

# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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2017

Abstract

Strategic Leadership in Public Sector Administration in Nigeria.

by

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MDevF, University of Stellenbosch, 2010

B.Eng, Enugu State University, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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## Abstract

Inefficiency in the public sector as a result of leadership ineptitude is said to have contributed significantly to the underdevelopment of Nigeria. This has led to the mismanagement of human and financial resources as well as contributed extensively to poor service delivery to the citizens. The research considered the critical role of public sector administration to the functionality of a society, noting that the major determinant for public sector success is leadership effectiveness. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to identify how leadership ineffectiveness could be addressed in public sector administration in Nigeria and consider the implications of adopting a different approach to improve effectiveness. The study was partly informed by the dearth of literature on leadership in public sector administration, especially within the Nigerian context. The study was underpinned by leadership theories particularly strategic leadership. Research questions focused on existing leadership approaches and how it hindered/enhanced effective service delivery. The study utilized a case study of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and collected data through face-to-face interviews of 17 staff. Data was analyzed using content analysis and findings revealed the existence of pseudo leadership and blame avoidance behaviour which are detrimental to public sector efficiency. Recommendations are that strategic leadership, administrative accountability, patriotism and reframing be adopted to refine leadership attitude to work in TETFund and other public sector organizations. Application of findings will result in positive social change by providing adequate service delivery for the Nigerian populace thus improving their living standards and supporting economic growth.



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## Dedication

This achievement is dedicated to my brother of blessed memory for whom I always wanted to be better, even though you are gone, I will keep pushing forward and ticking off milestones. You will always be cherished.

I dedicate this work to all positive change advocates, to public servants in Nigeria and all around the world.

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Mum and Dad, Ugo unu tubelu m, kam gi aga.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Leadership ineffectiveness in the Nigerian public sector is said to have contributed significantly to the detriment of economic development (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012; Ejimabo, 2013; Ogbeide, 2012). This study focused on leadership ineffectiveness in public sector administration as it affects service delivery and the implications of exploring a different leadership approach for effectiveness. Since the productivity of any organization is mostly a function of the effectiveness and quality of leadership (Sudha, Shahnawaz, & Farhat, 2016; Branch, Hanushek & Rivkin, 2012), it is imperative to examine the causes of leadership ineffectiveness with a view to proffer workable solutions.

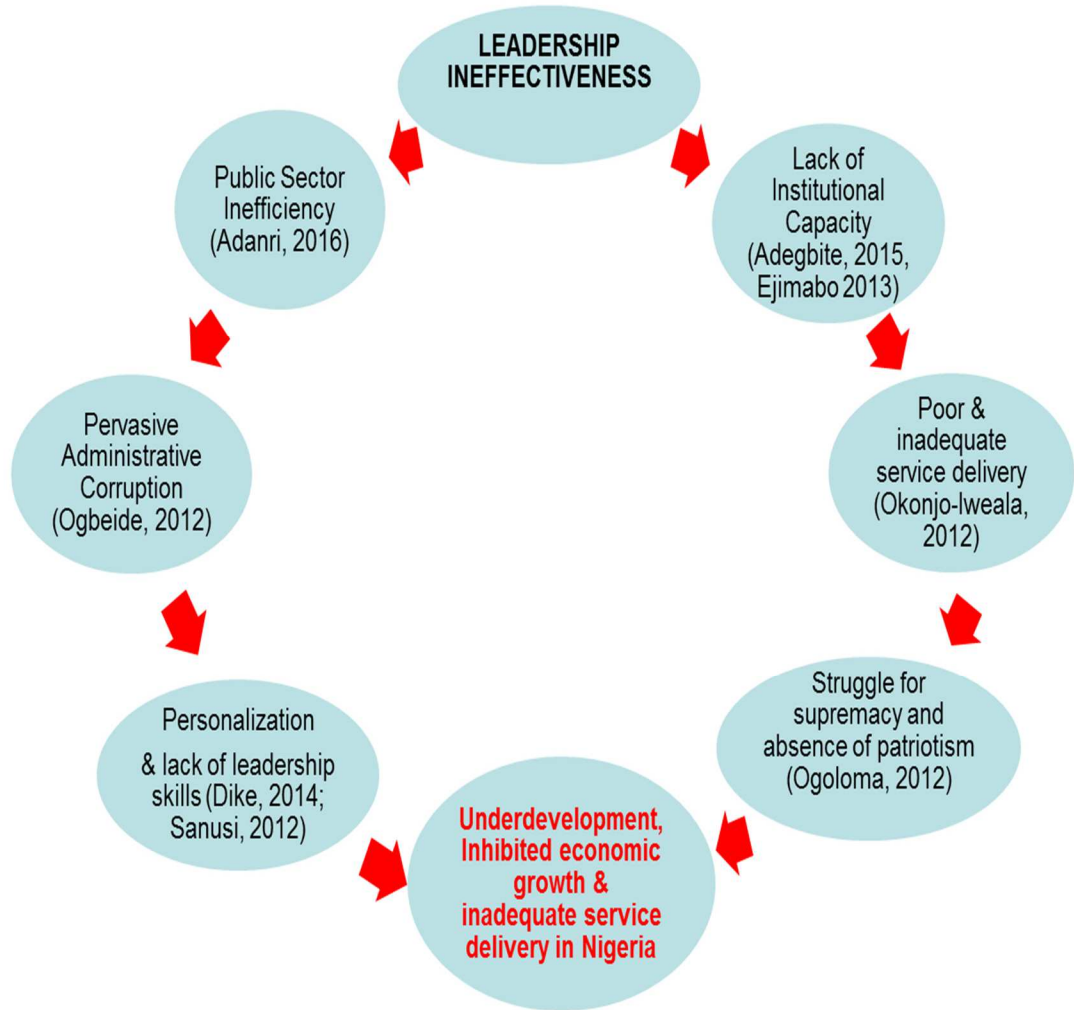
Nigeria is a public sector driven economy. Government policies and developmental goals are set into motion through the public service machinery, which actualizes government intentions through policy formulation and implementation. As posited by Inyang & Akaegbu (2014), “the public service of any nation is an institution of governance and administration established essentially to deliver public good to the people in the most efficient and effective manner”. Consequently, the ineffective management of different public organizations could ultimately lead to failure, underperformance and contribute to underdevelopment of the economy with the attendant effects such as poverty and insecurity. Mark & Asheazi (2016) is of the opinion that the Nigerian people are gradually sliding into poverty.

Studies and opinions had attributed the issues of underdevelopment and stagnancy in economic growth beleaguering Nigeria to public sector inefficiency (Adanri, 2016),



lack of institutional capacity (Adegbite, 2015), systemic government failures (Porter & Watts, 2016), Fraud and Ghost workers (Onyinyechi & Okafor, 2016), challenges of good governance (Oluwa, 2012), lack of leadership skills (Sanusi, 2012), pervasive administrative corruption (Enofe, Afiangbe & Agha, 2017; Ogbeide, 2012), personalization of leadership (Dike, 2014), weak foreign policies (Ibijola & Opeyemi, 2013), insecurity & cultural disorientation (Aloziewu 2012, Anyadike 2013), religious and cultural diversity (Gilbert & Allen, 2014; Erhagbe, 2012), struggle for supremacy and absence of patriotism (Ogoloma, 2012), and reliance on resource wealth (Luong & Weinthal, 2006), abuse of office (Okogbule & Nkpolu, 2016), among others.

Central to all the above identified factors, is ineffective leadership (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012; Sanusi, 2012). Iheduru (2016) buttresses this by stating that Nigerian is plagued by leadership failure. Okonjo-Iweala (2012) further stated that the poor economic situation in Nigeria can be credited to weak public institutions bedeviled by entrenched corruption. Ejimabo (2013) collaborates this assertion, affirming that public service has deteriorated due to the resultant effects of corruption and a lack of effective leadership skills.



*Figure 1.* Outcome of Ineffective Leadership.

Adanri & Thakkar (2016) and Hansen & Villadsen (2010) are of the opinion that there is a scarcity of literature regarding leadership in public administration, specifically on the significance of administrative leadership of public sector organizations. Hassan & Lituchy (2017) supports the above statement by noting that the majority of literature on leadership in Nigeria laid emphasis on political leadership, leadership and personality, and employee performance. Wart (2003) states that there is scarce literature on public

sector leadership and Tummers & Knies (2013) suggests that there is a need for a well-designed leadership studies in public administration. Although many studies have been conducted on the effects of bad leadership in Nigeria from different perspectives, it is striking that I found nothing specifically written on strategic leadership as an alternative leadership style for public sector administration in Nigeria.

This is even more striking considering the position of Sudha, Shahnawaz, & Farhat (2016) that leadership style is the most essential factor that influences leadership effectiveness. Akindele & Afolabi (2013) posits that the essence of leadership effectiveness lies in the fact that the success of any human or organizational endeavor lie in the quality of leadership guiding that endeavor. Consequently, this study attempted to fill the literature gap on leadership and public administration by exploring the possibility of adopting/adapting a new style of leadership that would improve the quality and output of public service in Nigeria.

The implications of this study for social change are that the expected outcome of this inquiry will ultimately improve the living conditions of the Nigerian populace. As noted by Sanusi (2012), there is a need for leadership grooming and development in Nigeria. Thus, exploring and proffering an emergent leadership style which focuses on strategy first before implementation of actions would enhance leadership effectiveness which would galvanize improved public sector administration and ultimately promote better service delivery and efficiency in the public sector.

It would encourage leaders and aspiring leaders to broaden their scope, to think outside the box in terms of indepth research on ways to enhance effectiveness that would

propel economic growth. Social change from this study could manifest in the form of general awareness to the directional and pivotal role that a leader plays in public sector administration. It would also be a tool for social awareness to an alternative approach to leadership effectiveness for future leaders.

In this chapter, I provided the purpose and rationale for the study. I provided the background of the study and discussed the leadership challenges of Nigeria in the context of public sector administration and what it encompasses. I stated the questions that guided the study and the method of enquiry which was used. I expounded on the significance of the study and justified the need for a different approach to public sector management. The scope of study, its limitations and delimitations was also stated and explained. In line with the requirements of research processes, I discussed my ethical position in relation to the study. Some key terms and definitions were also included in this chapter.

### **Background**

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is classified as a developing nation located in the south-eastern corner of West Africa. It is the most populous nation in West Africa with about 181million people. The country is a petrostate as it is endowed with oil wealth, being the thirteenth largest producer of oil in the world (The World Factbook, CIA, 2016) and that constitutes the major source of Nigeria's income. Other sources of income include taxes, agricultural exports and other mineral resources. The country generated N41.6 trillion revenue from crude oil proceeds and taxes, as well as duties between fiscal years 2011 & 2014 (Guardian Newspaper, June 20, 2015).

There has been a mismatch between economic development and the standard of living in the country when compared to revenue generated. As a potentially rich nation, Nigeria has been unable to adequately provide basic services for its citizen in relation to its wealth. Sanusi (2012) posited that in relation to Nigeria's resource endowment, the economy has grossly underperformed. As at 2015, the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) puts Nigeria at 0.514, Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of 0.28, life expectancy of 52.8, Gender Development Index of 0.84 and ranked 152 out of 188 countries assessed.

There are complexities to the Nigerian State arising from the diversity in culture, religion and languages coupled with high level of poverty and illiteracy as illustrated in the preceding paragraph. Doud (2016) opines that the diversity in Nigeria has led to intolerance and divisiveness that has spilt over into the political realm thereby becoming a destabilizing factor in the country by encouraging a struggle for political dominance. Diversity also plays a role in leadership in the country as the need to identify with a particular group tends to affect decision making. This is consistent with Miao, Newman, & Lamb, (2012) position that leaders use identification to garner support and commitment to their goals especially in a culturally diverse and developing nation.

Corruption has been identified as the most significant factor responsible for Nigeria's economic developmental failure and the institutionalization of corruption can be attributed leadership ineffectiveness (Ogbeide, 2012). Writing within the context of Nigeria, Badamasiuy & Bello (2013) opined that the lapses on the part of leaders have allowed corruption and maladministration to thrive. Corruption is a deterrent to public

sector productivity because it feeds off mismanagement of resources, abuse of power and the negligent administration of the public sector.

Rose-Ackerman & Palifka (2016) defined corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Agbiboa (2012) attributes corruption to an African leadership trait where governments loot their countries' resources through violence and bribery, entrench corruption and default on service delivery. Chinua Achebe summed the country's problem up to "leadership failure". He said "A functioning, robust democracy requires a healthy educated, participatory followership and an educated, morally grounded leadership" in reference to the leadership and corruption issues prevalent in Nigeria (1983).

Economically, ineffective leadership can be classified as a crime because it has allowed corruption which Agbiboa (2013) describes as an "economic crime" to thrive. Corruption encompasses a wide range of practices including bribery, extortion, nepotism, cronyism, judicial fraud, accounting fraud, electoral fraud, public service fraud, kleptocracy, embezzlement of public funds, influence peddling and conflicts of interest (Egwejiofor, 2016; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016) which are all indices of ineffective leadership.

All over the world, one key indicator of ineffective leadership is prevalence of corruption in doing government business. According to the Transparency International 2015 Report, Nigeria's Corruption Perception Index for 2015 is 26/100, placing the country in 136<sup>th</sup> position out of a total of 167 countries scored

(<http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015>) and concluded that Nigeria is amongst the most corrupt countries in the world.

Through the years, Nigeria has been striving to address the scourge of corruption originating especially from the public sector but also from the private sector. Elected governments have always come up with an anti-corruption plan which often times is unsuccessful. President Muhammad Buhari led administration has instituted various policies to curb this malaise. One of such established policies is the Treasury Single Account (TSA) that requires all public organizations to maintain a single account domiciled at the Central Bank of Nigeria. The Treasury Single Account (TSA) initiative is the operation of a unified structure for Government Bank Accounts, in a single account or a set of linked accounts for all Government payments and receipts ([www.cenbank.org](http://www.cenbank.org)). It is intended to reduce and possibly end the diversion of public funds into private accounts by public officers.

Though the government expresses commitment to eradicate corrupt practices in the country, corruption is institutionalized and has so many outlets. Mr. Femi Falana while delivering the keynote speech at a round table on “Winning the War against Corruption” said;

*“The Nigerian government is not yet winning the war on corruption despite the overwhelming evidence available to it. Apart from the class solidarity usually extended to politically exposed persons by judges in all capitalist societies, the situation is compounded in Nigeria by judicial corruption and professional misconduct on the part of*

*senior lawyers involved in the defense of corruption cases” (Retrieved from <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/>).*

One of the many deterrents to the struggle to end corruption is the Nigerian tolerance for corruption. In many countries, a person that is linked to corrupt practice(s) of any kind, becomes unworthy of public office. The case is different in Nigeria. Being linked to any form of corruption is not immediately seen as a negative or bad thing. A typical example is the case of a Former Minister of Aviation – Stella Oduah, who had to resign in 2014 due to the purchase of two bullet proof cars at an inflated of ₦255million (USD 1 = ₦ 199 at the time) but emerged as an elected Senator in 2015 (Ekene & Ugwunwanyi, 2016).

It is definitive of the Nigerian value system that corruption is often times explainable or defensible. According to Olatunji (2015), our societal values and ethics often times dictates our conscious appreciation of accountability. He further stated that Nigeria is a country where financial embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds by public servants is seen as a virtue instead of a bad vice. This is further exemplified by the celebration of the recent release of James Ibori, former Governor of Delta State, from prison after serving jail term in the United Kingdom for corruption and money laundering. He returned to widespread Jubilation from many Nigerians. (<https://guardian.ng/opinion/the-return-of-ibori/>). In part, one can attribute this attitude of acceptance to the inexcusable delay or non-commitment to the administration of justice by the Nigerian Judicial System (John & Musa, 2014).



It is important to note that the Nigerian Government upon return to democracy in 1999, has put some policies & reforms in place to fight corruption. This includes the public service reforms (monetization) and public procurement reforms, the reinforcement of existing anti- corruption agencies such as the Code of Conduct Bureau and Code of Conduct Tribunal, the establishment of anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crime Commission and Independent Corruption and other Practices Commission. Despite these measures by the Government, corruption still thrives (Mohammed, 2013). This further arguments the assertions of leadership ineffectiveness in the Nigerian public sector.

In spite of the glaring deleterious effects of corruption, it is important to note that there is a school of thought that shares a different view on corruption. This theory assumes that corruption brings about development and progress. Henry (2012) talks about the “grease hypothesis” explaining that grease money can also be called speed money as it is used to circumvent the slow pace of normal bureaucratic process thereby accelerating prosperity and a nation’s growth.

Kolstad & Wiig (2013) posits that corruption is often beneficial to host countries as it encourages foreign direct investment from multinational corporations who in turn have access to the host nations’ resource by easing the constraints of bureaucracy through bribery. Although this theoretical assumption is discussed at an informal level to justify corrupt practices prevalent in Nigeria at the official level, however, it is considered illegal and relevant laws were enacted to curb its prevalence. The extent to which corruption is

curbed in Nigeria is dependent on effective leadership across every strata of public sector administration.

### **Public Sector Administration in Nigeria**

Public administration is what government does (Shafritz & Russell, 2011). It is a series of policy making activities that is geared towards a country's development & growth. In defining public administration, it is important to situate it in the particular country context because public administration differs in different environment, culture and society (Shafritz, 2015). In Nigeria, public administration encompasses all government activities that utilizes human resources to manage public affairs. Through evaluations, negotiations and lobbying, administration of public resources happens and it is implemented by the public sector which is made up of the following governmental agencies grouped into;

- a) The Civil Service: the career personnel of the presidency, ministers, Extra – Ministerial Departments, the National Assembly and the Judiciary.
- b) The Armed Forces, the Police, Other Security Agencies e.g Para – Military organizations
- c) The Parastatals or Public Enterprises.

The public sector is government's policy implementation tool. In a nut shell, the functions of public service include revenue generation, management, monitoring & implementation of policies – economic, political & social and service delivery to the people. Antithetically, Porter & Watts (2016) is of the view that there is a case of misplaced priorities and a lack of institutional capacity to “promote economically

productive or socially equitable investments, or deliver public goods – justice, security, services, livelihoods – effectively and democratically”.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria operates a three tiered system of government namely – Federal, State and Local Government. At all levels of government, the general perception is that the public sector is complacent, morally bankrupt, lazy, irresponsible, uncaring and generally lacking integrity as well as the key ethical leadership principles of respect, service, justice, honesty and community.

The quality of the public service largely determines the pace of development of any nation (Murtala & Marshall, 2015). This position strengthens the negative perception of the Nigerian public servants due to the level of underdevelopment in the country in relation to the revenue generated. It is important to stress the critical role of public service in the enforcement of government policies towards the delivery of quality public service. Achebe (1983) notes that the Nigerian problem is a direct result of leadership failure and “the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which is the hallmark of true leadership”.

The leadership problem can be attributed to the personality, approach, aspirations, motivations and values of the person in the leadership position. These positions are opportunities to create social change by working within the lines of ethics, equity, morality, strategy and most importantly, the code of conduct for the organization. The Nigerian public sector seemingly lacks such leadership. It could be as a result of the complexities of the countries diversity and problems of management in a constantly changing state of governance. Agbibo (2012) attributes the state of underdevelopment in

Nigeria on corruption and bad leadership prevalent in both private and public sector as it has become the main engine of activity.

The public sector is the major channel for resource allocation, expenditure and policy administration in Nigeria and that defines its control of the economy. The public sector serves as a conduit through which resources flow down to the private sector and to individuals. Oroh (2002) states that “Public administration is the machinery by which government performs its activities”. This refers to the networks by which the federal government fulfills its economic developmental goals. Management of the public sector basically entails the implementation of government policies through the administration of resources and delivery of services to the populace. It should be carried out in tandem with political, economic, social and environmental demands. A public administrators’ end goal is service delivery and as such, must be able to explain their conduct, allocation of time and other resources (Cooper, 2012) for the fulfilment of overall objectives. Since leaders in the public sector are also administrators, they are accountable for their decisions, actions and the consequences thereof.

The administrative challenge that Nigeria faces revolves around the synergy between leadership and corruption. Nigeria’s foremost anti-corruption agency - The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has traced the high rate of corruption in the country to the nation's value system (Ossai, 2011), stating that poor leadership is one of the major enforcers of corruption. The institutionalized corruption in the leadership of Nigeria has persisted through different regimes, through the military to the democratic government.

The leadership issue in Nigeria is such that many of those empowered into management positions (Either through public service progression or appointment), view it as an opportunity to exercise power, grant favors and acquire wealth. Most often people are appointed based on political or familial affiliations instead of competence and oftentimes ill-equipped persons are put in key positions. This is a contributory factor in breeding leaders who have no appreciation of the requirements for leader effectiveness. Achebe (1983) posits that the inability of leaders to lead effectively stems from the system of choosing public servants into positions as a way of rewarding them. This patronage encourages them to act selfishly and take decisions based on parochial interests with its deleterious consequences to the Nigerian nation.

There is little thought to leadership by example or the comprehension of the influence that is triggered by negative leadership. It is very important to note that without followership there will be no leadership, so basically followers shadow a leader, emulate their behaviors and even try to do better than a leader in every way, good or bad. A fallout of leadership ineffectiveness as opined by Ikokwu (2011) is that grand corruption has led to the personalization of public wealth, stating that democracy and development suffers due to the practiced abuse of public power and resources for private gain and thus stagnating the civic service.

Leadership is about optimizing self-management for the collective goal of influencing people management and output to the betterment of the organization and by extension, the country. Burke (2011) states that leadership is the capacity to influence others to the achievement of a common mission and goal. This is further buttressed by

Hickman's (2010) definition of leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations – the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations – of both leaders and followers. Leadership can be described as an opportunity to add value to people you work with, thereby garnering voluntary followership while optimally fulfilling organizational goals within ethical and professional limits. What the Nigerian public administrators mostly ignore is that a leader is highly influential whether in a negative or positive way. Past leaders have paved the way for the “turn by turn”. People queue to get to that leadership position so they can do what the others have done and even beat the record of the last leader.

Effective management of the Nigerian public sector is expected to transform it into a stable institution with guiding principles for decision making which enhances good governance to prevail. It is crucial to national development that the public sector organization be anchored upon strong strategic leadership and good governance to ensure the country's economic and social priorities are forthright. It is safe to say that there will be no equitable administration of public affairs without ethical practices and strategic leadership.

Public officers, government functionaries, executive and legislative arms of government must not only be seen to be fair, equitable and just, showing transparency in all their activities but also ensure that no citizen is victimized or favored because of his/her political, religious, ethnic persuasions and orientations. Cooper (2012) states that an administrator must be able to explain their conduct, allocation of time and other resources as is consistent with the work plan and objectives of the organization. In

essence a leader should be able to justify the need for their decisions, actions and the consequences thereof. The study will be concentrating on a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

### **Problem Statement**

Service delivery and public sector productivity are abysmal in Nigeria and this, according to several researchers can be linked to ineffective leadership of public sector organizations. Okonjo –Iweala (2012) asserts that the lack of effective leadership in the Nigerian public sector has led to a failed public institution plagued with mismanagement of resources and inadequate service delivery. Badamasiuy & Bello (2013) supports this position by stating that the leadership ineffectiveness has allowed corruption and maladministration to thrive for decades. Due to misappropriation of resources, Nigeria is burdened with the inability to provide of basic infrastructures like roads, schools, healthcare system, electricity and water (Ejimabo, 2013). There is a relationship between leadership, public sector and economic growth. Simply put:

- a. Economic growth is determined by government as it is a prerequisite to gauge the improvement of social welfare for citizens in a developing country (Rodrik, 2014);
- b. “The development of any nation is engendered by the effectiveness of its various institute\’ns” (Olowookere & Elegbeleye, 2013);
- c. Government depends on the public sector to implement its economic growth policies and plans. (Murtala & Marshall, 2015);

- d. Leadership of the public sector is essential to the effectiveness of their performance (Mora & Ţiclău 2012); and
- e. Economic growth/development is the product of effective leadership (Ogbeide, 2012).

Adanri (2016) is of the view that the underdevelopment in Nigeria is a result of public sector inefficiency due to leadership ineffectiveness. Leadership in the public sector has been derailed largely by personal agenda and political interference to the detriment of economic development (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012). This leadership failure is manifest in the quality of service rendered, in the prevalence of corrupt practices that occur in the federal government ministries and also from unfavorable attitude to work displayed by the employees in the civil service. Ejimabo (2013) asserts that public service has been greatly neglected, precipitating deterioration as a result of corruption and lack of effective leadership skills.

Musgrave (2014) posits that public sector is critical for a society to function properly and Mora & Ţiclău (2012) views effective leadership as a major condition for public sector success. Haslam & Reicher, (2016) estimates that organizations in the United States spend about \$14billion yearly on leadership trainings. This is significant because it shows the importance of leadership effectiveness for the progress and growth of any organization. Therefore, there is a need to rethink the philosophy of leadership and its effectiveness in Nigeria. Thus, taking into consideration that different situations/organizations/levels require different types of leadership for effectiveness (Van



Mart, 2014), this study sought to explore how strategic leadership approach can be a viable option for effective public sector administration in Nigeria.

Carter & Green (2013) notes that the values that reinforce leadership styles/actions are critical to leadership effectiveness, while Ossai (2011) posits that Nigeria's value system is lacking in the prerequisite particulars to reduce corruption and promote effective leadership. This study therefore looked at the role that value plays in strategic leadership from a Nigerian perspective.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to identify how leadership ineffectiveness could be addressed in public sector administration in Nigeria. I considered the implications of adopting a strategic leadership approach as an option for public sector administration in Nigeria. The outcome of the study was envisioned to address the challenges of public sector administration with a view to ultimately improve service delivery and support economic growth.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions are as follows;

- RQ1: What leadership approach currently exist in public sector administration in Nigeria, with particular reference to Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund)?
- RQ2: How does the leadership approach adopted by TETFund hinder/enhance effective service delivery?

RQ3: How can the adoption of strategic leadership approach address the challenges (if any) of TETFund as a for public sector organization in Nigeria?

### **Research Objectives**

This study sets out to critically evaluate leadership effectiveness in public sector administration in Nigeria. The major objectives of this research work revolve around determining and understanding the extent to which leadership effectiveness is pivotal to success of public sector administration. Therefore, the following are the objectives of this research project:

1. To understand leadership effectiveness on public sector administration.
2. To determine the existing leadership style and its effect on public sector administration.
3. To explore how the adoption of strategic leadership in the Nigerian public sector could facilitate effective leadership for the promotion of productivity, efficiency and economic development of Nigeria.
4. The role that value plays in strategic leadership from a Nigerian perspective.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this research is underpinned specifically by Strategic leadership theory. To appreciate strategic leadership theory, one has to review some leadership theories which include transformational, transactional, emergent, situational theories (Meuser et al, 2016; Ehrhart, 2015; Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden & Hu, 2014; Goethals, Allison, Kramer, & Messick, 2014; Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Hall, 2013). I is exploring the intricacies involved in the adoption of strategic

leadership in public sector administration in Nigeria hence the particular consideration of strategic leadership theory (Oladele, Akeke, Adebisi & Adeusi, 2013; Hagen, Vaicys, & Hassan, 2011; Serfontein, 2010; Hitt & Duane, 2002).

The emergence of leadership theories was borne out of a need to enhance organizational effectiveness and efficiency (Newton, 2012). Basically, leadership is about getting work done through effective utilization of resources. Leadership style on the other hand, refers to how a leader goes about achieving organization goals (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2015; Goethals et al, 2014; Van Mart, 2014). This study explores the viability of adopting strategic leadership as an alternative leadership style to address problems related to leadership effectiveness in public sector administration in Nigeria. Van Mart (2014) is of the view that though leadership theories have some similarities, applying leadership is complex as it has to do with skill assessment and behavioral competencies in a variety of situations.

In the review of these theories, I took cognizance of the fact that values are a defining attribute of a leader and that it is partly responsible for the interpretation and implementation of public policies that have far reaching outcomes / consequences, hence the need to understand the role of values in strategic leadership. Wright, Moynihan, & Pandey, (2012) states that “Leaders can influence public service motivation through several mechanisms, including engaging employees’ existing values, infusing jobs with meaning, and highlighting and rewarding public service values”. Consequently, this research would also explore the social theory of value hoping to draw linkages between the values that reinforce strategic leadership and leadership effectiveness.

### Nature of Study

The nature of this study is situated in an interpretive and critical methodological paradigm. Wang & Zhu (2016) theorizes that paradigm encompasses all assumptions on the nature of social reality. Scotland (2012) explains that epistemology, ontology, methodology and methods are the components of a paradigm and according to Thanh & Thanh (2015), paradigm explores the nature of knowledge, the methodology and the criteria for validity in research. Interpretive research is concerned with the meaning(s) that people assign an experience as it constitutes their reality in the course of trying to understand a phenomena.

I chose an interpretive paradigm based on its ontological position of relativism which queries the nature of reality as understood through multiple views (Creswell, 2013). Relativism views reality as a social construct of meaning that varies from person to person. (Paleček & Risjord, 2013; Scotland, 2012). To understand leadership effectiveness, I needed to explore the individual experiences of people that have headed public organizations and people who have worked with leaders in the Nigerian public sector.

My aim was to proffer another leadership style to enhance effectiveness in public sector administration and facilitate change, as such the study is further located in the critical paradigm. Review of literature showed that consequence of ineffective leadership is poor service deliver and low standard of living which could be seen as a social injustice to the Nigerian people. Wang & Zhu (2016) explains that the critical theory takes into

account the power, political and ideological factors influencing a phenomenon with a view to changing the status quo for better.

Scotland (2012) asserts that critical epistemology is based on real life phenomena linked to political and societal ideology which questions values and assumption with the aim of resultant societal change. Most importantly, critical theory was underpinned by a change agenda as it goes beyond understanding to critiquing existing condition and raising awareness to inform change (Patton, 2015).

The research was explored through an interactive medium which qualitative method provides, and in the case of this research particularly phenomenological research design is considered most appropriate. The theoretical framework in phenomenology looks beyond the surface to the inner, thus basing the research from the inside out. It attempted to see or understand the world through the eyes of others while maintaining a philosophical edge to it. Creswell (2013) defines qualitative method as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. An important characteristic of qualitative research that makes it suitable for this study is the fact that I is the key instrument of research and this study requires face to face interactions with participants for optimal and holistic data collection.

Qualitative inquiry was instrumental in my exploration of the values that shape or determine the decisions that are made by leaders in the public sector in Nigeria while exploring some leadership theories. These theories include pragmatic leadership theories,

responsible leadership theories, transformational leadership theories, transactional leadership theories, servant-leadership theories, charismatic leadership theories, value theories and especially strategic leadership theories. Atieno (2009) is of the opinion that qualitative research simplifies and manages data while retaining its intricacy and context. Qualitative research method would help me understand the thought process and opinions of workers in the public service.

### **Definitions of Terms**

A detailed analysis of any subject matter requires definition of key words and concepts. This not only ensured that any ambiguity is preempted but also prepares the reader for clarity in line with my intentions. Some key words in this study include;

*Public Administration:* Refers to all activities and processes carried out by public servants in the management and delivery of government policies and programmes to the populace. Henry (2015) opines that public administration promotes the relationship between government and the governed, employing effective managerial practices to institute public policies to the benefit of the citizenry. Putting it simply, it is the translation of politics into reality. Public administration speaks to the effectiveness and efficiency of government (Kettl, 2015).

*Leadership:* Burke (2011) states that leadership is the capacity to influence others to the achievement of a common mission and goal. Leadership is about influence and that influence is a reciprocal process. Leadership can also be described as an opportunity to add value to people that one works with, thereby garnering voluntary followership while optimally fulfilling organizational goals within ethical and professional limits.

*Leadership effectiveness:* this primarily depends on the right leader and is defined as the ability to motivate a person/group through continuous interaction to surpass their expectation based on their knowledge, without supervision (John & Chattopadhyay, 2015).

*Public Administrators:* They are key players in the formulation, structuring, delegating & deployment of government strategies and policies. They have discretionary powers to implement these government policies as they deem fit within cultural, institutional and legal limits (Henry, 2015). Public administrators include politicians, public servants and technocrats responsible for driving government policies and implementing government agendas, they work in public departments and agencies, at all levels of government.

*Politics:* Politics plays a major role in public sector leadership as most heads of public sector organizations are political appointees. Pettigrew (2014) defines politics as the exploitation of human and physical resources for the achievement of control over others.

*Paradigm:* Paradigm is a set of basic beliefs that constitute the background for research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

*Interpretive Paradigm:* interpretive paradigm is reasoning in a bid to understand a social phenomenon based on the subjective understanding of individuals who have experienced this phenomenon (Wang & Zhu, 2016). In other words, interpretive paradigm is a quest to understand the world from the different perspectives of people.

*Ethics*: Ethics is the study of moral conducts and moral status. It seeks to clarify the logic and adequacy of the values that shape the world, assessing the moral possibilities which are projected and portrayed in the social give and take (Cooper, 2012).

*Decision Making*: It is a calculated and rationale thought process involved in the selection of options or alternatives available in the consideration of an action. NIṬÄ & Solomon (2015) defines it as the use of a set of criteria to choose from options for action. It is the central concept for policy making which is a significant role of leaders.

*Values*: this can be defines as the supervisory principle that dictates the actions of individuals or the foundation for organizational strategy. It determines culture, behavior and interaction in any situation.

*Phenomenology*: A qualitative research design that explores a phenomenon through the lived experiences of participants.

*Parastatal*: Predominantly in African countries, parastatals are organizations wholly or partly owned by the government to support government agencies. In some countries like Nigeria, they are mostly an offshoot of Federal Ministries.

*Hermeneutic phenomenology*: an aspect of phenomenology proffered by Martin Heidregger (1889-1976). It posits that there is a subjective nature to human experience which begs understanding.

*Ontology*: is concerned with the subject and objective nature of reality. A researcher needs to understand the ontological position of his exploration to be able to define his epistemology.



*Epistemology*: It is a component of the research paradigm which asks the question - how do we know that we know? What is the source of knowledge?

*Leadership theories*: Leadership theories such as transformational, transactional and situational leadership explore the different types of leadership styles, their values, motivations and the consequences thereof.

*Negative Leadership*: The other side of leadership that adversely affects followers and outcomes, stemming from the wrong priorities and deleterious personality.

*Blame Avoidance behavior (BAB)*: connotes all behaviors exhibited by administrators to avoid any responsibility in the event of a blame-attracting situation. (Hinterleitner, (2017))

*Critical theory*: is concerned with changing the status quo, it strives for social justice by utilizing emancipatory politics. It is underpinned by fundamental guiding principles. (Pease & Cook, 2016)

*Meritocracy*: is defined as advancement in society based on individual capabilities and merit rather than as a result of political, familial or societal influence. (Kim & Choi, 2017)

*Relativism*: believes that the interpretation of a person's reality varies per person. (Scotland, 2012).

*Abuse of office*: refers to the use of the powers conferred on a public servant by right of his position/office to misappropriate and divert the resources of his office for personal gains instead of using it for the judicious discharge of his duties (Okogbule & Nkpolu, 2016).

Pseudo Leadership: leadership that is self-serving against the collective or institutional interest (Pandey, Davis, Pandey, & Peng, 2016).

### **Assumptions**

A qualitative research began with assumptions and the use of interpretive/ theoretical frameworks that informed the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups assign to a social or human problem (Creswell 2013). In the course of the study, I assumed the following:

1. That the participants that will be interviewed during data gathering are knowledgeable about public sector administration, leadership effectiveness and have directly experienced administrative leadership.
2. That the participants will answer truthfully to the best of their capability and knowledge.
3. That the journals and secondary resources studied for the literature review have provided accurate truthful information on public sector administration, leadership, leadership theories and leadership style.
4. That all documents collected in the process of data gathering will be authentic and reliable.

### **Limitations of Study**

The limitations of this study revolve around data collection issues, researcher and participant bias. Leadership behavior is a sensitive issue as no one wants to admit to any form of irresponsibility, incompetence, prejudicial or unethical behaviors in relation to public sector administration. Consequently, I would likely encounter abridged or

ambiguous answers to interview questions. Data collection for the study will be primarily gotten from face to face interviews but there is the alternative of using secondary data collection in the event that I was unable to conduct all interviews as scheduled and as such the advantage of primary data is reduced.

It is important to note that I work in Tertiary Education Trust Fund which is the public sector organization where data will be collected from. This could be an advantage to the study as the interviewees might be more relaxed with me due to pre-existing familiarity. It could also have a negative effect on data gathering, as my acquaintance with the organization might produce tailored and surface answers to interview questions, thus reducing the quality of data collected. The familiarity could also mean that there will be an imbalance of power while interviewing because hierarchically, some of the participants are my superiors and that might affect flow of interview process. The perceptions of participants on the central issues of leadership effectiveness may vary and also their interpretation, expression or articulation of their views will contrast, this means that the onus lies on me to streamline data collected.

I would ensure that all questions are clear and concise enough so as to encourage clarity in response. The retelling of events often leads to exaggerations or redistribution of events so I would have to authenticate some information garnered at the interviews. Participants' might be susceptible to instances of self-awareness during the interview and this might hinder full disclosure which could mean that all relevant data needed for this research might not be fully accessed. There was a potential bias on my part, based on

some inside knowledge of the organization, this could be mitigated by means of looking beyond the preconceptions, in essence bracketing (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

To mitigate this problem, I tendered a full disclosure of all particulars of the study. I also employed verbal persuasion to allay the fears of the officials concerned assuring them of confidentiality and assuring concerned officers/managers that information divulged to me would only be used for academic purposes. A positive to the data collection process is that the cadre of purposefully selected participants guarantees that enough information will be garnered given that they are in the position to give out these information.

Time constraints would also constitute a limitation of this research proposal. This was because the research study was time based, and thus I might not have adequate time to thoroughly gather data and still meet up with the submission dates as planned.

### **Scope of Study**

The scope of the research work focuses leadership effectiveness of public sector administrators while taking into consideration their immense ability to contribute to economic and national growth. It would be limited to a critical, comprehensive understanding and working knowledge of public sector, public sector administration, leadership theories, decision making process, and strategic leadership of the Nigerian public sector. It would also explore the effects of negative leadership and its consequences, distinguishing it from bad leadership.

The target population is the general public service and since this phenomenological study is located in a case study of Tertiary Education Trust Fund,

Abuja, the sample size will be gotten from staff of the stated public sector organization. The participants for this study were leaders at different levels in this organization and some staff who have been opportune to work with different leaders.

### **Delimitations**

Some of the delimiting factors that might be encountered in the course of this study are time constraints in terms of data collection. The study was restricted to public servants with a minimum of 10years work experience in the public sector. This was done to ensure that the participants have experienced leadership of different types as the public service undergoes timely rotations in the course of work.

In other words, the study was also indirectly restricted to the knowledge and perceptions of the participants on leadership effectiveness in the public sector administration. The willingness of participants to be truthful and factual is recognized as a delimiting factor. Scheduling interviews at the convenience of the public officers who were my participants might not align suitably with the time allotted for the dissertation in its entirety. Lastly, inability to gather the sufficient data primarily would dictate that I resort to the use of secondary data to complete the dissertation.

### **Significance of the Research**

The significance of this study lay in the fact that it is sectionalizing the leadership problem in Nigeria by considering leadership effectiveness as a challenge and a solution to economic growth. In view of the prevailing economic recession in Nigeria as noted by Soniyi & Akinwale (2016), it is imperative that Nigeria's public sector leaders effectively and efficiently manage available public resources to achieve optimal results and deliver

adequate services to the populace. It is significant because the public sector is a vehicle through which all levels of the Nigerian government drive national growth as it cuts across all the states in the federation and as such, a progressive change in the productivity and service delivery from this sector would make a positive impact on the economy and development.

Another practical significance of the study is the possibility that the findings of this research could be used for further improvement of the institute of public service in Nigeria. It would contribute to the formulation of a comprehensive framework of measures aimed at combating corruption, improving the quality and transparency of public administration and lastly the moral regulation of behavior of public officers. This would translate to better quality of life for citizens of the country. The overarching goal of public administration is economic development that will bring about social change as it will positively impact the lives and welfare of the populace.

Its importance would also be appreciated by other researchers, serving as a resource material when conducting studies in areas of strategy, strategic leadership, organizational performance, ethics, leadership, public administration, the Nigerian economy, good governance, accountability and to those who want to explore other sectors for the improvement and general economic development of Nigeria. It is expected that the suggestions in this study would be of immense help to the staff and operatives of federal, state and local authorities as well as interested members of the public and other stakeholders, who are all seeking means of implementing quick, efficient, and responsive government administration and services based on effective leadership.

## Summary

The summary of the study is laid out in five (5) chapters as follows:

In Chapter I, I introduced Nigeria and the present state of public/civil service in the country. A background of the concepts of public sector administration, leadership theories/styles, leadership and leadership effectiveness, the Nigerian public sector, and its problems and challenges, and the challenges of leadership effectiveness on public service administration will be discussed. I explained the problem, purpose of the study which was to explore how public sector leaders could enhance their service delivery by exploring theories to enhance effectiveness.

Subsequently I outlined the research questions and objectives of the study. The significance of the study which is advocacy for change in the manner which public sector administration in Nigeria is managed and to improve service delivery, was highlighted. The implications for social change was discussed well as the scope; and finally define terms and concepts which will assist in the better understanding of the project. It explained the nature of study, limitations and assumptions.

Chapter 2 was a review of current literature that relates to the study and its relevance. It expounded on the theoretical foundations of the study, looking at the origins of these theories or their source. The study was underpinned by leadership theories and so I explored leadership theories/style with special focus on strategic leadership theory, in relation to leadership effectiveness in Nigeria public sector administration. I also explored strategic leadership and its suitability to serve as a leadership alternative for Nigeria's public sector administration. Other related issues and concepts with respect to

the topic under study were addressed. I attempted to link all these issues, concepts and literatures together in order to critically evaluate leadership effectiveness through the lens of leadership theories, as it contributes to leadership of the Nigerian public sector. The chapter also explained the search strategies and databases employed during the research.

In Chapter 3, I discussed the study's research methodology. The research applied the qualitative research design, utilizing the phenomenological methodology to understand the concept of leadership effectiveness, taking into consideration their pivotal role in the administration of the Nigerian public sector. It outlined the population identification and sampling process used to explore the topic. My role as the researcher was explained highlighting the efforts made at ensuring trustworthiness of findings. Data procedures in respect of data gathering procedures, storage and security measures, data analysis and interpretation taken was explained. The chapter also addressed ethical issues & procedures, issues of trustworthiness in terms of confirmability, dependability, credibility and transferability. This culminated in seeking the internal review board approval of Walden University.

Chapter 4 explained the settings and preparation for the data collecting and highlighted other issues that might affect the interpretation of participants' responses. I illuminated the data collection process in detail, identifying the demographics of participants and clarifying the analytical techniques used. I presented and analyzed relevant data collected through interviews that aided the research efforts. I attempted to address each research objective and research questions from the data analysis. I noted the infractions observed during data collection and analysis. I also provided the evidence of



trustworthiness by showing the confirmability, dependability, transferability and credibility of the study.

Chapter 5 concludes the research work with the interpretation of findings, outlining the deductions from data analysis in Chapter 4. I stated my understanding of the findings based on the information from data collected. I did this by grouping it into subheadings – leadership effectiveness, meritocracy, blame avoidance behavior among others. I stated the limitations that were encountered in the course of the study. I reiterated the gap that led to the research and the implications/opportunities for positive social change. I suggested recommendations for progress in the Nigerian public sector administrators, and other key stakeholders. I also offered submissions for further studies by future researchers. I finally concluded by discussing the impact of the research on both I and the participants.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

The public sector is the bedrock of government activities, owned and controlled by the government to act in the interest of the general public and the law by providing adequate services for all (Uche, Oghojafor & Akaighe, 2016). The management of the public sector determines how effective government will be in policy implementation, service delivery and overall governance (Murtala & Marshall, 2015). This is considering that the services provided by public service organizations significantly influence the quality of living standards and circumstances of the populace (Dvorak 2013). Effective leadership plays a fundamental role in public sector administration (Olowookere & Elegbeleye, 2013), noting that it is the major determinant of the success or failure of any organizational activities. The Nigerian Public sector is mandated to deliver essential services to the general public by effectively utilizing financial resources provided by the government (Solaja & Ogunola, 2016).

According to Uche, Oghojafor & Akaighe (2016), Public servants are expected to be effective and efficient but over the years, they have been unable to maximize these resources – human & financial – towards the provision of adequate services and support economic growth. Offiong, Atsu, Ajaude, & Ibor, (2016) found that in the face of the economic uncertainties, there is need to enhance effectiveness in use of resources by government organizations. Sorunke, Omojola & Adeleke (2016) opines that public sector officials have displayed inefficiency and crass mismanagement of resources which has turned public institutions into a den of corruption. Other researchers have narrowed

the problems and challenges of public service administration in Nigeria to ineffective leadership (Adanri, 2016; Mora & Ţiclău 2012; Ogbeide, 2012).

Leadership is critical for administrative effectiveness in the public sector, as it is the fundamental component for managerial direction to bring about institutional coherence towards the achievement of a mission (Ukeje, Abraham & Chinyere, 2015). Organizational productivity and effectiveness, irrespective of the situation will always be dependent on leadership as it is a fundamental success factor for any institution (Wilson, 2016; Iheduru, 2016).

Thus the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was an attempt to understand how leadership ineffectiveness could be addressed in public sector administration in Nigeria and to also consider the implication of adopting a strategic leadership approach as an option for public sector administration in Nigeria. Hoffman & lord (2013) notes that there is a need to understand what leaders do to increase their effectiveness. Therefore this study was theoretically grounded in leadership theories as this chapter will review various literatures by experts on leadership theories/styles and public sector administration as it relates to the Nigerian economy, its structure, challenges, and functions. The chapter explained the literature review search strategies that I employed during the study. The theoretical foundation was analyzed in four parts. Leadership, leadership theories/style, strategic leadership and strategic leadership in the Nigerian public sector administration.

### Literature Search Strategy

The literature search strategy was mostly electronically done. In researching for this work, the underlisted databases and search engines were employed.

- Google Scholar
- Dissertation and Thesis at Walden University
- Google
- Research Gate
- Journal of Public Administration
- Journal of Social Sciences
- Nigerian Newspapers
- Ebsco Host Research Databases
- Public Administration Abstracts
- Global Journal of Politics and Law Research
- Journal of Phenomenological Psychology
- Sage Journals
- The Leadership Quarterly

The key search words that were used are public administration, Nigerian leadership, Nigerian public service, corruption, phenomenology, leadership theories, qualitative research, ethics, strategic leadership, trustworthiness, strategy, personalization of public services, values, decision making, Nigerian economic growth, policy, economic growth, government, public sector.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

This study was primarily underpinned by strategic leadership theory, but would explore other leadership theories taking into cognizance that I was particularly interested in leadership effectiveness in public sector administration. Meuser, Gardner, Dinh, Hu, Liden, & Lord (2016) defines theories as a methodical framework for the understanding of a phenomenon. Thus leadership theories were the frameworks used to identify the essence of leadership, what makes leaders to excel, how they evaluate options and make decisions.

The broad classification of leadership theories included trait, behavioral, contingency and the new leadership function theories (Singh, 2015). Conversely, leadership styles are defined by experts to explain how the traits and behaviors of leaders enable them function successfully under specific circumstances (Duggan, 2016). The constant evolution of leadership theories is a testament to the fact that no particular leadership style is applicable to all situations and that effective leadership is not dictated by a particular theory (Yang & Lim, 2016).

### **Leadership**

Through the years, studies on leadership have undergone stages of metamorphosis, reinvention and amalgamations. McCleskey (2014) posits that a fundamental element of these theories is that it believes that leaders are individuals with extraordinary characteristics. This has resulted in many variations in the definition of leadership and the birthing of numerous leadership theories. Leadership implies that there is person within a group with a different, often preeminent status, authority and

responsibility (Chemers, 2014). Another definition states that leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent (Sharma & Silpa, 2013). This researcher favors the definition by Spisak, O'Brien, Nicholson, & Van Vugt, (2015) which states that leadership is the emergence of a focal individual who influences and coordinates followers towards solving issues arising from social challenges experienced in a vibrant and cultural environment.

Leadership is a group effort that involves inspiring, motivating and influencing towards a vision, direction or goal (John & Chattopadhyay, 2015). Researchers agree that there are distinctive commonalities to leadership definitions that is generally established and accepted by all which is that leadership requires a group of followers, is based on the ability to influence and the ability to utilizes resources in accomplishing goals (Wilson, 2016; Meuser et al, 2016; Gonzales, 2016; Breevaart, 2015; Ehrhart, 2015; Dinh et al, 2014; Chemers, 2014; Goethals et al, 2014; Burke, 2011, Bass, 1990). Leadership has been an integral part of humanity since the beginning of civilization (Coggins, 2016). I could summarize all the definitions of leadership to one simple statement, Leadership is meant to influence reality positively.

There is a fluidity to the leadership phenomenon as leadership behavior is believed to fluctuate within individuals on a daily and situational basis (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & Derks, 2015). The basic form of leadership exists where two individuals interact under different scenarios which give rise to the need for hierarchy. As

opined by Horne (2012), without hierarchy is anarchy, this means that without leaders to give guidance and directions, there will be chaos in an environment.

In Nigeria, leadership especially in public sector has been under constant scrutiny because of governments' inability to provide adequate infrastructure and social amenities. Felix, Ahmad & Arshad, (2016) states that Nigeria's public sector administration which is the Government's tool for policy and program implementation, is weighted down with leadership failure and leadership crisis. Other issues as Iheduru (2016) notes, is that there is a misconception of leadership in Nigeria, stating that it is often mistaken for rulership, forsaking the social interaction aspect of leadership hence the gap between the leading and the led.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen an evolution of leadership theories and models propagated by different philosophers based on the analysis of leadership styles portrayed by great leaders at a particular time through history. Meuser et al, (2016) found that between 2000 -2014, sixty six theories have been identified which relates to leadership. This is against the backdrop of the ever increasing need for direction in a dynamic social environment. This dissertation chapter will expound on the various leadership theories and styles to underpin the area of study, with special emphasis on Strategic leadership.

### **Leadership style & theories**

Meuser et al (2016) defines theory as a way of understanding a phenomena. In this study we explore leadership theories/styles in relation to leadership effectiveness. The ultimate charge of leaders is to achieve a predetermined goal through employee motivation and utilization of resources. Leadership has a direct consequence on the

effectiveness and success of an organization (). The distinctive manner or personal skill with which they provide direction, implement plans, inspire and motivate people towards achieving the goals of the institution, is their style (John & Chattopadhyay, 2015; Ukeje, et al, 2015; Caillier, 2014). Theories of leadership evolved from a need to understand the processes, reactions, perceptions of leaders (Dinh et al, 2014).

Leadership theories date back to the great man theory which was the first formulated in the 1840s. The name originated from a result of analysis of great men who shaped history and the era where most successful businesses were run by men. It believed in the school of thought that leadership is inheritable, especially from upper class citizens or aristocrats (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 2014), that some people are leaders by the fact of their birth (Yang & Lim, 2016; Jiang, 2014). The theory asserts that leaders are born and not made. A typical example will be the monarchy of England which is ruled by the queen as a result of succession of the royal lineage. In cases like this, a person is expected to be the leader based on the fact he is born into the ruling family, irrespective of competence or democracy. Examples of such leaders include Sir Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, Napoleon Hill Bonaparte, Alexander the great, Mao Zedong, Julius Caesar and businessmen like John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie among others.

The common outstanding characteristic of these leaders is that they greatly influenced the events of their time and the effect is still felt today; they shaped history. Most times, these leaders came from aristocratic families making early philosophers to conclude that leaders are born. Most of the leaders examined were male hence the name -



the Great Man Theory. Karl Marx and a host of 20th century behavioral psychologists in their work have discredited the great man notion (Turak, 2013).

Democracy in the Nigerian system has rendered the great man theory antediluvian. This is due to the institutionalization of the tenets of democracy such as separation of powers into three arms of government – the executive, the legislative and the judiciary, egalitarianism, individualism, libertarianism and the basics of liberal democracy where credible electoral process involves politicking, campaign for votes and elections that lead to the selection of leadership (Suleiman, 2016; Moran & Parry, 2015).

The great man theory is underpinned by autocracy where a sense of entitlement, control, sole decision making, and followers' unquestioned obedience, played an important role. These attributes do not necessarily guarantee leadership effectiveness. It is important to point out that leadership effectiveness is not inherited, it is a decision and a commitment to be productive reinforced by constant training, learning and skill acquisition.

Table 1.

*Summary of Leadership Theories & Style*

SN	Theory	Concept	Leadership Style	Era
1.	Great Man	Leaders are born not made	Autocratic	Pre 1990s
2.	Trait	There are inborn traits that outstanding leader possess	Autocratic Challenging	1930s 1940s
3.	Competency	Skill identification	Engaging Involving	1930s – 1940s

			Coal-oriented	
4.	Behavioral	Required skills for leadership can be learned	Laissez-fair Democratic Autocratic Bureaucrat	1940s – 1960s
5.	Contingency	Also known as situational Leadership, it effectiveness varies according to situation	Directive Supportive Participative Achievement-oriented	1960s
6.	Servant	Emphasizes on the legal and ethical aspects of operations. Pressure on the leader for personal growth and authentic living.	Engaging Coercive	1970s
7.	Charismatic / Transformational	Influencing followers with personality & charm.	Transactional Transformational Laissez-fair	1980s- till date
8.	Strategic	Amalgamation of different theories to provide a holistic approach to leadership.	Transformational Transactional Situational	2000s

Visionary

Democratic

Associative

Pacesetting

Commanding

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*Note: Adapted from Jiang 2014, American Journal of Trade and Policy, Voll, Issue 1*

### **Trait Theory**

This theory is credited to Thomas Carlyle through his works in 1840s, assessing the degree to which natural abilities were inheritable. In a bid to understand the characteristic attributes that distinguishes leaders from non-leaders, the trait theory was hypothesized (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman & Humphrey, 2011). It is of the opinion of Gonzales (2016) that personal character is a major influencer of leadership style and this links leadership style to personal trait.

The Trait Theory postulated that certain characteristic traits and attributes are essential to leadership and explores which personal trait activates leadership effectiveness (Ibukun, Oyewole, & Abe, 2011). It argues that a leaders' personal traits is crucial to success and goal accomplishment. However, there are no universal traits that are capable of defining leadership in all conditions nor the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of leadership based on traits.

### **Contingency/Situational Theory**

Situational which is also known as contingency believes that leadership behavior is dependent on the situation. McCleskey (2014) defines this theory as a task oriented

model that assesses a situation properly before an action is taken. Unlike the behavioral and trait theories that ignore the situation the leader is in, the key feature of this theory is the environment the leader operates is instructive of his action.

McCleskey (2014) asserts that situational leadership has to contend with issues of continuity, conformity, ambiguity and internal consistency. According to Ibukun, Oyewole, & Abe, (2011), the effectiveness of leadership may be adequate within one situational perspective but will be ineffective in another.

### **Behavioral Theory of Leadership**

This model was theorized during the Post-World War II period of the 1940s to 1960s. The defining element was that leadership could be learned. It believes that leadership is not based on internal traits or qualities but the particular behavior that is employed to lead employees to achieve a goal (Ibukun, Oyewole, & Abe, 2011). The theory emphasizes on the effectiveness of the leader based on behavior, not on trait nor situation. In essence, leaders are made and not born. The theory argues that behaviors of effective leaders could be isolated and understood to train others to be effective leaders too.

Today, leadership theorists have identified additional behavioral leadership styles that may potentially influence organizational performance on several dimensions. Among these are the authentic leadership approach and servant, spiritual, ethical, moral, responsible, and entrepreneurial styles. Authentic, servant and responsible leadership styles are now keenly followed (Carter & Greer, 2014).

Responsible leadership places emphasis on organization triple bottom-line outcomes-corporate social responsibility and environmental care. Responsible leadership draws on discourse ethics theory and views leadership as a leader–stakeholder interaction. Moreover, it does not view leadership effectiveness in terms of financial performance as a driver of leadership behavior, but rather as directed toward gaining legitimate solutions for all affected parties .It transcends culturally specific views on ethical leaders (Voegtlin, 2012).

Authentic leadership has four dimensions: self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing (Avolio, 2009). It originated as an answer to issues of confidence in leadership (Banks, McCauley, Gardner, & Guler, 2016). This style has been censured for its overlapping attributes as it integrates transformational, charismatic, spiritual, servant, ethical and other leadership styles. Authentic leadership shows positive organizational performance in intermediate outcomes (Leroy, 2015).

Ethical Leadership style is where the leader virtues are ethically sound. In this regard, such a leader display intentions, values and behaviors that are respectful and mean no harm to others. This kind of leadership is widely expected among healthcare leaders as if ignored or followed it has the greatest impact on the primary role of healthcare. There is usually a positive improvement in patient outcomes and employee motivation on the part of healthcare workers (Al-Sawai, 2013).

In servant leadership, the leader is at the forefront handling the needs of his or her own followers. Thus the followers only take care of their needs later after the leader

has already handled the issues. The leader is basically a servant and not a ruler. To them to rule is to offer service to the subjects. Examples of George Washington and Mahatma Gandhi in history (Dems, 2015).

The various leadership theories and styles that have evolved over time have proved that perhaps the best strategy is one that is adaptable to the various situations and that it is worth considering how the various positive aspects of the different theories/styles can work together hence the strategic leadership theory.

### **Transaction Theory**

Transactional leadership style is also known as managerial leadership as it is routine based. It entails achieving organizational goal by appealing to the interest of employees in a contractual manner (Sajjadi, 2014). It involves supervision, organization and group performance motivated by rewards or punishment as the case may be. The power of the transactional leader comes from formal authority and responsibility in the given organization (Nikezic, Puric, & Puric, 2012). It is not adaptable to organizational change as it maintains the status quo, aiming to achieve organizational efficiency at all times.

The model favors employees who are task and goal oriented. Thus the model allows the managers to allow the employees fulfill their own self-interests. Transactional leadership focuses on results, conforms to the existing structure of an organization and measures success according to that organization's system of rewards and penalties. Transactional leaders have formal authority and positions of responsibility in an organization (Sajjadi, 2014) where the relationship between the leader and follower

revolves around the exchange of gratification aimed at maximizing gains for both organization and individual (Spahr, 2015).

Transactional leadership however faces a number of criticisms. The outcomes are usually short term and shallow as they are done on transaction by transaction basis. Its rigidity in following the same approach to leadership ensures that situational organizational challenges will prove difficult to solve (McClesky, 2014). Also team loyalty, motivation and innovativeness is low to nonexistent here (Spahr, 2015). The justification for transactional leadership is simple, followers who perform their obligations to specification get rewarded as it is simply a give and take relationship (Carter & Greer, 2014).

### **Transformational Theory**

Transformational leadership theory has been the most studied, debated and most influential leadership theory in the past 30 years (Berkovich, 2016; Dinh et al, 2014; McCleskey, 2014). A transformational leader is one who raises the level of consciousness of his followers about the importance and value of outcome and the methods of reaching those outcomes (Burns, 1978). A transformational leader uses his charisma to coach, mentor, challenge and support followers to transcend their own self-interests for that of the organization (Berkovich, 2016; Bass 2008).

Transformational leadership is underpinned by on four components - idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (McClesky, 2014). These components ensure that the followers are impressed by their leaders as he exemplifies their idea of leadership by inspiring and

motivating them to push the boundaries and face challenges. The flow of ideas between leader and followers ensures that there is intellectual stimulation, through the receptiveness of the leader to criticism which opens up a flow of innovative ideas. Transformational leader encourages interaction with followers at a personal level, all in a bid to steer an organization to new horizons (Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2016; McCleskey, 2014; Van Knippenberg, & Sitkin, 2013).

The ultimate goal of transformational leadership is to positively impact on followers by helping them internalize organizational values and organizational performance through improved staff performance (Phaneuf, Boudrias, Rousseau, & Brunelle, 2016; Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2016). Transformational leadership fits a wide array of cultures, situations and contexts. However, the suitability of transformational leadership depends on contexts. In as much as generally deemed successful, there is a growing need for research on the relation between transformational leadership and work outcomes (McCleskey, 2014).

Some critics of transformational leadership state that there are no clear indications/fundamental models of the effects on this theory on organizational outcomes (Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). Transformational leadership has been interrelated with leadership effectiveness but Berkovich (2016) argues that there is a degree of ambiguity between the definition of transformational leadership and its effectiveness with respect to idealized influence. Mills & Boardley (2017) contend that this approach is incapable of advising daily operations. The impact of transformational leadership in the public sector is being contested as scholars maintain that the organizational structure and



size of the public sector inhibits or even outrightly makes transformational leadership an unethical venture (Felix, Ahmad & Arshad, 2016).

There is the predilection of transformational leaders to pursue assigned interest to the detriment of collective interest (Soniya & Akinwale, 2016). The fact that transformational leaders pressure their followers opens up opportunities for abuse of power and the rise of pseudo transformational leadership where a leader is more orally inclined than exemplifying leadership (Camm, 2016).

### **Charismatic Leadership**

Charismatic leadership is through charm, communication abilities and persuasiveness. Charismatic leaders are driven by their conviction and commitment to a cause. There are similarities with transformational leadership but for audience and focus. Charismatic leaders often try to make the status quo better sometimes exhibiting elements of self-sacrifice and heroism while transformational leaders focus on transforming organizations into the leader's vision (Spahr, 2016). As earlier noted in the transformational theory, the use of coercive power by charismatic leaders can pose significant risks for psychological damage in organizations (Camm 2016).

### **Strategic Leadership**

Strategic leadership refers to a leader's ability to "anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes" (Meuser et al, 2016). Strategic leadership has the potential to be a solution to recurrent leadership problems as it is an amalgamation of various leadership styles, about 20 leadership theories according to Meuser et al, (2016). The development of leadership theories needs

to progress to the level of integration to advance the practice and study of leadership (Hollenbeck, DeRue, & Nahrgang, 2015). Strategic Leadership explicitly outlines the motive and the purpose of a goal, thereby guiding an inclusive process to set a new strategy in place (Joyce, 2012). It thrives on the flexibility to switch between styles based on existing conditionalities and environment.

Strategic leadership is about multi-functionality, striving to understand and align the external with the internal environment (Simsek, Jansen, Minichilli, & Escriba-Esteve, 2015). It appreciates that different situations demand different types of intelligence to execute hence the flexibility to adapt to a required course of action. It understands the importance of organizational culture to the success and long-term viability of the organization. Strategic leadership is value addition to high performance where the operative element is strategy. Strategic leadership employs critical thinking for problem solving.

As noted by Stowell & Mead (2016), leadership requires more than operational effectiveness, or completion of daily/existing responsibilities, it is about effective execution of present responsibilities while developing a visionary outlook that will shape a better future. Strategic leadership is the ability to effectively combine the best attributes of the visionary approach with the managerial leadership styles while tapping into their emotional and strategic competency (Jiang, 2014).

It balances the short term needs of the organization with the longer term strategic opportunities that may become available. They integrate the vision, creativity and innovation necessary for long term success with the operational focus and understanding

that maintains organizational stability. Above all, the strategic leadership is able to connect with the people around them and has strong performance expectations (Redmond, 2015). It is about leading through inspiration and persuasion rather than by coercion (Bass, 2006).

There is a managerial aspect to every leadership style and it focuses on the day-to-day and operational side of the business. Overtime they build an in-depth understanding of their measure of the business. In this capacity, they are the implementers of procedures, policies and budgets instead of giving the vision. Their interaction with employees in this capacity is in a formal manner concentrating on the task at hand and not the person doing it. According to Hoskisson et al (2004), Strategic Leadership is the managerial ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, and empower others to create strategic change as necessary. Effective strategic leadership shapes the formulation of strategic mission and intent while at the same time influencing successful strategic actions namely formulation and implementation of strategies that too bring strategic competitiveness and better results.

Rowe (2001) defines strategic leadership as the ability to influence others to voluntarily make day to day decisions that enhance the long-term viability of the organization while maintaining its short term financial stability (Slawinski). Key strategic leadership actions include determining strategic direction. This means that a clear vision of where the organization will be within a specified period and specific targets outlined. Strategic leadership focuses on activating and implementing core competencies in terms of resources and capabilities of an organization. It also entails developing human capital

through training and other forms of capacity building of employees while sustaining organizational culture.

The operative element for strategic leadership is the ability to utilize strategy in all decision making and implementation of plans. Strategy is defined as the pattern of choices intended to assure an organization's enduring success. Strategic leadership is about transforming an organization through its vision and values, culture and climate, and structure and systems. Strategic leadership requires continuous self-development to enhance a leaders' ability to anticipate opportunities & threats to their organization. It should be able to challenge the status quo, explore differing views, interpret the information, decipher ambiguous data, decide, align, and learn (Schoemaker, Krupp, & Howland, 2013).

Strategic leadership has a central role in evolution and cultivating an organization's philosophy. This theory of leadership prepares an organization to better respond to future trends (Abdow, 2015). The private sector has benefited from strategic leadership as it is practiced by the private sector CEOs and their top management teams, the board of directors and other heads of business units (Boal & Hoojiberg 2012).

There is a synergy between leadership effectiveness in the public sector and strategic leadership. Joyce (2016) summarizes the key characteristics of effective leaders and they are: knowledge of the situation and how to lead the people, self- confidence, building alliances, coalitions and trust among followers, constant personal development, understanding and managing stakeholders and lastly, challenging people to change. These characteristics align with that of strategic leadership approach. Backoff & Nutt

(1993) posits that strategic leadership focuses on creating an enabling environment for growth development which encourages personnel commitment and a sense of ownership inspired by trust and reciprocity. All these work towards idea implementation and strategic productivity.

### **Strategic Leadership in Nigerian Public Sector Administration**

The intention of this research was to seek an alternative solution to leadership effectiveness issues in the Nigerian public sector administration, considering that they are service providing agencies for the public. Hassan & Lituchy (2017) posits that the predominant leadership styles in Nigeria are the charismatic, team and humane orientation. This study is exploring strategic leadership as the alternative style to enhance effectiveness in the leadership and by extension service delivery of public sector administration in Nigeria. Wang, Waldman & Zhang (2012) posits that strategic leadership focuses on effective, efficiency and stakeholder needs, hence the need to consider it as an option to enhance leadership effectiveness in Nigeria's public sector administration.

Schutte & Barkhuizen (2015) analyzed the core competencies of strategic leadership which include affective, cognitive and psychomotor competencies and found that public sector leaders need improvement in all these areas. These three competencies encompass the ability to communicate flexibly, to be analytical, perceptive, promote inclusion, comprehend and implement strategies, be adaptable and to be an originator. Backoff & Nutt (1993) states that a strategic leadership strives to provide effective guidance, mobilize and inspire people to create change which has permanent value. An

important aspect of strategic leadership is the element of sustainability and long term vision/planning of leaders. This element is also important in public sector administration seeing as government is a going concern.

Vart (2003) points out that public sector administration requires an integrative and all-inclusive leadership model for higher productivity and service delivery in the face of the global economic situation. According to Omoyibo, (2012), Nigeria needs to tackle their dysfunctional economic system by creating and implementing an institutional framework of policies. These policies when created, will be implanted by the public sector hence the need for leadership effectiveness in this sector which is critical for national & economic development.

As noted by (2016), public administration is concerned with turning government policies into effective actions in reality, thus the obligation falls on public sector administrators to close the gap between government objectives and policy implementation/achievement. Bennis (1994) noted that the major problem of public sector leadership is that they impose rather than inspire follower, bringing about bosses instead of leaders. There is a need to incorporate management and democracy in public sector administration (Box, 2015).

In Nigeria, Leadership, especially in the public sector, is driven by individualism which has allowed personality traits, culture and ethnicity to play a role in the (mis)management of the public sector culminating in poor service delivery and low productivity in the sector. Solaja & Ogunola (2016) opines that Nigerian public sector leadership needs to institutionalize one of the fundamental traits of leadership and that is

to forego personal interest for collective, national interest. Akindele, Olaopa & Obiyan (2002) theorizes that the quality of the Nigerian public administration was reduced by persisting issues ranging from conflict of interest, inability to be politically neutral, bureaucracy, quota system and federal character.

More reasons why individualism is on the rise as asserted by Chemers (2014), is that prominence and financial reward are ultimate benefits of leadership making it a coveted position to attain. This encourages people to bend the rules in a bid to get there as attaining leadership position becomes the goal and not the opportunity to serve as preconceived. Acknowledging that corruption and the personalization of public offices are some consequences of leadership ineffectiveness which has led to the institutionalization of unproductivity and inadequate service delivery in public service administration, it is imperative that leadership in public sector administration is reassessed and re-energized to change the current situation.

Adanri & Thakkar (2016) found that there is a correlation between leadership style and leadership effectiveness. Wart (2003) states that effective leadership sets in place a system to deliver superior quality of goods and services more efficiently by aligning vision and direction with environmental forces while creating an atmosphere for creativity and innovation to thrive. Effective leadership takes personal development and organizational culture into consideration for a sustainable system to succeed. Thus, there is a need for democratic strategy in the leadership and administration of the public sector specifically for a country that is constantly divided by its diversity in the people, ethnicity and religion.

Ejimabo (2013) recommended that Nigerian leaders need a comprehensive leadership style that will include the understanding of varied tradition, customs, language of the people to be effective in governance. It is imperative that a leader take responsibility and ownership of decisions and actions taken. To put it succinctly, Nigerian leaders have to acquire holistic & sustainable problem solving skills. For leadership to be effective in Nigeria, it should employ strategies to achieve set goals irrespective of familial, political and religious affiliations. The positivity of results in the public sector will be enhanced if time and efforts are dedicated to analyzing the internal and external environments to develop and evaluate strategic options for leadership implementation (Elbanna, Andrews, & Pollanen, 2016).

Schutte & Barkhuizen (2015) theorizes that public service institutions need skilled and competent leaders to be sustainable. Solaja & Ogunola (2016) opines that the success of leadership depends on the ability to use a range of skills and the flexibility navigate between leadership styles as warranted by different situations. Strategic leadership understands that motivation is the key to productivity, job performance and personal satisfaction. (Yang & Lim, 2016). It employs effective problem solving using critical thinking to orchestrate a deliberate and inclusive decision making process irrespective of hierarchy that would produce superior results (Iheduru, 2016; Fung & Wright, 2003). Leaders with social skills also known as social and emotional intelligence go a long way, Strategic leadership is going a step further from transformational leadership. Strategic leadership in the Nigerian public sector should integrate public and private roles



harmoniously where your private life enhances and compliments the public aspect (Bennis, 1994)

In exploring strategic leadership in relation to the Nigerian public sector, one needs to look at the profile of public sector leaders in Nigeria. Uche, Oghojafor & Akaighe, (2016) asserts that most leaders who head public sector organizations are politically appointed and unqualified to lead their organizations. According to Okonjo-Iweala (2012), the recruitment of public servants in Nigeria was mostly political or reward based neglecting a merit/skilled based practice and this has resulted in redundancy and an under-skilled workforce with employees lacking the prerequisite expertise for their jobs. Some of these personnel go on to become inept leaders.

Iheduru (2016) upholds this argument by noting that the leadership crisis in Nigeria is the outcome of inadequate preparation preceding the appointment, on the part of those who find themselves in leadership positions. Royce (2012) theorizes that a leaders profile should include his focus on delivery of results and his vision/plan for future continuity. Hassan & Lituchy (2017) is of the opinion that for leadership effectiveness in Nigeria, one should be well educated, knowledgeable, honest, trustworthy, fair in all manners, persevering and sociable in nature.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I attempted to define leadership in relation to the Nigerian public service. The theories of leadership which underpins the study were explored. These theories include great man theory, trait theory, contingency theory, visionary theory, transactional theory, transformational theory and strategic leadership theories. Taking

into consideration, that I was exploring strategic leadership as an alternative option for leadership effectiveness to be achieved in the Nigerian public sector administration, I examined the workability of applying this theory to public sector administration by matching strategic leadership traits to public sector leaders.

I endeavored to fill the literature gap on strategic leadership in the Nigerian public sector administration, highlighting the benefits of the theory to effective leadership.

### **Transitional Statement**

In Chapter 3, I discussed the research design, method and methodology that will be used to gather data to explore the research questions. I had explored various designs under the qualitative method namely the ethnography and narrative designs, in a bid to utilize the best fit. I found that trying to explore the phenomenon of leadership required a method that would capture the essence of the experiences of participants and so I decided on the phenomenological method. I detailed the procedures that I would employ for data collection in this study. It was important that I discussed the population under study, sample size, sample selection process which includes the sample selection criteria, instrumentation. The processes employed in the data analysis method was also explained.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was an attempt to identify how leadership ineffectiveness could be addressed in public sector administration in Nigeria. Ukeje, Abraham & Chinyere (2015) postulates that administrative effectiveness and the degree of goal achievements are testaments to effective leadership. I considered the implication of adopting a strategic leadership approach as an option for public sector administration in Nigeria. This I did by exploring leadership approaches that currently exists in the Nigerian public service administration with a view to proffering solutions or an alternative approach to the leadership challenges. This would enhance the Nigerian public sector efficiency and optimize service delivery.

This chapter focused on the research methodology, method and motivation for the aforementioned. I provided an understanding of procedures employed while conducting the research project. I explained my role as the researcher. In explaining my role in this chapter, I iterated my commitment to objectivity by stating any bias and the ways that I would mitigate the effect of bias on the outcome of the research. It further addresses the ethical issues applicable to the study and discusses the steps taken to ensure the confidentiality of research participants.

To carry out the research, it was important that the methodology be situated in an interpretive paradigm to understand the phenomenon. Research methodology refers to the set of procedures employed during the execution of a research study. It is a systematic process and procedural scheme upon which a research is based and against which claims

and assumptions are evaluated, proven in favour or against prior assumptions. The issues explained herein includes research design, area of study, the sample frames, sampling techniques, instruments used and their validations, procedure for data collection, and data analysis information. It described the choice of research population and identified the sampling strategy as well as justified the participants' selection process.

Furthermore, the chapter illustrated the data collection procedure and specifically the collection method and its suitability for the research. Strategies to ensure trustworthiness – credibility, dependability, reliability, transferability – was stated. The ethical procedure which included the initial approach to participants to get their consent to contribute to data gathering and all ethical concerns related to researcher bias, data handling, participant's anonymity and conflict of interest was addressed in this chapter.

The research was conducted using a hermeneutic phenomenological research method under qualitative design because of the nature of the research project with its stated objectives. To appreciate hermeneutic phenomenology, one has to understand the concept of phenomenology. Phenomenology is both a philosophical and psychological doctrine, a far-reaching form of epistemology proffered in the 20th century by the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938).

Edmund Husserl's investigation into phenomenology which is also referred to as Transcendental or Husserlian Phenomenology became the foundation on which other researchers based their exploration. It is worth-noting that though Edmund Husserl is ascribed the title of father of Phenomenology, it was used by Immanuel Kant (1724-

1804) in his book “Critique of Pure Reason” while researching the mental representation of experience (Padilla-Díaz, 2015).

Phenomenology was explained by Friesen, Henriksson & Saevi 2012) as the study of the nature and meaning of a phenomena, focusing on people’s perception of their environment. Subsequently, other authors have added to the understanding of the knowledge of phenomenology as a philosophical undertaking which utilizes a different progressive approach to study of human lived experiences.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is another strain of phenomenology posed by a student of Husserl’s, Martin Heidregger (1889-1976). He is of the view that human experience is subjective and as such an appreciation of the world should come from the interpretation of individual experiences as understood by them. Hermeneutic phenomenology does not restrict a researcher to the right way of doing of phenomenological research, it frees a researcher to reach hidden depths that will produce valuable contextual data in a study to stimulate further thinking (Crowther, Ironside, Spence, & Smythe, 2016). Hermeneutic phenomenology searches deeper, looking beyond the general interpretation of lived experiences to the cultural, societal and historical underpinnings of the meanings of the experiences (Fernandez, 2016; Del Pilar Plazas, Cameron & Salas 2016).

Generally, phenomenology is individualistic in nature because it delves into a person's perception and understanding of the implication of an event, as opposed to the broad event externally. It could be defined as the acquiring a knowledge of the world as conceptualized through peoples’ lived experiences. The phenomenological research

method is therefore deemed appropriate in eliciting the participants' reflections of their lived experiences in relation to leadership in their various public organizations.

### **Research Design & Rationale**

The research design constitutes the plan, structure and strategy for research investigation conceived to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance (Osuagwu, 2006). Research design provides the basic guidelines for the details of the research study and it comprises a series of prior decisions that, taken together, provide a master plan for executing a research study.

Research design served as a guide to the research process. It charts a researcher's course through data collection, collation, analysis and interpretation. It explained the whom, the when, the what and the how the study was undertaken. The research design determines the thoroughness, generalizability and validity of the outcome of the exploration, this ties to the components of a research design.

Osuagwu (2006) defined research design as the programme that guided me through the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data and information. Research design decides the generalizability of the findings from the exploration.

Research design includes the aims of the research, the final selection of the appropriate methodology, the data collection that I intends to use, the chosen method of data analysis and interpretation, and how all these fit in with the literature. Thus since the qualitative techniques are themes/idea identification, I would utilize phenomenological methodology for this research.

The design I chose for this study is qualitative research design. Privitera (2017) defines qualitative research as the use of non-statistical scientific analysis to draw conclusions from nonnumeric observations. Patton (2016) earlier explains that qualitative inquiry studies how things work with a view to understand how systems work and their significances on people's lives, hence illuminating meanings from perspectives and experiences. This study attempts to understand public sector leadership effectiveness, its consequences on the Nigerian State and the benefits (if any) of strategic leadership as an alternative leadership style.

Thus, the choice of this research method was informed by the nature of study which concerns the exploration of a social phenomenon to illuminate peoples' behavior and decisions (Tong & Craig, 2016). It was further informed by the questions that i asked in the process of understanding the phenomenon of leadership effectiveness and its consequences in public sector administration in Nigeria. The research questions are;

- RQ1: What leadership approach currently exists in public sector administration in Nigeria, with particular reference to Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund)?
- RQ2: How does the leadership approach adopted by TETFund hinder/enhance effective service delivery?
- RQ3: How can the adoption of strategic leadership approach address the challenges (if any) of TETFund?

To answer these questions, I reasoned that it was important to have direct contact with people that have been in leadership positions or have worked under people in these

positions taking into consideration the subjective interpretation of an experience by different people. It is important to do a qualitative interpretive study because individual perceptions or beliefs are unique and dependent on their construction of an action. It was also imperative that I employ a method that is flexible, taking into cognizance that the research would involve direct interaction with individuals in their distinctiveness.

This prompted the review of the methodologies that would aid in exploring the patterns that would emerge from the understanding which actors ascribed to their lived experiences. A persons' reality and their adaptation to it, is steeped in their understanding of happenings in their social sphere which dictates their behavior. Hollan (2012) noted the importance of unfolding human experience to understand human conditions because it goes further to dictate how it assumes its unique character and quality. It is within this context that Yilmaz (2013) opined that reality is neither static nor fixed but rather subjective realities exist in a social constructs. Thus, the research design should be one that would capture the essence of the subjective construal of a persons' understanding of his everyday life.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The qualitative study is being carried out utilizing a phenomenological methodology. As indicated earlier, I decided to narrow down the study by utilizing the case study approach for data collection. Utilizing the phenomenological methodology as a framework and the case study method for data gathering purposes dictated that I employed face-to-face interview with participants as a primary source of data collection.

Consequently, I would say that my role as the researcher included being a



facilitator, in the sense that I was putting the whole research process together. I encouraged participants to express themselves comfortably, while ensuring that there is no direct or indirect coercion of participants towards an understanding of leadership effectiveness. I had to manage myself during interviews, especially potential emotional reactions during relational circumstances and also alternate between being an active listener and a helping voice to encourage dialogue (Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti & Mckinney, 2012). I was a learner as the entire process of exploring the phenomenon is to gain insight into the mechanisms of public sector decision making.

I had to peruse a number of research designs and methodology to determine that which was the most appropriate for the study. An important role that I played throughout this process was that of self-motivator, because there was the need to be committed to expending the time and effort required to exhaustively explore all data sources for the study, committed to data collection, member checking and analysis. The research methodology demands extensive field study as interviews will require time and patience taking into consideration that it is done at the participant's convenience as well as comfort zone.

Another role was that of reflection. I had to consider all the data gathered on the lived experiences of the participants in relation to the topic under exploration. My role as the researcher was interpretive as all aspects of the interview – body language, facial expression are important to the data process and subject to interpretation. I was personally unconnected to the phenomena under study and as such the data gathered will be unrelated to me.

Being able to distinguish between my person and the phenomena under study guaranteed objectivity in the data gathering process. I had no assumptions regarding the expected results of the interview but rather had to be circumspect as I worked through the questions that arose from the examination of the meanings that were found in the intangibles of human relations and behavior.

I also assumed the role of an enquirer as the interviewer during data gathering, asking the questions that will produce the answers for the study. I also played the role of data collector in the form of interviewer or observer as he goes about collecting the data, aided by field notes taken during the interviews. It is essential to forge a relationship with the participants for ease of the data collection process. I was the analyzer acknowledging that any software utilized would ease the organizing, coding and categorizing but the actual job of data analysis falls on me as the person who would assemble, describe, interpret and analyze the observations of participants and their responses to the interviews. Overall, I was the main instrument of research.

There is a need for the suspension or suppression of judgment during data collection and analysis in qualitative research (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). Accordingly, I would maintain objectivity in the face of exposure to the phenomena under study having worked in both the private & public sector, is currently working in TETFund which is the public organization that data will be gathered from and is also a partaker of services rendered by the public sector. It is important to note that some researchers believe that total objectivity is difficult in carrying out qualitative researchers (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013;

Tufford & Newman, 2012). I had also played some informal and formal leadership roles in the course of his career in both private and public sectors.

I ensured that upon conclusion of study there was sufficient evidence to support any claims made, that there was lucidity and consistency to the data collected in relation to analysis, interpretation and conclusions drawn from the above mentioned.

### **Methodology – Phenomenological Research**

The methodology for this study was conceptualized within an interpretive phenomenological research methodology. This was because it is important to use a methodology that would appreciate the social and economic consequences of leadership effectiveness from an individual's perspective, especially since the study is interested in understanding how and why a particular leadership approach is or should be adopted. Phenomenology is a descriptive and interpretative reflection of the basic structures of the lived experiences of human nature (Manen, 2014), and this speaks to its suitability.

Qualitative methodology refers to research that produces descriptive data through peoples own written or spoken words and observable behavior (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015). Various researchers have concluded independently that the qualitative research methodology has definitive common features in that it is interpretive, naturalistic, adaptable and exploratory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Silverman, 2010; Holoway & Wheeler, 2010; Flick 2009).

It is logical that this study which seeks to understand the perspective of people about the social phenomenon of leadership effectiveness that directly affects them should be done with a humanistic approach which would appreciate the participants view and the

environment in which the experience unfolds. Phenomenology is a 20th-century philosophical movement dedicated to describing the structures of experience as they present themselves to consciousness, without recourse to theory, deduction, or assumptions from other disciplines such as the natural sciences.

The concept of phenomenology has been widely researched birthing different approaches to phenomenology which naturalistic, descriptive, constitutive, existential, generative historicist, genetic phenomenology, hermeneutic and realistic phenomenology (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013). It is constantly evolving but nonetheless, through all the arguments and refining, the key concepts remain the same, and it evaluates lived experiences. Smith (2013) states that phenomenology basically studies the structure of various types of experiences ranging from perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire and volition to bodily awareness, embodied action and social activity, including linguistic activity. This further buttress the fact that phenomenology is about individual consciousness and a person's appreciation of his consciousness of his environment.

The objective of phenomenology is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced, without theories about their causal explanations or their objective reality. It therefore seeks to understand how the respondents construct meaning to an experience, reaching into their self-awareness of these experiences. By looking at multiple perspectives of the same situation, a researcher can start to make some generalizable conclusion of what is from a supposedly insider perspective.

The rationale for the choice of phenomenology as the research methodology are as follows:

- a) Smith D.W. (2013) states that phenomenology studies various types of experience ranging from perceptions, thoughts, memories, imaginations, emotions, desires, and volition to bodily awareness. I needed to explore leadership in public sector administration in Nigeria with a view to understanding leadership ineffectiveness and to further possibly proffer strategic leadership as an alternative leadership approach. This was done by trying to understand the perceptions of the experiences of selected participants, with leaders in public sector organizations, in particular Tertiary Education Trust Fund.
- b) The need to understand why public sector leaders make decisions in a certain way, to know what determines their basis for decisions will be better achieved through a phenomenological inquiry.
- c) Phenomenology has an interpretive nature which will be used to explore the delicate research problem about leadership ineffectiveness.
- d) There is versatility to the phenomenological methodology as it has some aspects of case study during primary data collection and narration involved in interpreting primary data collected from a third person point of view.
- e) Lived experiences are subjective to individual interpretation and as such requires a methodology that will yield a deeper understanding of the situation under exploration.
- f) It focuses on the lived experiences of the people within the sample study.

- g) It strives to extract the contextual understanding of the subjective behavior of people experiencing the same phenomenon from different perspectives.
- h) It is a more personalized approach to data collection as it allows for face to face interviews where intangibles like facial expression and body language counts, and
- i) Phenomenology can be a vehicle to illuminate the central and important issues of leadership in public sector management as the lived experiences of participants will help understand leadership ineffectiveness in public sector administration in Nigeria.

Human lives are a phenomenon in itself because we live with the constant interpretation of our reality as it evolves and as such the distinctive difference of nature determines how the phenomenon of life is lived. This ties in with the description of phenomenology as an ontology of human existence (Chemero & Kaufer, 2015). They further elucidate that it studies subjective experiences that make the shared objective world intelligible. It is an approach used to decipher the core of the interpretations of people's experiences and it explores the manifestation of things or events. To buttress the above, Creswell (2013) explains phenomenological study as an understanding of the common meaning of a lived experience for several individuals.

A phenomenological approach studies the essence of experiences (Patton, 2012), so the role of theory is based on social constructivism framework of the retrospective reflection of daily experiences from our consciousness. It is structured on the first person experience of a participants through the direct happenstance to the participant or by direct observation of a phenomenon by me. There is a similarity between the

phenomenological and narrative qualitative approaches. They both tap into peoples' perceptions and lived experiences. Narrative approach to qualitative research takes the knowledge of an experience and transforms it into a tale of said experience. In simpler terms, a narrative study can be said to be an experience storied while a phenomenological study is an understanding of a phenomenon arising from lived experiences. I believes that the phenomenological methodology is the most effective approach to answering the research questions on leadership in the Nigerian public sector administration as raised by the study.

The rationale for adopting phenomenology as the research methodology is that it studies the commonality of the behavior, language and interaction among several individuals with regards to their lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). This suits the subclass of public servants who will be participants in the study. Secondly, leadership is a complex phenomenon as opined by Wright, Moynihan & Pandey (2012) which can be better understood through a methodology that appreciates complexities.

Exploring the strategic leadership which is an emergent style requires interactions with participants to explore the interpretations of their lived experiences with leaders and this fits the phenomenological research. The research could have employed other qualitative research methodologies such as grounded theory and ethnography but in the opinion of I, the study will not be holistically investigated using the grounded theory or ethnography. This is because Creswell (2013) rightly observes that grounded theory requires a large group of participants to generate an explanation of a process or action while ethnography explores a culture sharing group and their patterns. Ethnography also

requires a larger number of participants as it explores cultural groups in a setting over an extended period of time (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams, & Blackman, 2016).

Kafle (2013) explains that phenomenology encompasses a range of research approaches and Schwartz-Shea & Yanow (2013) explains that there is a distinction between methodology and method, stating that methodology is about the reality (Ontology) and know-ability (Epistemology) of the study and this informs the method which are the particular tools employed in the exploration. Tong & Dew (2016) posits that methodology is the guiding framework for the methods which a researcher employs for data collection, sampling strategies and data analysis.

### **Case Study Method**

Consequently, the specific method I used in my attempt to explore the phenomena of effective leadership and the possible adoption of strategic leadership for public sector administration organization was the case study approach. Yin (2013) states that case studies are ideal for policy and public administration research and this supports the suitability of the research strategy for this study. Pettigrew (2014) posits that case studies highlights certain regularities of a social process. Case studies provide insights into a phenomenon and these insights may likely influence policies, procedures and future research (Hancock & Algozzine, 2015).

I intended to do an in depth study of purposively selected participants from a public service organization – TETFund in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria. TETFund is a government parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Education charged



with the mandate to intervene through the provision of funding and project management in all public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. To comprehend the complexity of the leadership effectiveness in public sector organizations, there was a need to immerse self in the work lives of research participants who are employed in the public service. I employed primary data gathered from conducting face-to-face interactions which will enable the observation of intangibles like body language and emotional undertones of the participants. This would also give the participants the opportunity to construct historical experiences to explain their answers.

A very important highlight of this data collection strategy is its flexibility, as it gives me the opportunity to come up with follow up questions to answers from respondents to enrich research findings. It means I can continue delving for clarity as the views and opinions of the participants are very important as the principal source of knowledge. Finally, the outcome of this work is expected to have positive social change implications by way of public and social awareness which would lead to increased output and optimal service delivery. The study has a social advocacy aspect to it that would hopefully enlighten the populace to possibilities of effective leadership and encourage leaders at all levels to address the country's developmental challenges, thus contributing towards bringing social change to Nigeria.

### **The Tertiary Education Trust Fund – TETFund**

Tertiary Education Trust Fund is a public organization (parastatal) under the Federal Ministry of Education. TETFund was established as an intervention agency under the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Establishment, etc.) Act, 2011 and charged with the

responsibility for managing, disbursing and monitoring the education tax collected from all registered companies in Nigeria, to public tertiary institutions. The parastatals activities are targeted at improving the standard and quality of public tertiary education in the country.

TETFund was borne out of a need to refocus the education tax fund mandate which encompasses all levels of education in the sector to specialize in tertiary institutions for maximum impact (Ugwuanyi, 2014). The TETFund Act repealed the Education Tax Act Cap. E4, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and Education Tax Fund Act No. 17, 2003. This means that their intervention programmes are restricted to government (Federal & State) owned tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria include Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. As at 2016, the number of schools benefitting from TETFund interventions are 202. TETFund intervention programmes include provision of essential physical infrastructure for teaching and learning, provision of instructional material and equipment library development, research funding, academic and research journal development, Academic staff training and development. (Retrieved from [www.tetfund.gov.ng/](http://www.tetfund.gov.ng/))

Evaluating the leadership in TETFund is important because over the years they have become the major source of funding for public tertiary institutions in Nigeria and as such a foremost public organization in the country. Initially established as an interventionist agency to bridge the gap between institutions internally generated revenue (IGR)/direct government allocation and institutional needs, the parastatal has become the primary source of funding (Afianmagbon & Obiukwu, 2012). Without TETFund

intervention, many public tertiary institutions will be lacking in basic infrastructure, learning and teaching materials and equipment and staff with post graduate qualification.

Despite the interventions of TETFund, public tertiary institutions are inadequately funded, have inadequate infrastructure and have not attained global recognition (Udu & Nkwede, 2014). A Nigerian university – University of Ibadan, has been ranked among the top 600-800 but there is room for improvement. This has been credited in part to bureaucratic blockages in the accessing institutional allocations from TETFund.

Nigeria is striving to diversify its economy and drive development through knowledge based innovations. Tertiary institutions are the mainstay of human capital development in any nation through research, innovation and development. TETFund has a role to play in supporting Nigeria on its onward move to a knowledge economy and so it is important to ensure that there are no erroneous prioritization of policies, misapplication of funds and optimal utility of all resources. In light of the critical role of TETFund's intervention, I aims to appraise the leadership of the organization and possibly proffer strategic leadership as an alternative if necessary.

### **Central phenomenon**

The central phenomenon of this research is constructed on an interpretive paradigm. I decided on an interpretive paradigm as the study will explore the subjective interpretation of participants experience (Berger, 2015). Thus, based on the paradigm chosen, data collection will be most productive through direct interaction with participants since the aim is to comprehend other people's reality as interpreted individually. A research undertaking starts with the selection of the topic, problem or area

of interest, as well as the paradigm. A paradigm refers to the patterning of the ones' thinking process. It is a principal example among examples, an exemplar or model to follow according to which design actions are taken.

The epistemological position of this research is that knowledge is gained through an understanding of the subjective experiences of individuals and for this study, it will be articulated from:

- a) Information garnered from the data collected during interviews with the participants that work in Tertiary Education Trust Fund, Abuja in different levels of leadership and also from people who have worked with aforementioned leaders; and
- b) Review of related literature.

### **Population**

The population for this research is public servants working in public sector administration in its entirety. The study population is the pool from which the sample for the study will be selected. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, (2013) state that in identifying a study population, one has to consider the central interest of the study, subset or sub populations to be included based on experience or excluded due to special circumstances. This study is exploring leadership effectiveness in public sector administration and that informed the target population.

### **Sampling & Sample Size**

As noted by Englander (2012), selection of research participants is the first step in data collection. The act of selecting some members from a population for the purpose of studying them or their responses is known as sampling. Sampling is used in the data

collection process of a research to extrapolate about the general population from which they were chosen. Sampling could be on individuals, groups, observations and cases. For this study I employed purposive sampling within Tertiary Education Trust Fund. Tong & Craig (2016) describes purposive sampling as a strategy used to target a select information-rich group with a view to capture extensive quality data.

The scope of study determines the size of ones' sample. Patton (2002) states that sample size depends on what I wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will be credible and what can be done with the available time and resources? Qualitative research does not require a large number to fulfil the generalizability criteria for the targeted population. Englander (2012) asserts a qualitative method such as phenomenology, can meet the criterion of representativeness and generalizability from a small number of research participants.

For this study, 20 participants was purposefully selected from Tertiary Education Trust Fund which is a parastatal under the Ministry of Education in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. Purposive sampling was the preferred sampling technique because of the specific population under study. The study aims to engage participants who have worked for a minimum of 12 years so that they would have experienced different leadership styles from being rotated among parastatals and ministries. There is a constant reshuffling and placement of officers within parastatals/ministries under the federal civil service from time to time. I plans to increase his sample size if the aim of the study is not achieved, that is if sufficient knowledge is not garnered from the proposed number of participants.

### **Sampling Rationale**

- a) It was impracticable to try and interview the population of research as the research is a finite process constricted by time and finances.
- b) Data collection will be done via interviews so it is important that the right size is sampled to achieve the aim of a thorough job while conducting these interviews. Taking into consideration that I had little control over timing and location for face to face interviews as it is important that sampling was contained in a specific area so that it will be easy for me to navigate. It was important that participants are interviewed in their comfort zone to get the best results.
- c) I understood that I was the main instrument of research and as such focus should be on the process as the onus for generalizability lies in the findings as proffered by I and not on the number of participants. In other words, if I was able to exhaustively gather data from few participants, it is acceptable as far as all parameters of trustworthiness are established.

### **Sample Selection**

The phenomenological method in human science recommends that a researcher engages at least three participants for a study (Englander, 2012). Therefore, I have narrowed the study to a specific public service organization – Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to provide insight and also to fully comprehend the leadership phenomenon in public sector administration (Silverman, 2016). The sample selection will be from within the staff of Tertiary Education Trust Fund. I verbally approached random participants to invite them to participate. The results of the verbal discussion with would-

be participants will determine the selection of the final 16 participants from the organization.

### **Sampling Criteria**

The criterion for sampling participants for this study was dictated by the following brackets;

- That the participants must be public servants residing in Nigeria.
- That they must have attained leadership or managerial positions at any level – middle and top management preferably.
- That they are knowledgeable about the workings of organizational leadership
- That they should have worked with different leaders/managers at different times. I hopes that with the constant reshuffling, they would have all worked with leaders in top managerial positions.
- That they will be available within a specified period, within which they can choose a specific date(s) and location which is convenient for them.
- That they are willing to sign the letter of consent form.

The participants will be asked questions about their jobs and their position in the organization to confirm suitability for the study. There answers will be further reconfirmed informally by asking questions at their offices. The federal public service is always top management light in the sense that an organization might have 500 staff of which 10 to 15 will be top management staff and about 30 of middle – top management

cadre. The participants were picked in hierarchical order from levels 12 (Principal Officers) to 16 (Directors).

### **Data Collection Process and Instrumentation**

Data collection was a detailed collation of other people's experience of their social reality interpreted by me according to his construct. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, (2013) explains that data collection is based on the methods that best illuminates a study and on practical considerations like timeframe and available resources. For this study, data collection will be generated by way of face to face interviews. Quinney, Dwyer & Chapman, (2016) describes effective interviewing as a mining information from the experiences of individuals to draw up a composite understanding of a phenomenon to broaden knowledge.

According to Silverman (2016), utilizing this method will task my ability to generate authentic comprehension of the participant's experiences. Seidman (1991) posits that interviewing is the most appropriate method to understand the meaning people attach to their experience, asserting that one has to access an individual's subjective understanding to appreciate his behavior. Face to face interviews are direct and indirect source of information through interactions as the interviewer relies not only on spoken words but also on unarticulated or intangible data in the form of body language. Various authors concur that the use of open-ended, semi-structured interviews is ideal to carry out a phenomenological research (Kyale & Brinkman, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Open ended questions give the interviewee the opportunity to extensively express themselves (Bevan, 2014).



Interviewing provides the opportunity to hear the interviewees' thoughts, memories and point of view, in his own construct of the experience and laid out in his words. I appreciated the fact that the process of interviewing during data collection for this study would be a collaboration between the participants and me, as noted by Chan, Fung, & Chien (2013). The manner that a question is asked will determine the tone and quality of response of the participant. Silverman (2016) buttresses this with his assertion that language used in an interview is important as it shapes meanings while permitting intersubjectivity.

It is important to note that there are criticisms of the interview method which points out the tendency to be overly dependent on data from interviews in a bid to unearth the secret realities behind the public image without being able to ascertain the truthfulness of answers to open ended questions. A second school of criticism recognizes secondary data as a more appropriate reality than primary data from interviews. In addressing these criticisms, Hammersley (2003) points out that "interviewees' accounts are more likely to be affected by error and bias than the researchers' own" but maintains that the skepticism surrounding interview method should not encourage vacating the use of typical interview material and interviews as a data gathering method.

The interviews process will concentrate on the participants retelling of their interactions with their management in respect of leadership attributes. Their current experiences in relation to decision making, organizational structure and the process that go final outcomes will be discussed. Data gathering will be carried out within a period of three months. Based on the three months plan, I will map out time allocations for

participants interview subject to their available and agreement. These interview dates will make allowance for follow up interviews where necessary.

There will be open ended questions crafted to guide the interview process. I also plan to use a recorder with the consent of participants. I would be satisfied with data collected when the data collected becomes monotonous. It is understood that there should be commonalities in experience of a phenomenon by different people but when the similarity in perspective of individual interpretation becomes largely recurrent, I will be confident of data saturation.

### **Issues of trustworthiness**

Rigor in qualitative studies has been the subject of debate over the years as it has been criticized in regards to the difficulty in establishing issues of trustworthiness, (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 2016; Noble & Claire, 2015; Patton, 2015). Consequently, establishing and mitigating issues of trustworthiness is of critical concern in qualitative research as it will increase the authority of a researchers' findings and the acceptability of the study (Ang, Embi & Md Yunus, 2016).

It is important to note that establishing credibility of research does not mean agreement with the research, it means that the research was carried out within specified scientific parameters. In essence establishing trustworthiness is about clearing doubts and inspiring confidence in thoroughness of research procedures and processes. To do this, it is important that the stages of the research process be greatly scrutinized to ensure accountability and avoid any form of bias (Williams & Pigeot, 2017).

### **Credibility**

It is important to note that the credibility of a study is interrelated to that of the researcher (Patton, 2015). Credibility speaks to the internal validity of a research, Silverman (2016) defines validity as matching interpretation of observations to data collected. So to ensure credibility I will be upfront about any potential bias to the study. According to Del Pilar Plazas, Cameron & Salas, (2016), it is essential that a researcher recognizes his bias or pre-understanding of the study upfront as it would determine his interpretation of the research.

Some of my bias included the fact that I has been affected by the outcome of ineffective leadership, through abysmal service delivery in major sectors in the economy, especially the power sector. The fact that I currently works in the government agency – Tertiary Education Trust Fund, which is the subject of the case study. I would submit to personal critique by a valued friend or research mentor to check bias. In my role as the major instrument of research, he would immense self in the experiences of the participants such that he becomes a part of their reality, meaning that their reality becomes his reality thus negating researcher bias.

Generally in a qualitative research, it is understood that multiple realities exist due to the fact that it is socially constructed which could prejudice the outcome of findings (Tong & Dew, 2016; Noble & Smith, 2015). Hence the need to ensure that the truth value of findings is what is presented. It is the view of Cutcliff & Mckenna (1999) that if others readily relate to an experience by just reading about it, then the data presented is accurate. I would share data collected with other staff members to see if they can relate to the

phenomenon and also if it is applicable to them, this would be instrumental in confirming the credibility of findings.

A populist method for credibility is triangulation where different sources of data within the same technique are obtained to crosscheck consistency of information gathered. Patton (2015) & Creswell (2014) recommend that I get a second or multiple opinions on the triangulation already done. This would allow a third party scrutinize the data collected and identify the themes or test conclusions.

### **Transferability**

Transferability is another way of ensuring external validity. Ang, Embi & Md Yunus, (2016) defines it as being able to apply the findings of a study to other situations. El Hussein, Jakubec, & Osuji (2015) refers to transferability as fittingness of a research work to other similar situations. I was particular about the processes employed for data collection especially so that the flow towards the research outcomes is clear (Gehman, Glaser, Eisenhardt, Gioia, Langley & Corley, 2017). This will be visible in the comprehensive and contextual descriptions that I recorded.

### **Dependability**

Moon et al (2016) explains that dependability is concerned with adherence to documentation to ensure reliability of research process. I plans to have an audit trail of all field notes in the data collection process. He will detail all interview procedure and analysis process which would be crosschecked by a fellow researcher to reaffirm conclusions. This can be achieved by meticulous filing/storing of research records. Patton (2015) suggests that one should engage in constant comparison of data collected during

gathering and that data analysis should be synergized with the purpose of study and the research design.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is ensuring that results are actual findings of the participant's experience. As noted by Moon et al (2016), qualitative researchers are the primary instrument of research which means that the quality of study is dependent on I's skills, experiences and ability to manage bias. All these are key to ensuring that the research outcome can be wholly tied to data collected. I planned to use member checking to guarantee confirmability.

Member checking according to Harper & Cole (2012) is used to enhance validity and ensure high quality of research work. It is also known as participants' verification or respondent validation (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell & Walter (2016), as it entails getting feedback of a researcher's interpretation of data collected from the participants. I employed this method by always summarizing what the interviewee has said at the end of the interview session to confirm accuracy of data capture from the participant. This would be done intermittently during the interviews so as not to omit any part of the response. It also ensured that I exhaust data gathering from each participant.

### **Ethical Procedures**

Baskerville & Wood-Harper (2016) states that conducting research that would involve data collection from human participants, ethically demands that informed consent to be obtained from the participants. Silverman (2016) identifies one of the possible ethical challenges as that which could result from data misuse. He further states that the

relationship between researcher and participants should be based on an assurance of confidentiality and trust as it is the key to smooth data gathering. In order to ensure that all ethical issues are considered for the study, I had a full disclosure discussion with the participants during which the particulars of the research were disclosed.

I divulged my doctoral student status to the participants as well as a summary of the motivation for the study, the destination of outcomes and a proof of all the above stated, i.e student identification was also provided to the participants (when expressly requested). I obtained a signed consent agreement from participants which would detail the following;

- The working title and purpose of the research.
- Institutional identification (Creswell, 2014)
- The research methodology
- The benefits of the research and the inherent potential risk from the outcome of findings. Often times the biggest risk to participants is the risk of exposure hence;
- The assurance confidentiality and the steps taken to guarantee it.
- That the participants input is voluntary by nature.
- The flexibility due the participant especially in relation to interview locations and the choice to stop participation at any point during the interview.
- Lastly, the participants' decision/agreement to contribute to the study by consenting to the interview. Creswell (2014) advices against compelling participants to sign the consent form because a participation in a research should be a voluntary act.

Privitera (2017) proposes that researchers inform the participants of the limitations (if any) of their confidentiality and where applicable offer incentives to participate. The fact that I was upfront about the aims of the study and research processes hopefully assured participants of the positive objectives of the study and also reaffirmed my commitment to the participant's confidentiality. This went a long way to assuage participants' fears and boosted my optimism that truthful responses to questions during data gathering was a certainty. At the beginning of each interview, the consent form was summarized and signatures affixed by participants. Those participants still unsure of their commitment were excused. Creswell (2014) is of the opinion that participants deserve to view the finished work as a way to thank them for their participation. I would not financially be able to send a copy of the finished work to each participant but I would send a link to each participant to enable them to download it after it is published.

I was cognizant of the fact that the interview process is intricate in the sense that there should be a balance of power between interviewer and interviewee. In this research, there was a balance asymmetry stemming from the existing working relationship between me and the proposed participants, most of which are older and hierarchically higher at work. It was important to have a level of rapport to ease any awkwardness and at the same time maintain control of the flow of the interview. Also I am a member of the sector under study and as such it might be a distracting factor to the participants and encourage suspicion of indictment.

The country had undergone social and developmental change in government which led to a lot of investigations into past administrative malpractices, corruption

and revenue mismanagement. What this portended for this study was an increase in the degree of skepticism especially with regards to the questions and a resultant self-protective need to be careful of utterances by participants.

I sought the approval of the Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before embarking on data collection.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I had discussed the methodology and the rationale for choosing research design, methodology and method. The study was conducted using the phenomenological method and explored from an interpretive paradigm taking into account individual perspectives. To further streamline the study, a case study method was chosen. Data was collected by face to face interviews so as to be cognizant of intangibles like facial expressions and body language which also form part of the data collection process. For sampling. There was a significant criteria which dictated that the participants must be knowledgeable about the phenomenon of study (Gehman, Glaser, Eisenhardt, Gioia, Langley & Corley, 2017). Ethical concerns were addressed especially in respect of confidentiality in terms of anonymity and researcher bias.

Chapter 4 would detail the process of data collection and analysis. It would speak to the methods of analysis and the address issues of trustworthiness. The results from the findings after analysis was given and data to support findings also presented.



## Chapter 4: Results

### Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was an attempt to understand leadership effectiveness in public sector administration in Nigeria with the aim of proffering sustainable solutions to inadequate service delivery among other issues. I also set out to consider the implication of adopting a strategic leadership approach as an option for public sector administration in Nigeria. To do this I considered leadership theories which includes transformational, transactional, great-man, charismatic, situational, behavioral, contingency among others as it relates to leadership behavior.

Consequently, I approached my study by collecting data with the following research questions as a guide;

- RQ1: What leadership approach currently exist in public sector administration in Nigeria, with particular reference to Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund)?
- RQ2: How does the leadership approach adopted by TETFund hinder/enhance effective service delivery?
- RQ3: How can the adoption of strategic leadership approach address the challenges (if any) of TETFund as a for public sector organization in Nigeria?

This chapter explains the process of data collection and analysis process. I employed the face to face interview method for data collection. I will describe the interview setting, the demographics, number of participants and the frequency. I will

provide evidence of trustworthiness – credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as it relates to my data collection processes. Lastly, I will present the results, discussing it according to each question.

### **Setting**

To proceed with data collection, I started out by securing the approval of the Internal Review Board (IRB) of Walden University. I subsequently carried out my data collection in the form of face to face interviews with staff of Tertiary Education Trust Fund, Abuja (TETFund). TETFund is a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Education charged with ensuring the progress and growth of public tertiary institutions through interventions in areas of infrastructure, academic training and research development. All participants were purposefully selected based on established criteria, specifically their level/position in the organization. This was to ensure that there was the right mix of top and middle management staff with enough experience in the public sector to have gathered enough experience and also provide an in-depth view during the interviewing.

Prior to the interviews, the participants were sent a letter of invitation/consent letter which fully informed them of the process and expectations of the interview. The interviews were carried out during a period of organizational restructuring, the management of Tertiary Education trust Fund, consisting of a Board of Trustees and the Executive Secretary were dissolved and a new Executive Secretary was appointed by the President as a result of the recent democratic change in governance. The election of President Muhammad Buhari brought about massive termination of appointments in

federal government institutions of which TETFund is one of them, some reassignment of key officers and new appointments. The Executive Secretary assumed office in August 2016, and has since started instituting some organizational changes including reassignment of staff members and restructuring of departments among others.

Worthy of note also is that the country has been going through a period of recession which has brought about high inflation and its attendant increased hardship on the general population. The current situation has been attributed to overall leadership inadequacy which also involves the public sector administration through federal institutions. Henry (2012) posits that public administration is essential to the democracy, competency and ultimately good governance.

### **Demographics**

The participant pool for this study was from the senior staff of Tertiary Education Trust Fund with diverse background to ensure that perspectives and opinions enrich the study. There was a mix of female and male participants, females – 5, and males – 11. I purposefully selected those in the management cadre and they include directors, deputy directors and assistant directors who head Departments and Units in the organization. I also added some middle management officers who have leadership roles formal or informal. Participants fall within the age group of 35-60. As discussed in chapter three; the breakdown is detailed below flows in the order of hierarchy.

Table 2.

*Participants and Frequency*

S/N	Participants	No.	Position	Grade level	Frequency
1.	Directors	4	Heads of Departments & Units	16	2
2.	Deputy Directors	5	Heads of Departments & Units	15	1
3.	Assistant Directors	3	Senior Management	14	1
4.	Chief Officers	3	Senior Staff	13	1
5.	Principal Officers	2	Senior Staff	12	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>			<b>16</b>

**Informed Consent**

The ethics of research demands that the inquirer protects participants' confidentiality as well as seek formal/informed consent. Williams & Pigeot, (2017) explains that obtaining informed consent from a participant is certifying accountability, and the willingness of their involvement with the study. This is necessary especially for face-to-face interviews where the questions will likely be unstructured or semi-structured, serving as guidelines. This means that there was room for clarification by asking additional based on the answers received from respondents.

Consequently, to proceed with data collection, I sent a consent form which detailed particulars of the study to the participants to officially indicate their willingness

to participate as well as their understanding of the modalities of the study and the interview process. In line with Gianotti et al, (2017), I had clarified the confidentiality measures that I had taken and those to be taken in respect of how data collected would be secured, and I also reiterated the fact that they were at liberty to withdraw at any point during the interviews. Although I had assured participants of utmost confidentiality, most of them, especially those in the upper echelons of leadership in the organization still tried to be “politically correct”. In other words, most of them tried to respond to questions cautiously and some answers were either evasive or defensive. It gave me a better understanding of the statement by Riaz, Khan & Jafar, (2017) that the importance of informed consent is realizable but not usually practiced. The participants expressed their inclination by signing the consent form but practically their responses showed that the consent form did not totally assuage their unacknowledged fear of possible leakages of their answers.

Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti & Mckinney (2012) note that informed consent in certain places only exist on paper in social realities. He went further to state that it often times just completes the façade of ethics as required during research. I could agree to a certain point within the context of my study because I sensed the underlying fear of repercussions to participants’ true experiences, and position on organizational behavior/culture. It was further confirmed at the end of some of the interviews where participants were more forthcoming on their experiences during the “off the record” chats. I found that once I ended the interview formally and turned off the recorder, some participants became more forthcoming and uninhibited. They always had last minute

recollections of events and truthful expression of their opinions of the internal contrivances of the organization.

The cautious response from some participants compelled me to persistently rephrase questions to try and get through some evasive answers to their real experiences. It worked in most cases but for those participants that were also very good at skirting my questions. In other cases I had to reschedule the interview to meet them at a different locations, and on a different day with the hopes that a different scenario would help them relax. This ultimately prolonged the time slated for data collection but at the same, it also enhanced the integrity of my study.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection strategy used was the face-to-face interviews. Data collection sample was initially estimated at 25 participants. Consequently, on receipt of the Walden IRB approval, I contacted a total number of 42 participants. Contacting a larger number than the target was done in anticipation of rejections. Some of the participants were approached at a seminar organized by the Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM) in Abuja and obtained their verbal consent and contact details. I also approached some participants by sending messages on LinkedIn. Several participants called me for a follow up questions and meeting where they sought for clarification on the modalities of the study. Some did not respond in any way while others gave their consent immediately. I followed up with the formal presentation of a detailed consent letters for signing by the participants and time scheduling for the interviews. The outcome of this process was a total number of 21 willing participants.

At the convenience of participants, face to face interviews were conducted for a total period of 1-3 hours depending on availability and readiness for disclosure. I emphasized on “total period” because some interviews were carried over a number of days. During the face to face interviews, both participants and interviewer had their assigned roles in the question and answer structure as noted by Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti & McKinney, (2012). And so we had an understanding that I will do the questioning and the participants will share their experiences in their responses. As suggested by Fujii (2018), I was conscious of treating the respondents with dignity and esteem irrespective of their disposition during individual interviews throughout the interview process.

I embarked on data collection with a clear understanding of my role as interviewer who needs a better understanding of this phenomenon. I was appreciative of the fact that the participants were indulging me with the service of their time and total recall. I also acknowledged my position as a subordinate staff to majority of the participants engaged for the data collection process, noting there was a need to ensure a balance of power during the interviews so that I am not overwhelmed or intimidated by the official superiority of my participants. To do this, I started out by mentality putting myself in the role of a researcher, outside the organization and not that of a subordinate so that I do not see the participants as my supervisors or bosses as the case may be but as contributors to the study. I also explained the need for neutrality during the interviews to each participant and politely asked that they put aside their official persona so that the interview will be conducted strictly as a scholarly endeavor between interviewee and

interviewer on impersonal basis. Throughout the interviews, I reiterated my position as an unbiased researcher intermittently so that they are constantly reminded of my noninvolvement status in the interview.

At the beginning of each interview, I proceeded by given a summary of the study, explaining the purpose and focus of the study. I clarified how the data collected would be utilized and handled. I particularly reassured participants that their confidentiality was guaranteed and that I would not use their personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. I enlightened all participants about the coding of participant names to ensure anonymity. I had coded each participants using T01 – T17 and maintained the codes for every part of the data collection and analyzing process that had to do with participants.

I reiterated that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point without prejudice or repercussions. I also asked for and received permission to record our discussions on a voice recorder. A participant wanted to know how safe the recorder was since he believes that voices could be recognized. I assured the participant that I was the only one with access to the recorder and that it was locked up in a safe at the end of each interview for safekeeping. The recorded interview and the notes taken for each participant was coded using the participants' assigned code.

I always start off interviews with a little chitchat to make my respondents comfortable because the body language of some of them tended to be stiff. Starting off, their responses veered towards determined positivity in their answers but as it progressed, they relaxed and became more forthcoming and even eager to be heard. Data was



collected both manually, by jotting down most points in my interview journal and electronically using of a voice recorder for those participants who allowed it. At intervals, I rephrased my questions to clarify certain points and also restated their answers to ensure that it is properly understood.

The data collection stage was not as straight forward as I had envisaged. Contrary to the ease experienced while scheduling these interviews, I found that the reality of timing was an issue for the participants. For example, a participant asked to meet after work hours and then cancelled last minute. This was after I had waited for about thirty minutes. I realized that the time set for the interviews was not sufficient and this resulted in meeting up with participants twice or thrice as the case may be. There was another case where the interview was rescheduled because at the start of the interview, the participant decided that he would rather have a copy of all the interview questions for a couple of days to properly prepare for the interview.

I had allotted 2 hours for each interview but the duration varied for each participant. I rescheduled some interviews due to timing, participants' discomfort and a need to delve deeper for answers. As the interviews progressed, I realized that people really were not predisposed to sit for a long period of time so I asked and received permission to spread the interview period to 2 or 3 days in line with their availability and convenience to ensure that they were comfortable at every point. Also some participants were being too cautious in their answers and there was a need for rescheduling, in a bid to interview them at a time and place where they would be more forthcoming with their

responses. The data collection process lasted over 7 weeks. It was difficult to control interruptions from people as a result of choice of venues by the participants.

Data collection was confined to a small number to study reactions intensively. I concluded data collection at the point of information saturation/redundancy (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). Data collection is said to be saturated when no new information can be added to that which has been already collected on a topic/question, in essence the response are becoming repetitive.

A noteworthy addition to my data collection was my research diary. I recorded detailed descriptive notes from my field study from the beginning to the end. I also recorded my thoughts throughout the data collection process. During data collection, I considered every discussion, especially the impromptu interactions I had regarding leadership an important data source and always jotted my opinions as well as the opinions of my discussants in my diary. I tried to document them as soon as I could, often times on the spot if I had access to my diary or on a piece of paper to be later transferred to my diary. I also started using the recorder on my phone to articulate my exact thoughts after spontaneous interactions so as to capture them without diluting information gathered. I would later write it down in my diary at the end of the day. These spontaneous discussions helped me to organize my thoughts as I moved forward in data gathering. In the field notes I made observations of the body language of each participants during interviews and also noted any conflicting statements from interviewees.

It is important to note that all interviews were strictly conducted between each participant and me. There was no third party present during each interview. The

interviews were recorded on a voice recorder. This was done to prevent any form of partial or total data loss due to malfunction or the wrong operation of my recording device. Furthermore, each interview was downloaded and stored on a password locked folder on my computer to ensure security and again protect against data loss and. The recorder was locked away after usage in a secure locker. In line with the data protection stipulations of the Walden IRB, the raw data will be kept in storage for a period of not less than five years.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis as explained by Vaismoradi, Bondas, Turunen (2013), is the process of transforming data from description to interpretation. I employed content analysis to examine information gathered. Schreier (2014) defines content analysis as the process of systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data using a coding frame, in essence one is trying to understand data. Content analysis involves the identification of the theme of collected, theme being the practical results, the essence of participants' experience of the concepts from field study (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove, 2016). My choice of content analysis is strengthened by Paradis, O'Brien, Nimmon, Bandiera, & Martimianakis, (2016) who opined that it is used to investigate changes in official, institutional and organization view in respect peoples' experience or perspectives about certain practices.

I have to mention that data analysis was ongoing throughout the period of that gathering because I had to edit a huge amount of data collected. Goethals, Dierckx de Casterle, & Gastmans, (2013) rightly noted that qualitative data collection yields a

massive amount of data which results in intricate analysis. During data collection, I realized that I got so much information on issues of exclusion like gender and ethnicity. This was due to the fact that my data collection method – face to face interviews allowed people to speak their minds about issues that they have been bottling up. So often times this resulted in deviations from the central focus of study. I ended up gathering so much data that it was important to start sorting through answers immediately after each interview to put them in categories. It was also important to read through data collected while sorting to determine point of saturation for each line of question.

Transferring field notes to working drafts, I had to constantly restrict data sorting categories to the issues of leadership and its effectiveness within the public sector because the data collected covered other issues outside the study's primary focus. As I continued categorizing, I flagged striking information that popped up. I also tried to reconfirm certain information via crosschecking the answers from other participants. I had no clear idea of the acceptable quantity of data to use so I highlighted as much as possible knowing that I could edit it later. I also took into consideration supervision/review from my committee to direct me on suitability of data content during their assessment of my work. I also transcribed certain aspects of interview recording to textual format.

I started by reading my interview notes to try and get a sense a general sense of the data and the trend of phenomenon under study. This was to prepare me to readily recognize the vital clues to the beginning of theme formulation as presented by the data. I went on to listen to the recorded interviews for the same purpose and made notes of direct

quotes that I could use. While listening I also attempted to put down some of the recurrent abstracts in participant description. Through the above stated process, I was able to generate meaningful recurrent ideas and key issues in participants' comments or event description, aligning them in categories. I used codes to condense the amount of data, filtering the unambiguous and inherent meanings. I most note that my journal helped me chart my analytical process steps because my thoughts were captured and it maintained a sense of continuity for every time I return to my analysis.

After transcription of the interviews, I started comparing the responses to identify categories and themes. I made up a board and started dividing data into relevant themes and subthemes while still linking them to the main theme. At a point, I had to go back to refresh on research method – phenomenology, so that my analysis would be in congruence with the epicenter of the study and my methodology. This is positive for my data analysis as it is a form of self-assessment to ensure that my immersion in the data collection /analysis process enhances my effectiveness in data representation. I maintained flexibility throughout the process so that I could move data around, go back to the data to sift out more information based on its relevance to the results or lack thereof.

Through the process of categorizing, five main themes were identified, they are; Leadership inadequacy, communication gap, unskilled leadership, favoritism; and ethnicity.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in a study is to establish thoroughness, appropriateness of method and ultimately support findings (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, & Kyngäs, 2014). Qualitative research has been plagued with concerns about the trustworthiness of methods implemented especially in areas of external validity (Noble & Smith, 2015). I was faced with the challenge of overcoming my concerns in respect of the neutrality, consistency, applicability and truth value of the study results. Consequently, I would detail the steps taken to ensure trustworthiness using the criteria proposed for qualitative research which include: Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Beck, 2012; Schreier, 2014).

#### **Credibility**

Credibility refers to the reliability of a researchers' representation and interpretation of participants' experiences (Cope, 2014; Polit & Beck, 2012). It is concerned with the truthfulness and authenticity of research findings. It seeks to ensure that research outcome can be generalized by the ease with which people identify with the interpretation of the human experience. To guarantee the integrity of my study, I started out by creating protocols to improve the efficiency of data collection instruments. I started out by crafting out interviews to act as guide during data collection. These interview questions were further refined by seeking the opinions of my supervisors. It was also sent to an external supervisor residing in Nigeria to get his input from a Nigerian standpoint taking into consideration that the study is based on the Nigerian Clime. Lastly, I invited a fellow post graduate researcher to further review the interview questions.

As noted by (Thomson & Collyer, 2017), I started out by establishing an interviewer – participant rapport that would ease the flow of conversation. I had to interview some participants 3 times because of scheduling constraints. Initially I had been discomfited by the request by participants to continue at subsequent times but this intervals ended up strengthening the credibility of my data collection because they were often times more forthcoming on subsequent interviews. This ended up collaborating what they have said previously, enriching their responses or contradicting their initial stand.

During this process, I meticulously kept a journal that detailed my reflections of everything about my research. This assisted me in remembering minute specifics of the data collection/analysis process and provided guidance for most subsequent actions that I needed to take. Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove (2016), notes that the audit trail that writing reflective notes provides, serves to validate trustworthiness.

### **Transferability**

Transferability is indicative of generalization and external validity, it looks at the applicability of research findings to a different context or setting (Morse, 2015). I initialized the transferability of study at the sampling criteria and selection stage. The aim of my study was to explore leadership effectiveness in public sector administration in Nigeria, so participants had to be public servants working and residing in Nigeria who must have attained leadership or managerial positions at any level – middle and top management.

I streamlined participant pool to a case study of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), a public organization under the Federal Ministry of Education. The participants are a mix of ethnicities to ensure that different perspectives are captured, taking into consideration that the country Nigeria, is a multi- ethnic Republic. It was important that diversity in the public service be represented. Participants were also a gender mix, having 4 women and 12 men in the group.

### **Dependability**

Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, & Kyngäs (2014) describes dependability as stability through the test of time and different conditions while Morse, J. M. (2015) simplifies it by describing it as the repeatability of the study. My demonstration of dependability can be traced to the thought process that went into every phase of the study, the decision trails. It starts from carefully selecting and providing a comprehensive description of the research design, method and methodology.

Furthermore, I detailed the sample selection criteria and data collection/analysis strategies. I considered the importance of the data collection instrumentation to the outcome of research, noting specifically the need to generate rich, in-depth data in line with the overarching focus of research. Thus, I put the interview questions through rigorous vetting by sending it to my supervisors both internal and external to evaluate its correctness. I further sent the interview questions to fellow researchers to also scrutinize. I believe that this study can be deemed dependable and can also be replicated following the steps from inception to completion.



### **Confirmability**

I used member checking as a confirmability strategy. Member checking is the ability to demonstrate that the research outcome was a direct result of participant's representation of their experiences as gathered during data collection through respondent validation. During the interviews, I intermittently summarized and rephrased what respondent said to clarify as confirm my understanding of responses and ensure accuracy of data collected. This also served to prevent omissions. In line with Cope, (2014), I approached participants with a transcript of the themes that emerged from data analysis for them to crosscheck and ensure that there were no misrepresentations.

This presented an opportunity for them to flesh out information given. I received feedback and clarifications from some participants while some validated the summary. Upon receipt of the clarification, I crosschecked their input with the raw data and updated my analysis accordingly. I subsequently returned to those participants who had clarifications and the updated summary was duly authenticated, thus verifying that the information provided was accurately recorded/represented.

### **Presentation of Results**

In this section of the study, I present the results after a comprehensive data collection which was done by means of face-to-face interviews as I had explained above. This is a representation of the individual interviews of public servants who voluntarily participated in the research. I had interviewed four (4) Directors, five (5) Deputy Directors, four (3) Assistant Directors, three (3) Chief Officers and two (2) principal officers, bringing the participants to a total of 17 persons. The interview was guided by a

set of 14 questions that was adapted from the research questions with a view to explore the challenges of public sector leadership from a different angle. As the interview progressed there were sub questions aimed at clarifying issues. It is envisaged that the outcome of this research will serve to boost service delivery in public sector organizations through leadership effectiveness.

The results were classified into eight categories while noting the themes that emerged. I will be interspersing a narrative description of participant's response as well as quoting some responses verbatim.

### **Research Question one**

What leadership approach currently exist in public sector administration in Nigeria, with particular reference to Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund)?

#### **Category 1: Leadership role in Public Sector Administration.**

This research question sought to understand the participants understanding of role of leadership in public sector administration in Nigeria from the TETFund perspective. Thus the interviews started out with enquiries about the role of leadership in the public sector and sought to understand the participants' general knowledge of leadership. I found that majority of participants viewed the concept of leadership as a key factor in the success of an organization. The participants understood the fluidity of the leader/follower relationship. They were quite certain that the burden of navigating an organization rested principally on the leadership. The participants were also conscious of the part that they were meant to play.

They knew what was expected of them from their leaders, using terms like teamwork, diligence, respect and hardwork to describe their role as followers. They were very clear on the importance of leadership and this was further emphasized by a participant when he/she stated that “without leadership, there will be no focus in the organization”. Other excerpts buttressing this interpretation from the interview transcripts of their opinions are detailed below;

**Participant T03** stated that “leadership is the oxygen that an organization needs to survive, citing that it can neither be good nor bad but that it can be suffocating /too much and the other extreme is when it is comatose or too little”.

**Participant T15** opined that “Leadership is providing a headway for achieving a decided goal. In public sector generally, our leaders lack one major thing. That is leading by example. Most leaders hardly carry their people along. I think that is major challenge experienced. Leaders are selective, you select the few that you like or you think that can achieve your goal. That is not good for any system. When you do selective delegation of duty, you are personalizing it. All inclusive leadership is what is lacking, you look at faces, my brother, my sister. So responsibility is delegated based on who you like and not on the existing structure. And often times they are not equipped for the job and then it drags the organization backwards”.

**T11** said that “leadership to him is the glue that binds an organization. That the speed of progress in an organization is directly proportional to the usefulness of leadership. There should be equilibrium between leaders & followers.

It was apparent that the participants appreciated the significant role of leadership to goal achievement in an organisation whether private or public. A summary of some adjectives used to qualify leadership include responsible, diligently, exemplary, integrity, mindful among others. It was explained that there should be a symbiotic relation between leaders and subordinate which constitutes teamwork.

### **Category 2: Existing Public Sector leadership Approach in Nigeria.**

Having established their understanding of the overarching role of leadership in organizational administration, I tried to tie their knowledge to their perception of leadership as it exist in the Nigerian public sector administration. The responses were not reflective of their concept of leadership, it showed a gap between what they understood as well as expected leadership to be and the type of leadership that they experience in their organizations. Some of their responses are detailed below;

**Participant T10** explained “My perception of leadership in the Nigerian milieu as it were, is that it is absent. That’s my perception. I am yet to see a clear cut presence of leadership and this is not because there are not men and women of caliber that is capability. Or that there are people who do not understand what leadership is all about but principally because the goal is not defined. Therefore the path to the goal is still hazy. I mean when you do not know where you are going, how do take off on the journey in the first place”.

This point of distorted or absent leadership in public sector administration was further reinforced by other participants through interchangeable statements as noted below;

**Participant T08** says “What I really think about this is, is that the public sector in Nigeria is really, does not really really have that clear cut leadership that can transcend to the upcoming public servants. The leaders are more self - centered. The leaders, when they get to that level, they only think more of themselves. It is not an inclusive type of leadership where you are allowed to bring in your thoughts, your views. You cannot do that. They just keep telling you that, look, this is public service so you just keep doing it the way it is run”.

**Participant T07** says “generally public sector in Nigeria defines leadership itself. It has a set of rules that hardly gives room for creativity, for ingenuity, it is like there is something out there to achieve, and then there is process through which to achieve it, and that this process should be followed religiously, to the extent that you.... To my mind, its fixation, it is something that is fixed. Rules are set, which is okay, it is good to set rules but at the time rules are set to the extent that everything from beginning to end is already decided by sets of rules, sets of laws that the leader may only be allowed to implement. Perhaps he is only there to implement. It gives little room for creativity. That is my own perception of leadership in the public sector. So I see a leader in the Nigerian public sector like....really a robot”.

In qualifying the existing leadership approach in the public service, the answers gotten from participants ranged from autocratic, consultative, participatory, entitled to dictatorship. Find below a table of the description of leadership approach in TETFund and Public sector organizations compiled from the responses of all the participants in this study.

Table 3.

*Leadership Summary in Public Sector Administration*

<b>Description of Leadership in TETFund &amp; Public Sector</b>	<b>Frequency by Respondents</b>
Autocratic	2
Consultative	1
Personalized	1
Entitled	1
Participatory	1
Unfocused	3
Inspirational	1
Prejudiced	2
Mentoring	2
Single-Minded	2
Unmerited	4
Ill - Equipped	6
Malicious	1

Inclusive	1
Dominant	2
Team- work	1
Skewed	3
Mediocre	1
Unimaginative	3
Territorial	1
Selective	3
Transactional	2
Limited or Constrained	1

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Leadership was described as a one-man show where directives are just passed down from above. There were complaints of non-inclusiveness of employees in organizational plans and misdirection by leaders. Participant **T05** stated that his/her perception of leadership in Nigeria is very different and he makes this assertion based on his work experience in other organizations which is very different. H/She notes that leaders in other organizations (especially the private institutions) and in other countries lead you to succeed but that in Nigeria, one is led to fail". H/She attributes it to the placing of round pegs in square holes saying that "no matter how good you are if you are under a bad leader, you are bound to fail." This was further upheld by the following statements;

**Participant T06** said that “leadership presupposes that there is a goal. That we are not talking of bosses and directors, leadership should own the job. Public service is still in limbo, people do not understand what they are in service of. They do not understand the end goal or maybe there is no end goal”.

**Participant T01** says that “leadership is the same in this organization as in everywhere in Nigeria. It’s autocratic. They operate like it’s a personal business, like this is our thing, not minding the development of the organizations development, they don’t think about building up the system, it’s more about themselves. It’s not inclusive. They sit and decide the way they want to run the organization”.

A participant noted that Departmental/Unit heads in the organization are territorial because of a perceived believe that some Departments/Units in the organisation are more important than the others, in other words a battle of departmental supremacy. These heads can also be considered leaders of the Department/Units that they are in charge of. H/she opined that these leaders often forget that the different Departments/Units are set up to carry out their various duties in a collaborative manner towards the achievement of a common organizational goal. H/She stated;

“In this organization, there has always been this territorial protection which current leadership has been talking about breaking. Departments see themselves as entities to the extent that some departments think they are superior to others and this has been really working against the realization of the organizations’ mandate. I can tell you that until recently some directors do not



understand the workings of other departments simply because it is out of bounds. This I know has been a problem. Efforts have and are being made to break this habit”.

The common point made by most participants was that the existing leadership were prone to personalization of official operations. Another form of personalization or favoritism as the case may be, as i understood from participants is that leaders choose people that they want to work with irrespective of the persons capabilities or the fact that there are others more qualified to do the job. Summarily, leaders lacked many attributes of true or effective leadership that would in turn stimulate true followership from their employees.

## **Question 2**

How does the leadership approach adopted by TETFund hinder/enhance effective service delivery?

### **Category 3: Leadership Impact on Staff.**

#### **Sub Category A: Staff Motivation**

In order to explore leadership effect on service delivery, it was important to examine how it affected the staff who are directly responsible for service delivery. I asked questions about the effect of leadership on employees and their motivation to work. I also asked questions about leadership and employee output in terms of service delivery. Most answers I got tended towards demotivation. 13 participants out of the 17 interviewed expressed their dissatisfaction with certain leadership behaviors that has

resulted in low work morale at work. They stated that in order to justify their presence at work, they have resorted to personal motivation to get work done. Some attributed their ability to work to innate maturity and experience because leadership has not afforded them with a favorable atmosphere to work. 7 participants complained of inadequate work tools while 6 participants claimed that they have not been active at work because there has been no clear job assignments.

Participant **T09** for instance, stated “I am not motivated. I just make the best of a bad situation. My work tools are inadequate, my office is not conducive, and it is tight. I know subordinates who have better office space. I work with someone who does not appreciate my input. My suggestions are always met with attacks so I don’t even want to talk or contribute during our meetings”.

Participant **T02** described the effect of the leadership approach saying, “Oftentimes I am indifferent knowing full well that my thoughts, my feelings and my ideas are inconsequential. At other times, I am concerned because the decisions taken may affect me negatively sooner or much later so I am concerned as to what informs the decisions taken by the leadership”.

**Participant T06** states that “based on the quantum of experience I have, I have to ignore things to get work done. If you don’t ignore, you can’t perform. You have to work round the issues in your workplace. Leadership doesn’t give you a conducive atmosphere to work. You don’t even have the full complement of equipment to work. I had to bring my personal tools to work, just to get work done”.

A participant said that S/He is not motivated and has no job satisfaction in the organization. S/He went further to state that it was time to start looking for other opportunities in other organizations/sectors. This was as a result of non-inclusion and feeling of been intentionally sidelined. S/He noted that there are spates of stagnancy in the organisation, some people are idle so there is no work output or no deliverables.

### **Sub Category B: Favoritism**

Favoritism was also identified as a fallout of leadership approach that also affects the way some staff relate with their colleagues. Some participants were of the opinion that the leadership approach or behaviour has deepened the cultural, religious and ethnic divide in public sector organizations due to some special treatment or allowances made for certain people. They alluded to decision making by leaders being based on familial, ethnic or religious affiliation. Some referred to it as tribalism. This they said breeds discontent as well as a need to identify with your own, among staff. To buttress this fact Participant **T07** said;

“Tribalism comes to play here a lot. And because tribalism plays a long role, it affects performance of leaders in the organization, because when you are thinking or trying to take a decision that concerns or impacts people under you, people always first of all, think of where the person is coming from, is it from my side, is he from this side, that side before you pass a judgment or make a decision. That singular action creates a lot of problem, not just here bur in Nigeria as a whole. It has a strong negative impact. For example look at my office, at my level, see my work table? It shouldn't be so. This happens probably because of

where I come from. Maybe if I had come from a different tribe maybe the person in charge would have made an effort to give me the right tools....maybe I will be given better consideration. I know my juniors in this office who have better offices... all because people are from the same place”.

I found that people actually believed some staff had leverage based on their affiliation to management, either through friendship, religion, familial or ethnic. Some examples cited that highlighted the ethnic divide, was based on familiarity at work between people of a particular ethnic group.

### **Question 3**

How can the adoption of strategic leadership approach address the challenges (if any) of TETFund as a for public sector organization in Nigeria?

#### **Category 6: Organizational Strategy**

I started out by asking questions about the organizational strategy and vision. It was insightful to find that most participants said the organization had a strategic plan but were unable to expand on the strategic plan because they had not seen it. For instance while responding on this matter, participant T11 stated thus:

“If we have a strategic plan, I am not aware of it”. I know that at one point, the organization was working on a plan but I have not seen the finished product”.

**Participant T10** said “A strategic plan is supposed to be a reference point for the implementation of the roadmap for goals attainment. And so if that document exists, we are yet to use it or maybe others are using it without sharing”.

**Participant T07** states “The organization has no strategic plan so any one, I mean, any leader who comes, brings his own ideas and we start going through a period of adjustment that might not be well instituted before the next leader comes.

The responses were indicative of a communication gap in respect of the organizations’ strategic plan by the management to the staff. I came to this supposition because some participants knew that there was a vision and mission statement which assumes that it is part of a strategic plan process or document but at the same time they could not confirm if there was a one available. In response to further questions on organizational strategy, **Participant T05** said;

“We have our mission and vision.. *to be a world class interventionist agency*...so there must be a strategic plan document though I cannot remember seeing it now. Am sure the problem is just that it was not circulated”.

**Participant T02** said

“I cannot categorically answer yes or no to that question. I know we are working on a new plan but I was not conversant with the old plan. So no, the answer is not as simple as it seems”.

I found a lot of inconsistencies moving from one participant to another about the existence of an organizational strategy and that buttressed the point that participant T11 made when h/she said that the organization was faced with the issue of territorialism by Department/Units Heads. This has resulted in knowledge gap between department and staff members as information is hoarded and sectionalized to specific Department /Units. A participant said that an organization without a strategy plan is prone to trial and errors by any one leading it. S/He noted that lack of organizational strategy was the reason for lack of continuity. Every new organizational head comes with his or her plan so some programs that were started by the former management are stopped even after resources have been committed to such programmes.

#### **Category 7: Strategy in Leadership**

Participants noted that strategy is lacking both for the organization and in leadership. For an organization to progress without a cohesive plan for the achievement of their mandate or goal points to the fact that there has been a deficiency in preparation.

**Participant T04** said that “if our leaders were strategic, meritocracy will have be a top priority in everything we do. Jobs will be assigned based on capability and not familiarity”.

**Participant T02** noted that strategy starts from day one. If you hire a mediocre, you will breed mediocrity. Putting square pegs in round holes will never amount to any level of efficiency, it will amount to continuous mistakes. So much effort goes into correction of mistakes in the public service. Its trial and error that we practice here.

**Participant T06** noted that strategy would help in addressing certain peculiarities of public service. There are some core issues with meritocracy and rewards. He stated

“In the public service unlike the private sector, no matter how brilliant and hardworking you are, your promotion will come at the same time with the dullest and weakest link. This typically kills employee motivation to be creative, to think outside the box”.

**Participant T03** notes that strategy in leadership would encourage them to employ a feedback mechanism to be able to reassess itself and re-strategise. He notes that leadership is very biased in TETFund and says that it is a public sector malaise. He notes that tribalism clouds the judgment of leadership decisions. **Participant T08** supports this assertion by stating that;

“Planning for success can never be underestimated. You need to be open to feedback so that you plan on how to go on”.

**Participant T02** – “I wish I could talk without receiving backlash, or being victimized for my true opinion. So most times I find myself tailoring my speech so as to be acceptable. I wish the leadership was one without fear or favor where expressions are encouraged”.

**Participant T04** responded that Leadership is an evolving process and so leaders should be open to positive change. So any approach that will increase my motivation to work, make me happy coming to work every day and give me the satisfaction of achievement is welcomed.

The answers I got on the question of strategy led me to the understanding that most participants had a sense of a strategy in place but were not conversant with the details of said strategy. I found that most employees yearned for leadership in its true sense. They want to have jobs probably explained and people to emulate. They want to be included in organizational plans. They were open to any approach that will improve their work life. I have to note that a participant didn't see anything wrong with the leadership system in the organization directly. S/He opined that it has always been like that in public service and did not see the system changing anytime soon.

### **Infractions**

The study findings generally tilted to a lot of information and knowledge gap and this could be attributed to ineffective leadership. I have to note that there were some contradicting statements from the participants. One of the participants alluded to his perception of leadership in the public sector to robots who are told what to do by certain rules and policies that guide implementation. At this point I had to seek for clarification on his view of leadership because earlier he had described leaders as people who are able to influence decisions. And so this description was contrary to his view of leaders as robots who just implement instructions. He maintained that there is leadership but one constrained by rules and as such they are unable to achieve what he might want to achieve.

In furtherance to this discussion, I asked who sets these rules that constrains leaders and the answer was Government, specifically leaders in government. In essence, leaders set the rules that restricts leaders to a robotic role. Basically, what I deciphered



from this particular interview was that leadership was constrained in the Nigerian public sector administration due to some sets of rules and policies imposed by former leadership.

Another example of the contradictions that I noted was that **Participant T05** said that there is no motivation to work due to the fact that management is biased and people are being marginalized, victimized based on tribe, religion or personality. And then when asked about his job satisfaction, he rated it 80%. This was inconsistent with the tone of that particular interview so far. I was trying to understand how one can rate their job satisfaction so highly in a work environment where you are supposed to be marginalized or victimized. Consequently I questioned how one could achieve such high level of job satisfaction in a job that treats you below expectation, the participant responded thus;

” I have to personally ignore a lot of things around me to even get work done. I could come to work and do nothing and no one will notice or even ask but the fact that I am not one to sit idly, I push myself past what obtains, I push myself past the inadequate work conditions and just get the work done.”

### Summary

Chapter four was a presentation of the processes of actual data collection, field experience and the results on findings. I had started data collection upon receipt of the Walden IRB approval. The process of collection and analysis took 6weeks because of some time constraints. This also applied to the time it took me to get participant reconfirmation of their responses.

To my research question one which refers to the existing leadership structure in public service, the participants described it in words like mentoring, unfocused, selective, autocratic, ill equipped among others. Some gave examples of their reality to buttress their point. Research question two tried to understand the effect of the existing leadership approach on effective service delivery and respondents alluded to the demotivating effect of leadership style on them. They also suggested that it had an overall effect on the organization as people do not work optimally and are often times indifferent to organizational goals. To the research three which explored strategic leadership by assessing organization strategy and participants comprehension of strategy. Some participants were not aware of the organizations strategy while some knew that it existed but had never seen it. Some were cognizant of the importance of strategy to the execution of goals and so they were positive that strategic leadership would boost organizational outcome and in turn service delivery.

While presenting the results, I noted contraventions in the responses of some participants and stated it. These infractions could be as a result of self-consciousness to their plain speaking, personal bias or a need to be conservative for fear of repercussions.

At the start of data collection, I had planned to collect data strictly based on guidance from my questionnaire. I realized as I progressed that there were unplanned moments as termed by Fujii, (2015) when information is volunteered. These moments occurred at the end of the interviews while chitchatting upon conclusion of the interview and participants volunteered information that added value to data already collected.

Chapter five will discuss the interpretations of the results from the data analysis. It will also state the limitations of study, recommendation for further study and the implications for social change. I would make some recommendations based on my findings in chapter four.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### Introduction

This chapter concentrates on the conclusions of the research. The purpose of this study was to explore leadership effectiveness in public sector administration and the possibilities of adopting strategic leadership as an alternative approach to the leadership issues. Literature review revealed the gap in studies in the area of strategic leadership for public sector administration. I sought to add to the body of knowledge on public sector leadership by bridging the literature gap.

I had employed a qualitative design utilizing the phenomenological methodology to assist me in the achievement of the study objective. The research was driven by an interpretive research paradigm. I relied on the semi structured questions during face-to-face interviews for my data collection. The questions focused on leadership effectiveness as it affects public service administration in Nigerian. The questions also concentrated on the existing leadership approach/style and its resultant effect on staff work attitude in a bid to understand its impact on public sector success in terms of service delivery to the populace.

### Interpretation of the Findings

The advantage of generated data is that the interpretation of the phenomenon is that which the participants ascribed to it (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). Therefore, I analyzed the responses based on this understanding. The results from data collection/analysis reveal that currently, the administrative state of the public sector can be classified as ineffectual due to the leadership behavior and ineptitude. There was a

linkage to the literature review which had exposed the failures of leadership as represented by poor service delivery, systemic government failures; ubiquitous corruption and lack of institutional capacity among others (Porter & Watts, 2016; Iheduru, 2016; Adegbite, 2015; Dike, 2014; Ejimabo, 2013; Okonjo-Iweala, 2012; Sanusi, 2012; Ogbeide, 2012). This assertion is supported by my research findings in the area of public sector leadership, its effectiveness and the impact on service delivery.

### **Existing Public Sector Leadership**

Participants noted that there is a strong presence of autocratic leadership as a predominant approach in public sector administration in Nigeria. Describing scenarios where “respect for hierarchy is demanded and seen as unconditional obedience to instructions and directives from superiors” as opined by Participant **T01**. This in essence is consistent with the autocratic leadership style. Leaders have a sense of entitlement which encourages the personalization of the operations of an organization.

Another dominant approach in this sector is dictatorship almost to the point of narcissism. As noted in the literature review, the Nigerian public sector leadership is plagued by inefficiency, incompetency and selfishness. (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012; Agbigboa, 2013). The data gathered showed that there was a gulf between the leadership and staff. This is encouraged by bureaucracy.

The fallout of these leadership approach is that there is a lot of “eye service” going on in the public service. Eye service in Nigeria means seeming to work when bosses are around, basically pretending to work.

### **Leadership ineffectiveness**

There are four important characteristics for effective leadership and they include vision building, standard bearing, being an integrator and a developer (Bottomley, Burgess & Fox, 2014; Abrell-Vogel & Rowold, 2014). These are largely lacking in public sector leadership in Nigeria. The diversity that exists in the country should be advantageous because different perspectives are brought together for a common goal, instead it serves to deepen the divide along tribal lines. Recalling a participants' grievance about his tight office space, he ended by stating "If I was of the same tribe, I will definitely be treated better". This brings to the fore, possible issues of discrimination/tribalism or favoritism as the case may be.

This also highlights teamwork as a basis for cordial work relations. One of the most important responsibilities of effective leaders is team synergy (Underwood, 2015). As noted by (Chen & Rainey, 2014) team work is essential to high performance and there is bound to be conflicts and differences when people with different priorities come together to work as a team. The leader is supposed to ensure that every one aligns their energies towards the achievement of organizational goal irrespective of personal reservations.

As pointed out by **Participant T07**, "leadership effectiveness is when a leader gets to the point that he is dispensable". In essence, when an organization is at the point where it operates seamlessly irrespective of the presence or absence of the figurative leader, when there is continuity is assured, then a leader can be said to be effective. It was also noted by **Participant T07** that the public service might never get to that point

because there will always be those tasks that will not be touched unless a leader is around.

Leaders are indispensable based on imposed importance or body language. Participant T02, he said “people don’t want their subordinates to outshine them and so their proactivity is queried by superiors thereby killing their motivation to be preemptive, creative. The leaders believe that decision making, no matter how inconsequential, is solely their purview”. He gave an example by narrating about the time he sent an official mail that detailed work processes to his colleagues and he was cautioned by his boss for copying his boss’s superior in the mail as it looked like he was the one doing the job.

### **Meritocracy and the Federal Character Act**

The level of inadequate skills in the public sector could be said to be a direct result of employment and appointment. Quite a few participants blamed the inadequacies of ineffective leadership largely on the recruitment process which is aided by the “Federal Character Act”. The Federal Character Act was established to address issues of economic, educational and social inequalities, ethnic representations by ensuring and enforcing fairness and equitable distribution of public post and socio economic resources. (Obi, & Ezeogu, 2016; George, Owoyemi, & Adegboye, 2014; <http://www.federalcharacter.gov.ng/>) The act basically ensures that every government agency employs a rational distribution of all coalescing units – state/ethnic of the Nigerian Federation to prevent marginalization or dominance and any one unit.

The Federal Character Act was established out of a need to manage the public workforce diversity, address inequality and marginalization of any state or ethnic in

Nigeria (George, Owoyemi, & Adegboye, 2014). This introduced the quota system which is applicable across all aspects of the nation, where all states/ethnic groups are given a proportionate representation in all public organizations (Obi, & Ezeogu, 2016). The Act in principle has positive objectives but the execution brought about manpower disadvantages because it due to the quota system, people that are not educationally and professionally qualified get employed into all levels & positions, irrespective of more competitive qualifications from other states.

The downside of the Federal Character Act is that it has been detrimental to meritocracy in the Nigerian public sector because the practice on inclusion trumps excellence, in a bid to adhere to the Act, merit is often time stepped down. It implies that people are employed primarily based on their state of origin and secondarily on qualifications, thereby sacrificing merit for state/ethnicity. It does not necessarily mean they are not qualified but it means that there might be people better qualified for the position. It breeds a sense of entitlement in citizens that is harmful to the advantages that is achieved through competitive recruitment.

Several authors have agreed that the quota system is injurious to the growth of the country. George, Owoyemi, & Adegboye, (2014) concluded that the Federal Character Act was counter-productive and inherently discriminatory, Obi, & Ezeogu, (2016) supports the above statement by noting that the Federal Character Act is contrary to human development fundamentals and Omeje, Egwa & Adikwu (2016) states that ethnic influence has degraded the policy, making the process unethical and unfavorable to meritocracy.



Meritocracy can also be looked at from a different angle of job competency. A participant explains it from his/her perspective stating “In public sector, the system is very clear. No matter how brilliant or smart you are you can never be a director until you have served out certain number of years, until you pass through a process of one level to another, to another. All these are built into the public sector to the extent that it is difficult to implement change”.

Another participant gave another example saying; “here in the public service, you have a director who is not performing. You have no choice but to allow him to stay until he retires. The worst you can do is to change his position say swap him to another department but there is really little you can do. Even if you want to send him out, it will take the whole of your tenure/time trying to edge him out because of the system. Another participant noted that merit is relative. Merit based on inclusion or merit based on qualification. The salient point is that the Nigerian public sector to a large extent does not run on meritocracy.

### **Blame Avoidance Behavior (BAB)**

The interviews with some participants who were leaders in their units/departments exposed the blame avoidance behavior or the “blame game” in the system. Blame game meaning, it is everyone’s’ fault but mine. Hinterleitner (2017) defines blame avoidance behavior “displayed by public actors as encompasses all kinds of activities intended to downplay or distance oneself from (potentially) blame-attracting and goal-threatening events”. This was made apparent by statements like;

“The staff are unprofessional, they are unskilled for the job that is assigned to them, they make so many mistakes”

“Many of the staff are not equipped skill wise, they don't even want to work and so I have to force them to work, infact I end up doing most of the work myself ”.

Infact the blame game by one participant went all the way back to the colonial masters. It was noted that some of the leadership mentality was inherited from the Colonial Masters pre independence of Nigeria. H/She stated that

“There is historical aspect to looking at leadership in the public sector. I believe it is not happening in the private sector. We inherited the no questions asked regime, where the public sector was setup to make sure the colonial government succeeds at all cost, no questions to decisions make, take it as it is ...and it is difficult to reform overtime because we continue to inherit the leadership, and these leaders like to leave some parts of this elements behind...in those elements reside authority, in those elements there is power, in those elements there is wait for your turn mentality. There is a chain of transmission from one set of leaders to another right from the colonial past”.

The need for accountability in public service administration cannot be overemphasized. According to Bowens (2005) orates that a public officer is primarily answerable to his organization on the status/outcome of his assignments. To be accountable, one has to take ownership of an assignment, thereby accepting responsibility for the outcome.

### **Pseudo Leadership**

Those in leadership positions, formal or informal, tend to be very positive about their leadership styles. They tended to concentrate on extolling their competence, inclusiveness and capabilities, believing in their efficiency. In line with the assertion of Lin, Huang, Chen, & Huang, (2017), some of them exhibited egoist values, self-serving behaviors and were very status conscious. Some participants suggested that their superiors believed that they are leading excellently and as such do not entertain ideas or suggestions for corrections nor improvements.

This is indicative of pseudo leadership, where leaders believe that they are leading from the point of knowledge but the opposite applies, where actions rarely match words (Camm, 2016). Authors have written about pseudo transformational leadership (Kelloway, Gilbert, Fraccaroli, & Sverke, 2017; Christie, Barling & Turner, 2011) and pseudo authentic leadership (Mills & Boardley 2017; Novicevic, Harvey, Ronald & Brown-Radford, 2006), where they explored the negative aspect of these leadership approaches identifying the rise of self-interest and manipulation triumphing over organizational goals & collective interest.

Lin, Huang, Chen, & Huang, (2017) opines that leaders who act contrary to the ethical requirements and legitimate values of leadership exhibit pseudo transformational leadership. In this case, leaders who are individualistic and do not abide by the dictates of the responsibility entrusted to them can be thus classified. It does not necessarily mean that work is not being done, it simply means that their approach to achieving results is

steeped in the personal and not the collective, thereby resulting in organizational underperformance.

In the case of the Nigerian public sector leadership, one could attribute it to a case of self-deceit among leaders or self-inflicted shortsightedness. Some leaders in the public sector believe that they have and exhibit the attributes of leadership which Northouse (2007) lists as follows; Intelligence, Self-confidence, Determination, Integrity and Sociability. In reality this belief is not supported by any empirical evidence. Some leaders have personally assessed themselves and adjudged their qualities to be exceptional. The disquieting part is that they actually believe it. This led me to wonder how a person could embrace value addition or superior arguments in any form when h/she does not see any need for it.

The downside of pseudo leadership in the Nigerian public sector is a lackadaisical workforce. People have no urge to apply themselves to creativity because they believe that they would not be encouraged. A participant for example said that he is indifferent to whatever decisions are taken in the organization because his thoughts, feelings and ideas are inconsequential. A workforce that is largely detached means that there will be commitment issues from staff to organizational goals. Thus, one can conclude that an organization that does not have the guarantee of staff loyalty is at the risk of stagnancy, unproductivity or decline. In the case of public organizations, the ramifications of employee nonchalance cuts across all aspects of social and economic development, it is detrimental to the populace who are the recipients of services rendered by the sector.

### **Managers vs Leaders.**

From some of the responses of some participants, I came to the conclusion that the public sector has more managers than leaders. Managers because my findings point towards the conclusion that they do more of execution of instruction within the public sector rules than planning, innovating or strategizing. To quote Participant T05

“A leader is someone who is able to influence decisions, execute decisions but the kind of public sector leaders we have, are constrained by pre-existing rules, they are like robots”.

The research findings support the above assertion as well as that in the literature review that the managerial approach is a common style of leadership in the public sector and as such these leaders can be called managers. Zaleznik (1981) opined that managers are there to maintain balance of operation, to get the work done while leaders create new approaches and explore new areas thereby inspiring creativity. You find that no one can give you a clear reason of why certain things are done the way it is done. Participant T03 talked about job assignation not being done based on skill set and when I asked why, s/he said “it is the way it has always been done”. So you find that employees just meet a process and continue in the same way without questioning the status. This is descriptive of a statement by Bolman, & Deal, (2017) which asserts that “when we do not know what to do, we do more of what we know”.

### **Lack of Trust**

Trust has been eroded in the public sector. Trust is fundamental to effective problem solving, information exchange, collaboration, efficiency, team work and

organizational effectiveness (Carnvale &Welcher, 1992). In an organization where everyone is suspicious of each other, there will be barriers to the efficient flow of work. A participant noted that “leaders lead you to fail” due to reasons that range from inadequate work tools to misapplication of a skill set. Van der walle (2017) is of the opinion that work is smoother when there is trust.

Working in an environment that begets doubt and suspicion or working with people under the cloud of corruption requires employees to be careful in the manner that work is executed so that one avoids involvement in cases of fraud or misrepresentation. Corruption in public sector includes the bribery of public servants, public procurement violation especially by over-invoicing, outright embezzling of public funds, and the deliberate ineffectiveness of public sector anti-corruption efforts among others (Okekeocha, 2013). It also means that compromises are made that derail effective performance. All these tend to inform the stance of caution in employees.

Belief in organizational efficacy gives an employee boost to personally buy into organizational goals. This translates to commitment to work, enhanced teamwork and improved outcomes in the areas of service delivery.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitation to the study was as a result of familiarity. Familiarity in the sense that the participants knew me on a professional level and this resulted in their consciousness of their responses on the part of some participants. I also think that acknowledging on some subconscious level that we would continue working together after the interviews impelled them to be cautious of their answers. Though precautions

were taken to ensure utmost confidentiality, I realized that some answers were still tailored and this resulted in some of the infractions noted above.

### **Recommendations**

The results of this study revealed that the leadership in the Nigerian public sector needs to be multi-faceted, fluid and dynamic. There are so many internal and external issues which intertwine to form bureaucratic hurdles for public sector administration. I have the following recommendations based on my research findings:

#### **Strategy in Leadership Approach**

For the public sector leadership to effectively utilize resources to deliver on its mandate of providing essential services to the populace as noted by Solaja & Ogunola, (2016), there is an urgent need to employ different tactics to solving existing problems. The challenges facing organizations increasingly numerous and evolving strategically that the demands of leadership & managerial skills have never been more essential (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Therefore, there is a need to expand the existing knowledge on the advantages of inculcating strategy into leadership to optimize output at every level.

The public sector in Nigeria has been said to dispirit creativity and innovation in employees. A participant designated certain aspects of the current leadership as robotic, where people just carry out end user instructions without personal ingenuity. They are constrained by rules of the public sector which summarily means that a leader in public sector is led by the rules that have been historically instituted in the public organization, rather than being led by his resourcefulness. It is important that strategy coupled with effective implementation be applied to move the public sector forward. Mazouz &

Rousseau, (2016) identifies strategy as a tool that helps to intelligently combine the purposes, objectives, means and resources required to steer public administration towards tangible results.

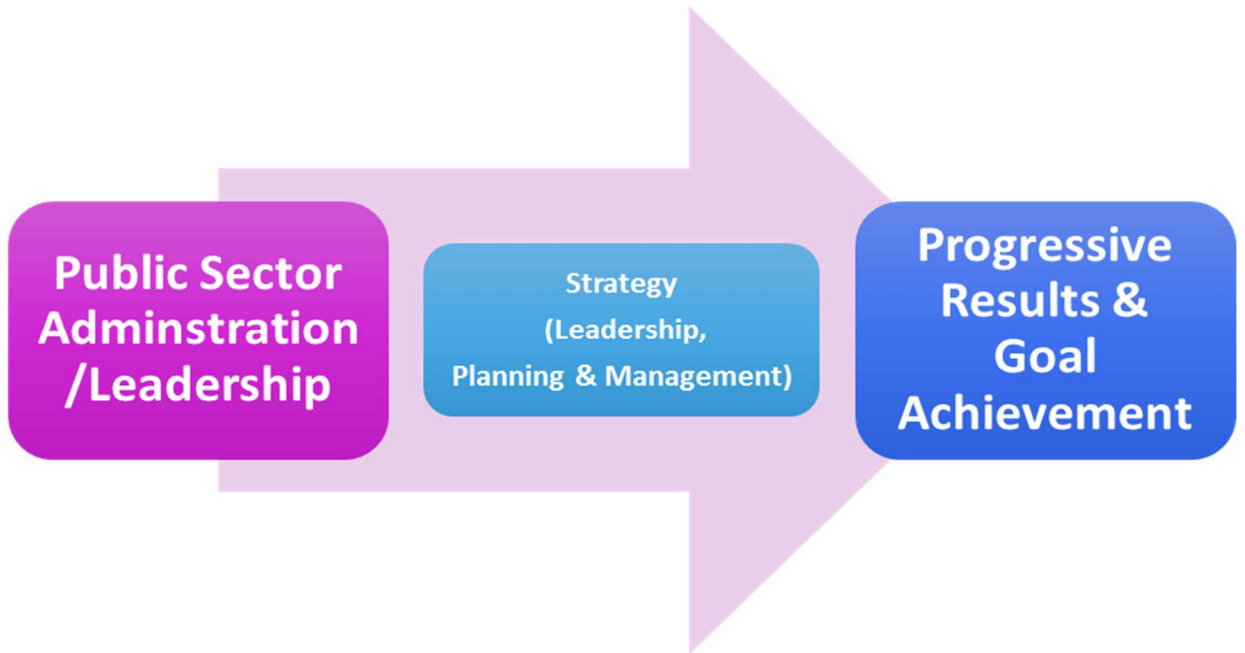
Leaders need to get feedback from their subordinates. During data collection, one of the reoccurring themes was that the staff wanted to be heard, they had so much to say. They kept deviating from questions and bringing issues that affected their performance holistically.

Strategy is vital in a dynamic environment, especially a country like Nigeria that is economically challenged, that stands recurrently on the precipice of ethnic volatility and agitations from marginalized groups. Taking into consideration that the effectiveness of a leader is measured on his performance, Mills & Boardley (2017) suggests that there is a need optimize different methods in different ways to achieve greater success and surpass performance expectations.

Strategic leadership can tackle the issues corruption in the public sector through the push for public sector reforms that ensure accountability of public processes. Corruption in public sector is said to reduce the quality of goods and services delivered to the public sector. It thrives in this sector because it is often classified as low level corruption because of its gradual nature as experienced in our daily activities (Okekeocha, 2013).

In a democratic setting such as Nigeria, the inclusive public management attribute of strategy will be a positive to the overall effectiveness of public organizations (Elbanna, Andrews & Pollanen, 2016).





*Figure 2: The role of Strategy in Public Sector Administration*

Strategy involves creativity and as noted by Fourie, Van der Merwe & Van Der Merwe (2017), creativity in leadership has proven to be quite effective in goal achievement. Strategy promotes cohesiveness in the mechanisms of public administration. There is a need for internal consistency, and in a country like as diverse as Nigeria, there is a need for leaders to maximize the uniqueness of people and situations (Camm, 2016).

Strategic leadership can bridge the disconnect between leaders and followers in the public sector as interpreted from data collected. The gap could be traced to the vision buy in. strategic leadership goes through the steps required to sell a vision to followers,

not impose it. It is not enough to lay out a vision, people must be carried along as co-creators for them to take ownership of the vision.

### **Administrative Accountability**

Lægreid & Rubecksen (2014) argues that accountability in itself can be multifaceted and equivocal. Thus I specified administrative accountability because there is a need to emphasize the managerial aspect to accountability. It requires that public servants account for the value of their time at work and their performance in relation to available resources. Olakunle (2015) found that the development of a country has direct correlation with the discipline of its public officers. They must be answerable for their actions, attitude and behaviors in relations to the resources – human and financial, that they are charged to manage. In a nutshell, Administrative accountability is concerned with the internal discipline, accountability and responsiveness of public servants to national interests (Healey & Tordoff, 2016).

### **Capacity Building / Leadership Trainings**

The findings of this study show that a lot of people in the public sector are under-skilled for the position they occupy. Bolman & Deal (2017) orates that to improve institutional output, the talent of those in charge of leading and managing the organizations have to be upgraded. He further noted that it could be a case of working within a limited understanding of leadership and public sector organizations. All this points to the need for leadership trainings. Effective service delivery from the public sector necessitates an alignment of training activities to organizational goals (Muin, 2017). It follows that the improvement of the management will enhance organizational

output. Recurrent training will update public servants on the best tactics and practices to help achieve their goals. Carrying out a training needs assessment for public organizations will better target skill deficiencies with a view of addressing individual necessities. This will end up strengthening the capacity of public institutions to tackle the task of public administration.

### **Implementation & Maintenance**

Participants identified implementation of plans or policies as a major setback to effectiveness for public sector administration. These implementation issues lead to stagnancy and carry-over of Project/Programmes. It also deepens the inadequate service delivery from these organizations. Often times these issues are carried over to a new management and then, they are pushed aside as it doesn't fall into the new direction of the new management. In essence, no work done. People know the right things to do, they know what to do to a certain extent but lack the motivation to do it. One could also attribute it to the fact that there is lack or lax in supervision.

### **Feedback Mechanism**

Feedback mechanism support innovations (Van Acker & Bouckaert, 2017). Leaders need to encourage feedback from colleagues with a view to enhancing performance. The idea that based on position and seniority, one is more knowledgeable should be totally ruled out. For growth on any level, personal or professional, there is need for self-assessment and self-management at all times. As noted by Demircioglu & Audretsch (2017), an established feedback mechanism will enhance public sector

efficiency, appetite for innovations, employee capabilities and employee motivation to improve performance.

### **Reframing**

The aptitude to evaluate situations or circumstances from different perspectives in order to refine your approach and re-strategise (Bolman & Deal, 2017). To understand reframing we have to appreciate what framing means. Framing as defined by Bruycker (2017), is an interpretation of a perceived reality into salient points when evaluating an issue. It describes the situation that needs solving by way of presentation of facts. Thus reframing of an issue is assessing the same concerns from a different viewpoint. In every particular situation, there are at least four ways to assess it. In essence, I am suggesting that the public sector leadership needs to view the challenges to leadership and service delivery from a different angle. It is time to employ a different method to the continued issue of leadership.

### **Patriotism**

Defines patriotism as public servants putting their country first by demonstrating an advanced level of concern for the progress of the country through the continued regard, value, protection and the maintenance of public goods and services. (Houngbo, Coleman, Zweekhorst, Buning, Medenou, & Bunders, 2017). This is not always the case in Nigeria. According to Okeke (2016), Patriotism in Nigeria is entrenched in duplicities and fraudulence. There have so many cases of the misappropriation of public funds and disregard for work ethics in Nigeria. (Mark, Ataire, & Campus, 2017; Duru 2016; Dorcas, 2017).

Public service administrators need to appreciate the opportunity given to them to serve their country and endeavor to put the populace and country first. They should exhibit civism which is core value embedded in patriotism. It connotes good citizenship, social responsibility, self-abnegation and discipline. It means that public servants should give priority to the citizenry and to national interests over personal interest. This will curb most of the ills currently bedeviling the Public Sector in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

Leadership studies in Africa has remained a very interesting topic for researchers, especially those from the region as it cuts across disciplines by way of its importance to economic development in the region. It remains a key challenge to scholars to find a lasting solution to the slow rate of development in the region. This qualitative phenomenological study accessed leadership in the Nigerian Public Sector and explored strategic leadership as an alternative the leadership styles presently. I streamlined the research to a case study of participants from TETFund. I would proceed by recommending a larger sample size employing other research method like the quantitative and the mixed methods. I would also recommend that an alternative approach to leading and service delivery from the point of employees be explored. This will be looking at it from the angle of self-leadership (Breavart et al, 2015).

The study showed that the public sector used a top to bottom approach when it comes to public sector leadership and management. The top to bottom approach ensures that entrenched organization behaviors continue to be passed down to new members of staff. It enshrines the “wait for your turn attitude. I recommend that future researchers

explore the bottom to top approach as a way to stem the continued institutionalization of the negativities associated with public sector leadership.

I would recommend a comparative analysis of private sector leadership, the non for profit organisations and the public sector to discover the qualities and indices that activate success and effectiveness. Leadership development as it relates to public administration is another aspect that could be explored for further studies as it paves the way for emergent leadership styles.

Leadership has been tagged a major challenge in African (Fourie, van der Merwe & Van Der Merwe, 2017). As such I would also recommend that future researchers should replicate this or a variance of this study in other African countries. In the course of this study, I came across a school of thought that points towards the African culture as a deterrent to effective leadership (Kuada, 2010). During data collection, some participants alluded to the underlying influence of the colonial era on leadership styles of the present administration. All these are areas of further study.

The study also revealed issues/traces of Pseudo leadership and I would recommend that further studies be conducted to assess, explore the impact or sources of pseudo leadership towards possibly containing it in Nigeria's public sector. I would recommend investigations into a possible formulation of an African Leadership Theory as a fallout of specific research into historical leadership trends of African leaders to be combined with possibly futuristic outlook at the dynamic inclination of African leaders.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The implications for social change are far reaching especially in areas of adequate and efficient service delivery through the provision of necessary socio-economic development. The findings of this study show that leadership in all its ramifications is critical to the growth of any organization, sector and a country. The results indicates that the existing leadership in the Nigerian public sector administration is inadequate. It also brought up so many issues that were outside the central focus of this study like gender inequality, tribalism, the disadvantages of the federal character act, divisive mentality as a result of colonial rule etc.

It is hoped that public sector employees would leverage on the recommendations of this study to drive professional and organizational planning which will result in achieving sustainable public sector efficiency. The recommendations can be a foundation for both personal and organizational reassessment of work ethics.

Awoniyi (2015) posits that those in leadership positions across the country do not completely appreciate their power to effect sustainable social change. It is hoped that this study will aid in the enlightenment of leaders especially those in public sector administration. The legislative arm of government who are in charge of policy making can utilize the outcome and recommendations of this study to formulate strategies that will contribute to public sector reform. The recommendations could also stimulate a rethink of existing policies that encourage or allow certain practices that does not promote public sector efficiency.

For future researchers, the study has exposed certain areas of knowledge gap in public sector administration which necessitates further study. These include exploring other approaches to achieving better service delivery, comparative analysis of private and public sectors in terms of service delivery, staff motivation and self-leadership, assessing the constraints of the African culture on effective leadership and exploring the values that underpin decision making in public sector administration.

### **Impact of the Research Process**

At the onset of this study, the rudimentary aim was to understand leadership effectiveness in public sector administration in Nigeria with the aim of proffering sustainable solutions to inadequate service delivery among other issues. I hope that the resultant effect of the research process was progressive change. My study, especially the data gathering period was particularly interesting because I had a mutual understanding with the discussants that we will be ultimately contributing to positive social change. Interacting with individuals throughout the process, gave people the opportunity to think differently and also reflect on issues that are overlooked on a daily basis. Realistically, the interviews were a data collection process as well as the beginning of a change process. I can say that the research process was of positive impact and mutually beneficial process for the participants and I. One of the feedback received from participants' reflections of the interview process include;

“The questions made me rethink about the current situation in the public sector and my part in it”.



From post interview discussions, it was obvious that some people did not appreciate that there were underlying leadership problems that could easily be solved with as little as one more hour of personal time or filing properly. Some participants did not understand the concept of job ownership or buy-in. It took the transformation of thoughts into words to understand that there was an obvious need to address the problems inherent in public sector administration.

### **Conclusion**

The primary purpose of government is to better the lives of its citizens (Obi, & Ezeogu, 2016). To achieve this crucial goal, the government employs the public sector machinery to ensure a fair and evenhanded treatment through effective service delivery to its citizens (Pandey, Davis, Pandey, & Peng, 2016; Murtala & Marshall, 2015). Thus, taking into consideration the distinctive role of public sector, it is safe to say that the administration of this sector will be continually scrutinized for their significance to national growth and development. Accordingly, the effective administration of the public sector is assumed to be directly related to effective service delivery and the success of the Government/Nation. So long as leadership is instrumental to the progress of a nation, the evolution of leadership will remain a constant. Its importance can never be over emphasized or over researched towards the enhancement of leadership outputs.

As noted by John & Musa (2014), momentous changes are happening around the world, Nigeria as a part of the global system must adapt. Thus, there is a need for constant education and exposure of public servants to global best practices as well as trainings in areas relevant to organizational growth and by extension economic growth.

For public administration to be impactful and successful, leadership is very critical and so the relationship between public administration and leadership should be synergetic as effective public administration is dependent on effective leadership. Leadership as it is a continuum, should be fluid. Adaptability to situational dynamics, especially in the case of Nigeria, will always be an added advantage to progressive thinkers.

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