iyagba & Omirin, 2003).

8.3. Further implications for practice and theory

The first, second and third person practice was used in the study (Chandler & Torbert, 2003); a process designed to give this professional doctorate integrity (Coghlan, 2007).

The first person practice is in the personal reflections chapter (chapter seven). The critical reflexive activities are useful, but there has to be an attitude to go with it. It is not all right to be critically reflexive, and then nothing gets done – in this case, dampening the efforts of the collective leadership team. Preferably is to work in alignment with progress in organisational performance. For instance, is it all right to have win-win with the financial supporters of the project and then have a win-lose situation with the suppliers who are also relevant stakeholders? Questions such as these are always in motion in line with being effective – not short term winning situations. The insight from the researcher's personal and professional background is useful; useful only with the clarity that the initial positivist approach held is more effective when complemented with the features of social constructionism.

The second person practice is the bedrock of social engagement in the action inquiry chapter (chapter four). The interpersonal approach here had dynamics that were different from the personal reflections or first person practice. The implication here is similar to the critical reflexive practice only this time wider questions involving ethicality and holding an integrative aim of improving leadership effectiveness. Differing perspectives is a complexity and a mode of operation that lays the foundation for creativity and problem resolution. Insight was gained through the course of appreciating, developing and seeing leadership effectiveness as an

evolving process. This insight implies that the team has developed a kind of focus that irrespective of the differences held, it does not stop the achievement of the organisational goals – a sign of leadership effectiveness.

Third person practice takes consideration of the first and second person practice to reveal a product that can go beyond those responsible for the development of the theory. These are activities found in the discussion chapter (chapter six). Here the aim was to use a rigorous discussion on the findings of the action inquiry and template analysis to develop a unique framework suitable for this organisation- although it may apply to a wide variety of individuals, groups or even organisations willing to improve their effectiveness. The implication is that a thorough process of analysis and synthesis does not take a day or two to develop but can take weeks, months or even years to perfect. As a result, organisations can broadly understand the kind of time deployed to bring change – a prime reason why organisational change is so difficult (van de Ven & Poole, 1995; Chia, 1999).

8.4. Study limitations and areas for future research

The participants of the study wished they had sufficient time to collaborate more with external stakeholders. This collaboration is an engagement with a scholar/practitioner attention used in the action inquiry phase. Again there was a limitation in carrying out the template analysis as the participants did not have time to learn and assist in the carrying out the additional analysis even though one participant volunteered and confirmed the final template. This would have been more suitable in a longitudinal study which could have more extended periods; in practice, however, the participants were ready to continue with the new modes of operation developed that is beyond the duration of this study.

It is worthy to note that this AR has tried to develop a method to support leadership effectiveness by aiming to have an in-depth understanding of the case (Creswell, 2013) and not evaluating the outcomes. The lack of evaluation is a limitation of this study and the leadership having positivist backgrounds would have wanted to see an assessment using mixed-method research. In other words, the qualitative method used to improve leadership effectiveness was limited and would

have been complemented with a quantitative means to delineate the requirements of an efficiency measure.

There is contemplation on the kind of success from collaborative studies in Nigeria – a developing country (Iguisi, 2014). According to Raelin (2016), collaborative leadership still has a long way to go even in advanced countries like America and in this case answering the second part of the first research question- collaboration demonstrated through business results. It means there are unlimited possibilities of carrying out further research in this direction. For instance, Nigeria is multi-cultural, so what is the effect of the diversity of culture on leadership effectiveness in the project organisation? There was a brief discussion on the way the national and organisational culture assisted in explaining the connection with the leadership behaviours found in this study (section 6.3.4.). The cultural approach to management is a vast area and is beyond the scope of this study, and although it is very significant, it varies between countries and within organisations (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

From an outcome of the third objective; effective decision making from critical reflection and also according to Rousseau and McCarthy (2007), there is a shortage of evidence-based managers. As a result, the four sources of information: practitioner experience, local context, research evidence and considering broad stakeholder perspectives can be used to improve the applied behavioural sciences. Leadership effectiveness indeed belongs to the family of these behavioural sciences. Doctoral practitioners have ample opportunity to look into developing their practice from the applied behavioural sciences sphere.

In the literature review, there were many dichotomies. For instance, consider the dichotomies of either management and leadership or efficiency and effectiveness. These are all avenues for diversifying this study with the aim of having a more in-depth exploration and explanation of the organisational issue. However, each will require a lengthy spell on focus towards coining an appropriate research question.

8.5. Summary

Interestingly, the action research methodology has improved the leadership effectiveness of this project organisation. Why? The reason is that although the research has come to an end, it has not gone away completely; it leaves the leadership team with a permanent attitude towards inquiry (Marshall, 1999). In other words, success has come from the transition of the leadership team (researcher and participants) that are critical to the construction project (Nixon, Harrington & Parker, 2012) from a problematic perspective to a solution perspective (Revans, cited in Pedler, 2008). This transition is evident in the process that provided an in-depth understanding of self, others and the organisation as a whole (Goleman, 2013). Again this type of inquiry is necessary for the survival and prosperity of organisations that are facing ever-changing business challenges. For instance, the current recession in Nigeria is not permanent; soon another problem is sure to come up in future either as a threat or an opportunity.

Finally, the time used up in this doctoral programme has not been in vain, it is an investment in overcoming various challenges in the methodology and the development of the leadership of the project organisation (Pervan et al., 2016). The development of especially the researcher came on the journey towards becoming a doctoral practitioner and to the participants, a way of achieving personal and overall organisational effectiveness (Manley & Titchen, 2017). This was with particular attention to the development of actionable theory. The actionable theory was developed from a suitable combination of literature, data generated, variables considered and diagrams and tables used to connect the research question and the findings; this approach is away from the consideration of these items individually for the development of actionable theory (Sutton & Staw, 1995).

Appendices



Appendix 1: Ethics approval

Dear Ahmed M. Ibrahim,

I am pleased to inform you that the DBA Ethics Committee has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below:

Committee Name: DBA Ethics Committee Title of Study: "A method to support Leadership Effectiveness in a construction project organization"

Student Investigator: Ahmed M. Ibrahim

School/Institute: School of Management

Approval Date: 27 July 2016

The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

☐ The researchers must obtain ethical approval from a local research ethics committee if this is an international study ☐ University of Liverpool approval is subject to compliance with all relevant national legislative requirements if this is an international study. ☐ All serious adverse events must be reported to the Sub-Committee within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the Research Integrity and Governance Officer (ethics@liv.ac.uk) ☐ If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Committee of the amendment.

This approval applies to the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Committee should be notified.

Kind regards

DBA Ethics Committee University of Liverpool Management School in Partnership with Laureate Online Education

Appendix 2: Interview Questions and AR Cycles

Research Objective Questions	Action Research Cycle 1 (January, 2017)	Action Research Cycle 2 (February, 2017)	Action Research Cycle 3 (March, 2017)
<i>How can collaboration be used to improve leadership effectiveness as a way of rethinking its leadership approach?</i>	<i>Describe a high-point when you engaged in mutual collaborative behaviour?</i>	<i>How did you engage in mutual collaborative behaviour?</i>	<i>How has mutual collaborative behaviour enhanced your leadership activities?</i>
<i>How can analogical reasoning be used towards value creation?</i>	<i>Describe a high-point where analogical reasoning was used to create value with stakeholders?</i>	<i>Describe the way you used analogical reasoning towards value creation with stakeholders?</i>	<i>How has analogical reasoning improved your creativity?</i>
<i>How can leadership effectively utilise critical reflection towards effective decision making?</i>	<i>Describe a high-point where critical reflection was used in making a very good decision?</i>	<i>Describe the way you used critical reflection to arrive at a good decision?</i>	<i>How has critical reflection enhanced your decision making?</i>

Appendix 3: INITIAL TEMPLATE:

1. Personal/Group Behaviour and Leadership effectiveness

- 1.1. Collaboration and its types
 - 1.1.1. Teamwork augmentation
 - 1.1.2. Cross-cultural diversity (Nigerian context)
 - 1.1.3. Effectiveness from interpersonal relationships
 - 1.1.4. Effective collaboration
 - 1.1.4.1. Awareness of collaboration is key to improving practice
 - 1.1.4.2. More assessment in recruitment process for collaborative personnel
- 1.2. Competing/individualistic
 - 1.2.1. Technical background/specialist
 - 1.2.1.1. Challenging because of background and experience Win/lose outcomes
 - 1.2.1.2. Requires changing personality even if situational
 - 1.2.1.3. Technical cooperation key in project management
 - 1.2.2. Facts and figures reliant
 - 1.2.2.1. No technical background but relies on calculated assumptions
- 1.3. Personal/Group behavioural objective
 - 1.3.1. Economic - through advancing the progress of the project
 - 1.3.2. Social - through building long-term business relationships

2. Organisational/Project value and Leadership effectiveness

- 2.1. Negotiations for win/win
- 2.2. Effective decisions for both parties
- 2.3. Analogical sources
 - 2.3.1. Immediate experience of Leadership team
 - 2.3.2. Industry wide (construction project/real estate environment)
 - 2.3.3. Other diverse sources (e.g. chess good in alternative thinking but is for win/lose situations)
- 2.4. Factors mitigating value creation
 - 2.4.1. Technical approach to problem solving (narrow approach)
 - 2.4.2. Technical competence built on experience and training
 - 2.4.3. Insufficient collaborative creativity
 - 2.4.4. Win/lose focus – trying to beat opponent rather than creating value with collaborator

3. Decision making and Leadership effectiveness

3.1. Operational thinking and actions

3.1.1. Fast, highly technical and efficient individuals

3.1.1.1. Individualistic

3.1.1.1.1. Personal biases of leadership team

3.1.1.1.2. Heavy work schedule/ Optimising project variables

3.1.1.1.3. Culturally driven chatting and waste of time

3.1.2. Slow, calculative individuals

3.2. Strategic thinking and actions

3.2.1. Visionary leadership

3.2.1.1. Individualistic, drives the vision

3.2.1.1.1. Intending collaboration improvement (looking to use an advisory board)

3.2.1.2. Collaborative, aiming for win-win

3.2.1.2.1. Groupthink in the leadership team

3.2.2. On project escalation

3.3.1.1. To abandon project

3.3.1.2. To continue project

3.3.1.3. To start additional new project

4. Specific (other) areas of improving Leadership effectiveness in context

4.1. Improving effectiveness so that absence will be felt

4.2. Development driven approach, readiness to serve and learn

4.3. Learning from this failure (self-funding design, derived from experience)

4.4. Seeking information from industry experts general questioning insight

APPENDIX 4: FINAL TEMPLATE:

1. Personal/Group Behaviour in Leadership effectiveness

1.1. Collaboration

- 1.1.1. Teamwork augmentation
- 1.1.2. Cross-cultural diversity (Nigerian context)
- 1.1.3. Effectiveness from interpersonal relationships
- 1.1.4. Effective collaboration
 - 1.1.4.1. Awareness of collaboration is key to improving practice
 - 1.1.4.1.1. Paying attention to collaborative efforts
 - 1.1.4.2. Heightened level of understanding between leadership team

1.2. Competing/individualistic

- 1.2.1. Technical background/specialist
 - 1.2.1.1. Challenging because of background/experience
 - 1.2.1.1.1. Previous employment based on technical solutions, now addition of managing and leading responsibility
 - 1.2.1.2. Requires changing personality even if situational
 - 1.2.1.3. Technical cooperation key in project management
- 1.2.2. Facts and figures reliant
 - 1.2.2.1. No technical background but relies on calculated assumptions

2. Organisational/Project value in Leadership effectiveness

2.1. Negotiations for win/win, effective decisions for negotiating parties

- 2.1.1. Value creation from creating opportunities where presumably non-exist

2.2. Analogical sources

- 2.2.1. Experiences of Leadership team
- 2.2.2. Industry wide (construction project/real estate environment)
- 2.2.3. Other diverse sources e.g. Chess, religious towards uprightness

2.3. Factors mitigating value creation

- 2.3.1. Technical competence built on experience and training
- 2.3.2. Insufficient collaborative creativity
- 2.3.3. Win/lose focus
 - 2.3.3.1. Funding issues affecting relationships with sub-contractors/suppliers
- 2.3.4. Culture does not support creativity but conformance to norms
- 2.3.5. Challenge of creating new market under the current recession

3. Decision making in Leadership effectiveness

3.1. Operational thinking and action

- 3.1.1. Fast, highly technical and efficient individuals
 - 3.1.1.1. Individualistic issues
 - 3.1.1.1.1. Personal biases
 - 3.1.1.1.2. Heavy work schedule/ Optimising project variables

- 3.1.1.1.3. Culturally driven chatting and waste of time
- 3.1.2. Slow, calculative individuals
- 3.2. Strategic thinking and action
 - 3.2.1. Type of leadership
 - 3.2.1.1. Individualistic objective - win/lose
 - 3.2.1.1.1. Personal biases
 - 3.2.1.1.2. Intending collaboration improvement (looking to use an advisory board)
 - 3.2.1.2. Collaborative, aiming for win-win
 - 3.2.1.2.1. Groupthink in the leadership team
 - 3.2.2. On project escalation
 - 3.3.1.1. To abandon first project
 - 3.3.1.2. To continue first project
 - 3.3.1.3. To start additional new project- Negotiated two new predesigned projects
 - 3.3.1.3.1. New sites provide economies of scale
 - 3.3.1.3.2. New product offerings for clients
 - 3.3.1.3.3. Guarantee business for sub-contractors/suppliers in long-term relationship benefits
 - 3.3.1.3.4. Imperfect/divided attention, confusion and ineffectiveness of leadership team

4. Integrative approach to Leadership effectiveness

- 4.1. Collaborative options/alternative thinking in value creation and decision making
 - 4.1.1. Value creation from a technical view in project efficiency
 - 4.1.2. Value creation from holistic approach to effectiveness
- 4.2. All forms of collaboration towards advancing project
 - 4.2.1. Personal and organisational effectiveness as a journey
 - 4.2.1.1. Commitment, attitude, social interaction, optimism, resilience and reliability
- 4.3. Politically managing situations through using positive approach
- 4.4. Collaborative, value creating and effective decision making potentials in the recruitment process

5. Questioning approach to Leadership effectiveness

- 5.1. Effectiveness from consistent questioning on why, how, what, where, when, who...
 - 5.1.1. Seeking information from industry experts
 - 5.1.2. Consistent questioning of self/group on biases
 - 5.1.3. Enhancing teamwork through constructive criticisms, productive debates
 - 5.1.4. Seeking clarity between operations and strategy as important because of process and outcomes
 - 5.1.5. Macro-managing - Less individualistic to more collaborative
- 5.2. Questioning in the subject areas
 - 5.2.1. Economic - through advancing the progress of the project
 - 5.2.2. Social - through building long-term business relationships

6. Other areas of improving Leadership effectiveness

- 6.1. Improving effectiveness so that absence will be felt by the organisation
 - 6.1.1. Use personal resources to correct technical error
- 6.2. Development driven approach, readiness to invest time to serve and learn
 - 6.2.1. Modification of personal habits e.g. time utilization
 - 6.2.1.1. Examining and altering personal/professional habits on a situational basis
 - 6.2.1.2. Reduction of individualistic trait through reduced micro-managing
 - 6.2.2. Seeking professional development from certification
 - 6.2.3. Understanding and development of leadership and management on top of a technical background
 - 6.2.4. Learning from this organisational situation
- 6.3. Risk tolerance of leadership team
 - 6.3.1. High risk team with capability to live with uncertainty
 - 6.3.1.1. Experience supports the high risk taking
 - 6.3.1.2. Understanding between the members of leadership team

Word count 49,894

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