Tacit Knowledge Revealed

Developing a Plain Language Inventory for Airline Leadership

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The dearth of context-based research in leadership studies and the absence of satisfactory research on the behaviour of leaders in the airline industry provided the rationale for this study. Data was collected from twenty-one senior executives in the airline industry who provided rich stories from their leadership experiences in the airline industry. Twenty-seven airlines are represented in the study. The data collected was analysed using Sternberg’s Tacit Knowledge Framework, which has been used to research leadership behaviour in sales and in the United States Military. Thus, the airline industry provided a context to extend the use of the Tacit Knowledge Framework.

Tacit knowledge was identified in the responses from the participants, and captured in tacit knowledge items boxes, which are presented in chapters seven to nine. The tacit knowledge items formed the basis of the tacit knowledge inventory for airline leadership, a major contribution of this research study, presented in Appendix Seven. In this way, the thesis extended and deepened Sternberg’s Tacit Knowledge Framework. The results from the study highlight the important characteristics of airline leadership, to include self-reflection, resilience, ability to motivate team members, ability to communicate effectively with diverse audiences, and the importance of political intelligence. The study also reveals the need for airline leadership to be able to adapt to the changing environment and also shape the environment. It is expected that this timely research will contribute to leadership development of executives in the airline industry and will stimulate further leadership and management research into the airline industry.
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I dedicate this work to the memory of my father, Dr Adekunle Okupe.

Daddy, I carry your heart with me, I carry it in my heart. Always.
Chapter One

Introduction to the Research Study

1.1 Introduction

“You can know the name of a bird in all the languages of the world, but when you're finished, you'll know absolutely nothing whatever about the bird ... So let's look at the bird and see what it's doing -- that's what counts. I learned very early the difference between knowing the name of something and knowing something.”

- Richard Feynman

Leadership is argued to be important for the performance of organizations. However, leadership research has focused on the benefits of effective leadership with a wide range of debates on the definitions and understandings of effective leadership, coupled with examples of effective and ineffective leadership. While this focus of leadership research on the benefits of effective leadership and definitions of leadership has contributed to the promotion of leadership studies in academia, in most cases, they are plagued by the inability to draw definite conclusions, leaving the academic debate environment as one where definitions are contested, without a firm understanding of what leadership is.

Leadership studies, as a distinct discipline, are relatively new and started about sixty years ago within organizational studies in an attempt to answer the questions ‘How
best to lead?’ and ‘How best to govern?’ within the context of North American institutions and businesses. Early leadership studies sought to establish the personality traits and characteristics of effective leaders and offered a way to measure leadership effectiveness. The studies provided a predominantly North-American positivist view of leadership and as such there remains an imbalance in leadership studies. This has led to a call for understanding leadership behaviour in a context specific manner, moving from general theories to applied, intense and rigorous studies (Case, French et al., 2011; Ladkin and Weber, 2011).

Leadership researchers agree that leadership should be studied within a context to contribute understanding to the phenomenon. It is within this debate environment that the research study seeks to understand the leadership behaviour in the airline industry. This is because leadership does not occur in a vacuum, but occurs within a diversity of contexts; social and political, that should be understood and researched further. While some studies have highlighted the challenges of leading in dynamic environments, these studies have not been applied to the context of the airline industry (House and Aditya, 1997; Case et al., 2011).

While leadership theories such as the transactional and transformational theories can be universal, because they comprise of constructs that can be measured across contexts, the application of these theories and practical leadership behaviour may vary according to context. This context can be national culture, organizational or industry characteristics, or also gender. Thus, it is important to integrate the context in which leadership exists into its study. This is because context is linked to the type
of leadership that can be considered effective and the context affects how leadership behaviour is understood (Antonakis et al., 2004; Lord et al., 2001).

1.2 The Airline Industry

The airline industry is a key sector on the supply-side in the tourism industry. Within tourism studies, research on leadership has been concentrated on the hospitality industry. Yet, even within the hospitality sector, leadership studies have focused on the importance of leadership, rather than an understanding of leadership behaviour. This study seeks to attempt to redress the imbalance of the focus on leadership in the hospitality industry in tourism studies and also contribute to a greater understanding of leadership. Consequently, there is a need to understand leadership in environments that are not represented in the literature. An understanding of the internal dynamics of leadership requires observation within a contextual framework, as “leadership is the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others in particular contexts around specific tasks” (Spillane et al., 2004:5). This context is the airline industry (Pittaway, Carmouche and Chell, 1998).

Commercial aviation has evolved since it commenced with the first paid flight on 1 January 1914. In its one hundred years of existence, the airline industry has grown from 1,205 passengers in 1914 to 2.8 billion passengers in 2011, and the total number of passengers in 2014 is estimated to be 3.3 billion passengers. The 1978 Airline Deregulations Act resulted in the significant change of the industry. It lowered the barriers to entry into the industry, and together with the privatisation of state-owned airlines in North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Africa, Latin America
and the Caribbean, contributed to an increase in competition in the industry and an increase in air travel. Globalisation has also contributed to the increase in air travel, and the industry has been a catalyst of integrating of destinations and economies. In this way, the airline industry has contributed to the change in how businesses are conducted around the globe, due to shorter travel distances when compared to other modes of transportation like rail, sea and road. Advancements in technology have also transformed the industry. It has resulted in more price information about flight tickets and lower loyalty from customers. The advancements in technology have provided alternatives to the need to meet in person, for example, video-conferencing, teleconferencing and web-based seminars. Yet, not withstanding the alternatives to air travel provided by technology, the commercial airline industry remains important. In 2013, it provided 57 million jobs and had a direct contribution of $540 billion to the global economy (IATA, 2012; IATA, 2014).

The airline industry is therefore an important part of the global transport infrastructure and the global economy. The industry is a conduit and agent for the activities of other industries, as it contributes to the accessibility of locations for the movement of people and cargo for business and leisure purposes. Business travellers seek connectivity; efficient transfers and favourable flight times while leisure travellers seek lower costs. However, the increasing competitive landscape has meant that business travellers also seek lower costs in addition to the connectivity and efficient transfers and flight times. This has contributed to the reduced customer loyalty of business travellers and increased the challenges of airlines operating in the industry. The main challenge the airline industry faces is its low profitability. In 2013, the airline industry reported a profit of $10.6 billion, which is a 1.5% margin
on revenues and translated to a profit of $4.13 per passenger. The industry has consistently reported low returns and some airlines have declared bankruptcy and other airlines have consolidated by forming airline alliances, for example, Star Alliance with twenty-seven member airlines, Skyteam alliance with twenty member airlines and Oneworld Alliance with sixteen member airlines, as a strategy to widen the connectivity of their network, reduce operational costs and thus mitigate their low profitability. The rise in competitors has also led to the introduction of several business models, such as low-cost carriers and budget airlines that compete with the existing legacy carriers and introduced complexities into the operation of airline organizations, as well as challenges for leadership (Morrell, 2011; Rothkopf and Wald, 2011; Engau et al., 2011, Low and Lee, 2014; Avolio et al., 2009; IATA, 2014; IATA, 2012; Wensveen, 2010).

The industry is also faced with challenges of security, safety, terrorism, environmental considerations and business sustainability. September 11, 2001, following the terrorist attacks on the twin towers in the United States of America, was a turning point for the airline industry and the industry has had to adapt to the challenge posed by terrorism and security and safety for passengers, whilst ensuring it has a sustainable business model, one that ensures survival and profitability over the long-term. The industry is also a complex business as it has several components to enable it to effectively meet the needs of passengers. For example, there are different categories of staff, technical staff, pilots, cabin crew, sales and ticketing staff, who operate in multiple occupations and have different hierarchical levels. In addition, some staff such as pilots and cabin crew, work with different team members on different flights. Therefore, there is the added challenge of how best to effectively
lead the multi-cultural and multi-layered staff who are operating in diverse global locations. Leaders have to be able to lead staff and also take into consideration the stakeholders in the industry such as competitors, customers, and policymakers.

The various political, social and cultural environments within which airlines have to operate also add to the complexity of the operating environment. These are challenges outside of the organization that affect the organization. When combined with the challenges within the organization, the need for effective leadership becomes even more paramount. This puts into context the role and responsibility of individuals in senior executive position in the industry, who have to be able to influence diverse people and synthesise the various operations required for a successful and efficient flight operations. The competitive nature of the industry also places additional demands on leaders to be able to manage labour relations and customers. The complexities of leading in the airline industry include the dynamic and complex environment highlighted above, but also extend to the requirement to effectively manage diverse teams of people as well as to provide timely and efficient services to passengers within the complex environmental, economic and political settings (Janelle and Beuthe, 1997; Lumpe, 2008; Joyce, 2011; Wensveen 2011; Wensveen, 2013).

Understanding the requirements of the role of leaders in the airline industry has been put forward as an important part of the airline industry’s capability to prepare itself for the future. The leadership provided by the management team of airlines is underestimated. However, effective leadership is important to enable the global airline industry to meet ongoing challenges and develop and realize its long-term
vision to achieve success in a dynamic and fast-moving business environment. There are currently gaps in the leadership competencies of leaders in the airline industry. Thus, the ability to have good leadership by senior management, and as such, the provision of effective leadership is also one of the challenges of the airline industry. Understanding the leadership behaviour of senior executives in the airline industry is important and timely as “global trends have enormous bearing on the roles and responsibilities of top executives in aviation.” (Chan and Wahl, 2013; Wensveen 2013, Wensveen 2011).

The airline industry requires leaders who are able to lead the industry to deal with its challenges and adapt to the increasingly complex business environment. It requires a deeper understanding of leadership behaviour. Yet, leadership is under-examined in the airline industry. Very little research has been undertaken on the behaviour of leaders in the airline industry and those that have sought to undertake the research into the behaviour of airline leaders have focused on the airline industry in the United States (see Natoli, 2010, and Kutz, 2000). Their research acknowledges the limited research into leadership in the airline industry. Other studies on the management of airlines have tried to apply these to the performance of airlines in specified locations, such as Singapore (see Heracleous and Wirtz, 2009); India (see Retsma and Watkins, 2013); Eastern Europe (see Akbar et al., 2014), Herb Kelleher’s leadership of South West Airlines (see Murrow, 2004); and the need for talent management in the African aviation industry (see Amankwah-Amoah and Debrah, 2011). No academic study has been found to focus on understanding the behaviour of senior executives in the global airline industry. As such, this study is timely and addresses the gap in knowledge, as it provides in-depth insight into the behaviour of senior executives in the global
airline industry. The focus of this research is on the senior executives in the airline industry as they are the ones whose role and responsibilities require them to be able to significantly impact on the industry (Lumpe, 2008; Stevenson, 2012; The Economist, 2013).

The focus of this study is the global commercial airline industry, referred to as the global airline industry. The study does not distinguish between the sizes of the airlines, as the different airline sizes contribute to the global airline industry. However, the focus has been on regional and international airlines. The airline industry is comprised of several organizations and these organizations are made up of several levels and departments. The understanding of leadership behaviour may vary according to the level of analysis; and as such leadership behaviour at the CEO-level is different from supervisory-level and middle management-level leadership. The research conclusions may differ, depending on the level analysed, as the measures of success are different due to the different traits, behaviours and competencies that are required for good leadership at the different levels. When the level of analysis is not considered and taken into account, problems might arise from the inferences of the research study; as individual behaviour may be inferred to be homogenous. However, the level of analysis increases the complexity of leadership research, because leadership phenomena can emerge at several levels within an organization, which can be examined at various levels: individual, organizational or industrial (Antonakis et al., 2004; Kroeck et al., 2004).

In this study, leadership behaviour is researched at the senior executive level in the airline industry, defined as individuals who are in senior management positions in
their airline organizations. Throughout this study, senior executives in the airline industry are referred to as airline leaders. Given the extent to which the concept of leadership has been explored, but unsatisfactorily determined, and leadership behaviour being under-examined in the global airline industry, the aim of this research is to explore the phenomenon of leadership in the airline industry.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

Specifically, this research aims to:

“Understand the role of tacit knowledge in the leadership behaviour of senior executives in the airline industry.”

The initial objectives of this study were:

- To gain an understanding of leadership;
- To identify an approach to be used for understanding the leadership behaviour of senior executives in the airline industry in this study.

The literature review of leadership theories and approaches for understanding leadership behaviour provided an initial understanding of leadership and revealed the practical intelligence approach. One of the proponents of the practical intelligence approach is Robert Sternberg who applied the approach to understanding leadership behaviour in the military and sales industry. However, it has not been applied to the airline industry. Sternberg (2000)’s research suggests that practical intelligence is a useful construct to understand leadership behaviour in a dynamic environment, as it provides the opportunity to explore the strategies utilised by leaders to solve the
practical problems they face in their roles. Thus, the practical intelligence approach was identified as an interesting approach to understand leadership behaviour and is the approach that was applied to this study.

Further review of Sternberg’s practical intelligence approach revealed that tacit knowledge was an important component of practical intelligence and that the identification of tacit knowledge provided evidence of practical intelligence. This knowledge was incorporated into the research objectives.

The initial research objectives having been achieved, additional research objectives were created, focusing on the identification of the practical intelligence approach, which uses the Tacit Knowledge Framework to understand leadership behaviour.

The research objectives were:

• To understand the meaning of leadership in the airline industry;
• To identify the tacit knowledge of senior executives in the airline industry;
• To understand the uses of tacit knowledge of senior executives in the airline industry;
• To capture the tacit knowledge of senior executives in the airline industry;
• To critically evaluate the Tacit Knowledge Framework;
• To develop a Plain Language Tacit Knowledge Inventory for airline leadership.
The key concepts of the study are “Understanding Leadership” and “Practical Intelligence” and “Tacit Knowledge”. Chapters two and three provide a literature review of the key concepts. Chapter two presents an overview of the theoretical approaches to understanding leadership and highlights the salient contributions of the main leadership theories to understanding leadership and effective leadership behaviour. The much-debated distinction between leadership and management is also explored. The chapter ends with a synthesis of the main approaches to understanding leadership behaviour, and the rationale for the choice of the practical intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour in this thesis.

Chapter three presents Sternberg’s practical intelligence approach, and his Tacit Knowledge Framework for collecting and analysing data, argued to contribute to understanding the practical intelligence of leaders. It also gives a detailed analysis of intelligence, and attempts a deconstruction of intelligence in an attempt to understand the different abilities that individuals possess. Chapter four provides the theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of the social constructivist research methodology and chapter five discusses research methods together with a rationale for the qualitative research methods to be employed in the study. It also provides a detailed description of the design of the research instrument with which data was collected and analysed in this research.

Chapter six presents the general results from the study, and a detailed review of the context of leading in the airline industry. Chapters seven, eight and nine contain the essence of the study. The chapters present the results from the study, the findings and qualitative analysis of the research data, presenting also the quotations from the
conversations to provide the reader with evidence of the conversations and documents and to enhance credibility of the research findings.

Concluding the thesis, chapter ten presents a summary of the research findings and implications of the research. It also summarizes the research study in light of the research aim and objectives and presents a critique of the practical intelligence approach for understanding leadership behaviour, critically evaluates the Tacit Knowledge Framework and discusses the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Subsequently, the researcher’s reflection on the research journey is presented as a post-script to this thesis. The figure below shows the outline of the thesis:

![Figure 1: Outline of the thesis](image_url)

Figure 1: Outline of the thesis
Chapter Two

Understanding Leadership

2.1 Introduction

Leadership is one of the most important themes in the social sciences, as it permeates all aspects of human affairs. Leadership studies can be traced back to Carlyle’s original proposition of the great hero-leader and Tolstoy’s bow-wave metaphor for leadership in ‘War and Peace’. In his work, Tolstoy describes the leader to be a figurehead, with a critique of the personalities and detailing of the leader’s limitations, indicating the complexity inherent in understanding leadership (Grint, 1997; Antonakis et al., 2004; King et al., 2009).

As a starting point to understanding the leadership behaviour of senior executives in the airline industry, this chapter presents an overview and synthesis of the principal theoretical approaches to understanding leadership, based on a critical examination of the literature. The chapter also presents an overview of the difference between leadership and management. The working definition for leadership that is used in this study is presented in this chapter, together with a section on understanding leadership effectiveness.

2.2 Theoretical approaches to understanding leadership

Leadership is immersed in a “historical-contextual superstructure” (Hunt, 2004:21). As such, it is essential to understand the history of leadership research, particularly
the major theoretical approaches, before proceeding to the need for a different conceptualisation of leadership and how this study can contribute to leadership research. Over the years, there have been several paradigm shifts and incremental advances in leadership studies, although these have not been without criticism, pessimism and dissatisfaction. However, an exploration of the main approaches to understanding leadership provides a useful starting point to the study (Antonakis et al., 2004).

There have been several theoretical approaches to understanding leadership. However, major leadership theories identified in the literature correspond to those presented by Souba (2007). Firstly, leadership can be understood from the perspective of the individual who possesses certain traits and is responsible for setting the strategic direction of organizations, that is, the traditional trait theory of leadership. Secondly, leadership can be understood as the process of allocating resources and solving problems as the situation requires, which presents the situation-contingent theory of leadership. Thirdly, leadership can be enacted by the top management team, a group of people responsible for setting the direction for the organization, delegating tasks and issuing orders for the rest of the organization, referring to the transactional theory of leadership. Finally, leadership can be understood as a capacity borne from human connections and teamwork, where leadership activities are the responsibility of all the individuals in the organization, as stated in the transformational theory of leadership (Souba, 2007; Bass, 1990).

It can be seen that the approaches to understanding leadership vary from one end of the spectrum, the leader as an individual, to the other end of the spectrum, where
leadership is an organization-wide activity, engaged in by the entire organization. These theoretical approaches present a way to review the evolution of the approaches to understand leadership and are critically evaluated in the following sections.

**Trait theory of leadership**

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, studies of leadership referred to great men and the traits such men possessed. In the 1930s to 1940s, leadership studies focused on the traits of leaders and were predominantly focused on masculine leaders. According to the trait theory, a leader was typically male, with physical and/or mental traits. The early studies of the trait theory posited that leadership selection could occur once the traits that differentiated leaders from followers could be identified, such as intelligence, power, vision, drive, ambition, initiative, leadership motivation, honesty, integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, charisma, creativity and flexibility. The trait theory argued that the individual was born with these traits. As such, leaders were born and could not be made. Rather, the theory argued that breed and lineage could provide certain traits, marking an individual out to be a leader. The trait theory of leadership is one of the oldest approaches to understanding leadership (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991).

However, the trait theory has some limitations. The theory posits that leaders possess certain traits that predispose them to be leaders in any situation, but it does not acknowledge the prospect of an individual acquiring or developing traits. Simplistically, the theory asserted that leaders are different from non-leaders; those who were not born with the traits of a leader were destined to be followers. In this
The early trait theory of leadership did not differentiate between inherited or acquired traits. In addition, by focusing predominantly on male traits, the theory did not account for ‘feminine’ traits, such as care and empathy, traits that have been proven to be important for leadership. Further, while the trait theory assumed innate leadership ability, research has revealed that certain leadership qualities can be learnt and developed over time (Van Vugt and Spisak, 2008; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991; Stogdill, 1948; Jenkins, 1947; Grint, 1997).

The trait theory of leadership argues that the traits of a leader are more critical for understanding leadership behaviour than the situation or context within which the leader has to influence others. Traits are important and certain individuals possess a combination of characteristics and skills that make them more capable leaders than others. However, possessing certain traits alone is not a sufficient identifier of leadership ability. Rather, leadership requires the identification and development of those traits and the ability of the individual to influence others in different contexts through using those traits to achieve a pre-determined goal. This can determine if leadership is effective (Grint, 1997).

The traits of an individual are not the sole determinants of leadership ability. The trait theory has been criticised for being insufficient as a theory for understanding what leadership entails as it does not consider the socio-cultural contexts within which leadership occurs. In addition, traits are not consistently correlated with effective leadership. Stodgill (1948) further argued that a person did not become a leader by virtue of the combination of traits that s/he possessed and argued that situational factors also affected the process of leadership. In this way, leadership studies evolved way.
from the trait theory of leadership to incorporate the effects of the situations within which leadership occurs, as a way to deepen the understanding of leadership (Antonakis et al., 2004).

Situation-contingent theory of leadership
The situation-contingent theory of leadership arose as a response to the criticisms of the trait theory of leadership. It postulated that leadership does not occur in a vacuum, but rather within certain situations that require different leadership characteristics. In this way, the theory builds upon the trait theory of leadership by acknowledging that leadership requires certain characteristics of the individual in a leadership position, but extending this further, i.e. that leadership is contingent on the situation.

In this way, situational factors are influential regarding leadership behaviour. For example, a successful military leader may be unsuitable to lead a business organization. The situational theory of leadership was developed by Fiedler in the 1960s. Fiedler argued that the situation within which the leader has to lead is important. Fiedler also argued that leadership occurs within an organizational context that determines the kind of leadership behaviour the situation requires. This is because there are some situations that call for specific responses. However, there cannot be a unique set of responses that can be applied across all situations (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991; Fiedler, 1964; Fiedler and Chemers, 1974; Horner, 1997; Fiedler, 1997; Antonakis et al., 2004).
The situation-contingent theory argues that situational favourableness and a leader’s interpersonal attitudes are the greatest factors that affect a group’s performance. It posits that the interaction between the leader, followers and the environment depends on each situation, which are all themselves contingent on other variables, introducing complexity into understanding leadership that was not covered by the trait theory of leadership. Therefore, understanding leadership requires an understanding of the unique situations. The leader also has to understand the situation and then decide how best to lead in that given situation.

Thus, the theory provides a dynamic understanding of leadership, where the leader interacts with the situation to enact appropriate leadership behaviour. Leadership is argued to be dependent on factors that can change over time. This theory contributes to the understanding of leadership, as it portrays leadership as being subject to situational factors. For example, some individuals are able to lead effectively in periods of organizational success, but are then unable to continue to lead through periods of organizational struggles. In addition, some leaders are able to perform better in highly structured situations, as opposed to vague and unspecified job situations (Fiedler, 1964; Fiedler, 1974; Fiedler, 1997; Horner, 1997; Weber et al., 2001).

Fiedler (1997) argues that there are no good or bad leaders. Rather, effective leadership occurs where the leadership style and the level of situational control are correctly matched. The leadership style could be either relationship motivated, where the leader’s self-esteem arises from interpersonal relationships with team members, or task-motivated, where the leader derives satisfaction from tangible evidence, such
as task completion. Thus, the leader exhibits situational control that is dependent on
the extent to which the leader feels accepted and supported by group members
(leader-member relations), how well-defined and structured the task is, particularly in
identifying goals, procedures and progress of work (task structure), and the ability of
the leader to reward and punish followers through organizational sanctions (position
power) (Fiedler, 1964; Ashour, 1973).

According to the situation-contingent theory, a leader is effective when s/he is able to
match the leadership style to the situation at the time. In this regard, leadership is
understood as a competency that can be developed and learned, where the appropriate
style of leadership can be selected, based on the situation. The theory argues that
leadership is a process that includes several variables that can be dynamic and
therefore, change according to the situation. Situational favourableness and
leadership style are the greatest factors that affected a group’s performance. Effective
leadership, according to the situation-contingent theory, is “contingent upon both the
motivational system of the leader and the degree to which the leader has control and
influence” and is able to “satisfy his own as well as the organization’s goals”
(Fiedler; 1974:73). In this regard, the theory recognised that the effects of one
variable in the interaction between the leader’s traits, the leader’s behaviours and the
situation in which the leader exists are contingent on other variables (Fiedler, 1964;
Horner, 1997; Fiedler, 1997; Kroeck et al., 2004).

The theory contributed to a richer insight into leadership than the trait theory of
leadership, as it considered the effect of the situation on leadership behaviour, a
factor that the trait theory of leadership does not incorporate. However, the
situational-contingent theory of leadership has been criticised for its lack of accounting for the skills required by the leader to act in different situations. While the theory recognized that leadership involves an interaction between the leader, the followers and the environment, it does not provide a rich understanding of the relationship between the leader and his/her followers and conversely, the process of leadership. The situational theory of leadership is also inhibited by the inconsistency of measurement and unstructured boundaries of situational classifications, which led to a decline in the focus of the situation-contingent theories in the late 1990s (Kroeck et al., 2004; Ashour, 1973).

**Transactional and transformational theories of leadership**

Up to the 1970s, leadership theories focused on elements of transactional leadership. The transactional leadership theory emphasizes that the relationship between a leader and his/her followers is based on exchanges (transactions). In this way, a leader and his/her followers’ interactions are dependent on their self-interests. In the transactional theory of leadership, a leader provides direction for followers by assigning set tasks and stating the expected level of performance. Followers that achieve the specified expected level are rewarded materially or psychologically. The material reward is in form of financial compensation and psychological reward as positive feedback. Conversely, not accomplishing set objectives will be penalised. As such, the interactions between leader and followers was based on transactions alone, where a leader transacted the organization’s objectives to the followers for a reward and the followers in turn transacted performance for reward (Bass, 1998; Bass, 2008).
The theory has been criticised for focusing solely on the short-term objectives of the organization and not incorporating the effects of transaction-based leadership on the long-term performance of organizations. The transactional theory of leadership has also been criticised for stemming from a traditional view of workers, organizations and the power of a leader to influence followers based on reward alone (Yukl, 2002; Storey, 2004).

The transformational theory of leadership was first introduced by Burns (1978) and extended by Bass (1985). The theory argues that while leaders usually lead followers in a transactional manner, leaders should also be able to motivate and inspire followers beyond self-interest purposes alone. It argues that there is a need for leaders to motivate and inspire followers to a higher level, which enables them to transcend their self-interests and work together towards enabling the organization to achieve its potential. The transformational theory of leadership states that transformational leaders possess the ability to inspire, charisma and intellectual stimulation that enables them to alter and change the mind-sets of their followers, thereby transforming their followers.

The theory is derived from the trait theory of leadership. However, the transformational leadership theory broadens the notion of leadership from a transactions-oriented approach to embody followers’ transcendence, following their transformation by their leader. Thus, the process of leadership focuses on “the accomplishment of group purpose, which is furthered not [only] by effective leaders but also by innovators, entrepreneurs, and thinkers; by the availability of resources; by questions of value and cohesion” (Gardner 1990: 38). The transformational theory
of leadership argues that followers transcend their own identity for one that is aligned to the organization’s, which enables them to take greater ownership for their work and deliver exceptional performance. The theory places the responsibility for effective leadership on leaders and followers. The leaders acting outside of their own self-interests motivate followers and engage them in the work process through initiating, challenging and changing the systems, creating vision and new meanings, coping with change, building relationships with followers, as well as through supporting and encouraging each individual’s development (Storey, 2004; Horner, 1997; Kroeck et al., 2004).

The theory of transformational leadership provides a new perspective from the earlier paradigm of transactions-based leadership, as it incorporates followers and the organization in the process of leadership. It provides an explanation for how or why some leaders are able to be more effective than others. It states that the leader and followers have a social relationship and when the followers’ aspirations are raised to those of the leaders, effective leadership has occurred: the followers have been transformed (Bass, 1990; DeChurch et al., 2010).

The change in the followers’ aspirations also contributes to the development of followers to become leaders themselves. In this way the theory contributes to succession planning and continuity of dynamic interactions within the organization. Transformational leaders have a long-term view with a focus on the strategic big picture. To this end, transformational leadership was found to be positively associated with leadership effectiveness. The goal of leadership then becomes the accomplishment of group purpose with a focus on the group (this can be a team, or
the teams within an organization), viewing leadership from an alternative perspective. Transformational leadership is thus dispersed and relational through continued interaction by leader and followers. It is dispersed since it removes the focus of the attainment of the organization’s goals from the leader alone and it is relational as it includes other members of the organization in the attainment of these goals (Parry and Bryman, 2006; Storey, 2004; Avolio et al., 2009).

The focus on transformation by the transformational theory of leadership assumes that leadership can and should be transformational. While the transformational theory of leadership has provided important insight into leadership behaviour, leadership cannot and should not always be transformational. Furthermore, transformational leadership is mostly required during periods of radical change. However, leadership cannot always be transformational, as radical change is not the main aim of an organization and is less required when the organization is established and stable. Different levels exist in the organizational hierarchy, which require different styles of leadership. In addition, transformational leadership is best suited for leaders who are in more senior levels of management, while those in lower and middle management levels in the organization require transactional leadership; especially in industries where the majority of work is performed by semi-skilled staff, who are employed on a casual basis, such as the tourism industry. This is because the expectation that followers will always act outside of their own self-interests for the purpose of the organization’s success is not realistic. Followers might be able to act this way, but they will not always act selflessly. Thus, there is a need for a reward process that aims to motivate followers to align their goals with those of the organization’s (Judge et al., 2009; Avolio et al., 2009; House, 1971).
Further, the transformational theory of leadership has been criticized for its lack of focus on the organizational, strategic and institutionalized positions of leadership, as it argues that transformational leaders can arise whether or not they are in positions of leadership. Leadership is different from authority and can emerge outside of formal authority in the sense of a formally designated status, which gives the leader the authority to coordinate and influence others within the organization. However, it is implicitly assumed that the person in the designated position is the leader and can be held accountable for the performance of the organization. In addition, it may become difficult for ‘informal leaders’ to continue to lead effectively, if they are not formally placed in positions of leadership (Bennis, 1959; Avolio et al., 2009).

The transformational theory of leadership has a strong intuitive appeal by involving followers in the leadership process. However, the theory lacks the conceptual clarity and appears to be another way to present the personal traits of leaders. However, the literature on transformational leadership contributes to leadership studies, as it provides unity in measurement and practice, and is a developed and unified stream of literature in leadership research (Northouse, 1997; Kroeck et al.; 2004).

2.3 Synthesis of the main leadership theories

The above theories of leadership have contributed to an understanding of leadership. As posited by the trait theory, individuals with particular morphological, physiological or behavioural traits are more likely to emerge as leaders. For example, a person who has the most motivation or need for resource is likely to become a
leader amongst a group of people, because leadership is strongly correlated with ambition and autonomy traits. The trait theory of leadership has undergone an emergence in leadership studies, as the focus on leadership has sought to understand the cognitive ability of leaders, and extends ability beyond academic ability alone, including the ability to understand and tackle problems. While the trait theory focused on identifying the traits in individuals that should be leaders, the situation-contingent theory contributed to leadership studies by including the role of the situation regarding leadership style(s), contributing to an understanding of the process of leadership. The situation-contingent theory of leadership also identified how leadership and leadership style are dependent on the dynamics of the organization, extending the understanding of leadership behaviour beyond a focus on traits alone (Van Vugt, 2006; Sternberg, 1997; Antonakis et al., 2004).

The transactional and transformational theories of leadership further increased the understandings of leadership to include the relationship between the leader and his or her followers. Within the transactional theory, the leader-follower relationship is argued to be reward-based and dependent on the follower’s performance. However, it does not provide information on how to transform followers to align their interests with those of the organization. The transformational theory of leadership amplified the understandings of leadership to include the leader, followers, the organization and the industry. Within this theory, the leader can influence and motivate followers to become change agents and leaders themselves. While it might be realistic to expect followers to transcend their good for the greater good within a religious and political environment, this is not as convincing within a business environment.
A century into leadership studies, the major schools of leadership theories have contributed to an understanding of leadership and these understandings can be integrated and synthesised. However, these theories have sought to explain leadership behaviour by focusing on distinct components; the trait, the situation, the followers and the leader. They do not view leadership as an adaptive, reiterating relationship. While a single grand theory of leadership might not provide the clarification required, leadership research requires a more expansive view of leadership than has typically been considered and one that is required to provide a deeper understanding of leadership behaviour. In addition, leadership studies have been criticized for being too rigid and for emphasizing the individual leader as the embodiment of leadership and his/her traits and actions as “the road to prosperity and moral elevation” (Crevani et al., 2010:80), without a consideration for the interactions of the leader with others and the practices of the leader, that is, how leadership is socially-constructed (Antonakis et al., 2004; Hunt, 2004; Kroeck et al., 2004).

2.4 Understanding Leadership Effectiveness

Leadership can be understood to be the ‘process of influencing others’ to achieve set goals. This definition of leadership introduces the questions of the purpose of the influencing of others and of how one evaluates the process of influencing others. Options for the latter include that it may be done by its results, how the leader feels the process went, or how others feel the process went. The theories of leadership have sought to contribute to an understanding of leadership behaviour. This is important as the understanding of leadership behaviour can contribute to leadership identification, leadership development and leadership evaluation of behaviour for effectiveness.
However, the definition of leadership as the process of influencing others to meet set goals is morally neutral. As such, a leader who is able to influence others to commit a crime, if that was the set goal, can be seen to be as effective as a leader who is able to influence others to build a school for the less privileged. Where leadership is ineffective, it can be said to be a failure of leadership. In the same vein, good leadership is used synonymously with effective leadership and bad leadership can be said to be ineffective. This confusing aspect of leadership can explain the focus on dark and bright sides of leadership (see (Judge et al., 2009; and Conger, 1998), to differentiate the characteristics of a leader that are ‘bright’ like conscientiousness, humility as opposed to qualities that are ‘dark’ such as narcissism, hubris, anger and domination (Hogan et al., 1994).

Yet, the question of how leadership behaviour should be evaluated remains unanswered. Leadership effectiveness is argued to be different from leader effectiveness. However, leadership cannot be effective if the leader is not an effective leader, as a leader is one of the co-creators of the process of leadership and the process of influencing others cannot be effective if the leader is not effective in influencing others. Further, leadership effectiveness is a complex and subjective term. Firstly, effectiveness of a process depends on several variables that include the leader, the followers, the group and the organization’s environment. Therefore, a leader who might have been effective in another situation might be ineffective in a different situation. Thus, leadership effectiveness is also dependent on context. The leader is not able to control all the factors that relate to a situation. As such, the external environment might be beyond the leader’s ability to influence others to
enable an organization to meet its goals, as for example political and terrorist crises that can affect the effectiveness of leadership. To the extent that the goals of an organization are decided on by the leaders, effective leadership includes a component of being able to set the right goals and review these goals with consideration of and for the changing organizational environment and the environment in which the organization operates. Thus, the process of leadership can be more effective if the leader is able to adapt to the situation or context and lead the organization to achieve its goals or review its goals in spite of the situations beyond of his/her control (Evans and Butler, 2011; Hannah et al., 2008).

Secondly, there is also the paradox inherent in that qualities that might make a leader effective in one situation might be detrimental to the success of another situation. For example, a leader who is able to lead during a period of change might be unable to handle the mundane, day-to-day activities and attention to detail required for an established organization. Thirdly, leadership effectiveness is not linear, where causation and effects can be directly linked to results. There might be a time lag between the effects of one leader’s decisions and actions and the time that the decision was made at, and/or the action implemented. In the case when the leader has changed during that time and the effects, positive or negative, are experienced by the organization, how can the evaluation of effectiveness relate to the individual who made the decision? The non-linear nature of leadership thus poses challenges of evaluating leadership behaviour for effectiveness (Judge, Piccolo et al. 2009).

One way to evaluate leadership effectiveness can be to link the position of the leader to effectiveness, where individuals who have been able to get along and get ahead
within the organization can be understood to be effective leaders. However, this is problematic as an individual can be promoted to a leadership position based on technical competence and not on leadership skill. Thus, an individual can emerge as a leader, but not be able to effectively build and guide his/her team(s) to achieve set goals (Judge et al., 2009; Boal and Hooijberg, 2001).

Therefore, one conceptualisation of effectiveness may be to observe the level of the leader and also his/her ability to build and guide teams. Yet, some leaders inherit team members and are not able to build their team from scratch. In this way, then the leader’s effectiveness can be evaluated by his/her ability to guide the teams to achieve the organization’s goals. However, where the organization has multiple goals, particularly in a multi-stakeholder industry like the airline industry, evaluating effectiveness can be problematic, where a leader can meet one goal and not the other, as for example economic, environmental and social goals can sometimes be competing (Evans and Butler 2011; Judge et al., 2009; Hogan et al., 1994; Thach, 2002).

Effective leadership is not entirely situational, behavioural or contingency-based. Rather, effective leaders are able to capitalize on their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses, such that where leaders are unsuccessful, it is because they have been unable to effectively capitalize on their strengths, or have been unable to effectively compensate for or correct their weaknesses (Sternberg and Vroom, 2002).

The diagram below provides an explanation for leadership effectiveness, where collective performance is dependent on the relationship between leader, followers and
how these interact with themselves and one another to produce a collective performance. The arrows point in both directions to show the inter-related nature of the relationships, where the relationship between leader and followers is dyadic, as the leader interacts with the group, and the followers within the group, so that all produce performance. Depending on the extent to which performance meets the goals set, leadership can be understood to be effective.

Figure 2-1: Leadership is constructed by many actors (adapted from Hannah et al., 2008)

Leadership effectiveness requires the ability to understand the multiple dynamics in the process of influencing others, including the leader-situation dynamic, the group
dynamics, where the leader’s experiences influence the group dynamics and the organization’s dynamics, as changes in the organization and/or industry also affect leadership behaviour. In addition, the dynamics (leader, group, situation and organization) are not static, but continuously changing over time. Understanding the complex, dynamic and interactive process of leading, conceptualising and evaluating that process through the integration of contingent, situational and cognitive factors will unite diverse findings and contribute to a better understanding of leadership (Antonakis et al., 2004; Fiedler, 1997).

2.5 Leadership and Management

One of the key academic debates has been on whether leadership is different from management and whether leaders are different from managers. While managers are required on a supervisory level to complement organizational systems and enhance effectiveness by motivating followers for rewards, leadership goes beyond management. Leadership is purpose driven and is concerned with change, which is based on “values, ideals, symbols and emotional exchanges” (Antonakis et al., 2004:5). This is different from management, which is driven by the need to meet defined objectives (Antonakis et al., 2004; Bass 1990; Ladkin and Weber, 2011).

However, leadership effectiveness comprises different criteria, depending on the organizational levels. Figure 2 below explains the difference of criteria for evaluating effectiveness at the different levels in an organization. The criteria for measuring and evaluating management efficiency are different from those that evaluate leadership effectiveness (Kroeck et al., 2004).
From the diagram above, effectiveness can be understood to relate to the evaluation of the quality of leadership behaviour, while efficiency is used to evaluate the quality of management behaviour. The quality of leadership is evaluated according to criteria of vision, strategy and how the leader is able to lead change within the organization and interact with the external environment on behalf of the organization. In addition, the requirements of leadership vary according to the levels of leadership. For example, leadership behaviour at a middle-management level is different from leadership behaviour at senior management team and the Chief Executive Officer level. An organization is a social group in which members are differentiated according to their responsibilities for the task of achieving set goals. The higher the
level of the individual in the organization, the more the focus is on setting the vision for the organization, on formulating initiatives and strategies, together with the development of systems and networks within the organization to create a conducive environment for the realization of goals and objectives (Kroeck et al., 2004).

The two roles, leadership and management, are distinct but complementary forms of action. Organizations require strategic coordination of the different internal goals with the dynamic external environment. These include enhancing the motivation of followers, coordinating the organization, as well as guiding and aligning the objectives of the organization with those of the external environment. This is the need for leadership. In most organizations, management and leadership roles are rarely differentiated, but the two roles remain rather complementary and individuals in top level management positions have to oscillate between traditional management roles, which include supervision and performance appraisal, and leadership roles, which include strategy formation, implementation and organizational design (Hunt, 2004; Antonakis et al., 2004; Katz and Kahn, 1978).

The extent to which a manager can be a successful leader, or vice versa, has been debated. Zalzeznik (1998) argues that leadership and management require different types of individuals. However, Bass (1985) suggests that leadership and management can be complementary and found in the same individual, although leadership goes beyond management.

2.6 Conclusion

Human leadership remains complex and new approaches are required to understand
when and why human leadership succeeds or fails. There is a myriad of leadership literature that seeks to provide definitions of leadership and tools for understanding leadership behaviour. This chapter has explored the principal leadership theories and has explained how each theory has contributed to an understanding of leadership. By so doing, it has woven a pattern through the leadership theories and provides a useful review of the existing literature on leadership. The chapter has also highlighted a major gap in the literature on leadership studies: the need for a more holistic understanding of leadership, by including followers, the organization, the industry and the wider society in addition to the leader, as effective leadership should be adaptive, interactive and able to perform well during periods of uncertainty and excel in a dynamic environment (King et al., 2009).

The practical intelligence approach was identified in the literature review as a useful approach to understanding leadership behaviour in dynamic environments. The next chapter expatiates on the practical intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour.
Chapter Three

The Practical Intelligence Approach

3.1 Introduction

The literature review on understanding leadership behaviour revealed the practical intelligence approach as a useful approach to understanding leadership behaviour in dynamic environments. The airline industry, the context of this research study is a dynamic environment and this provided the opportunity to use the practical intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour in the airline industry. Intelligence and leadership are strongly correlated, as intelligence is associated with leadership qualities, such as the ability to collect and understand information on complex issues, develop strategies to resolve these issues, as well as motivate employees and influence stakeholders of an organization.

Practical intelligence is posited as important for effective leadership, and the importance and applicability of the practical intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour in the airline industry is discussed. This chapter provides a deconstruction of intelligence to encompass a broad understanding of ability. Tacit knowledge is an important component of practical intelligence and the Tacit Knowledge Framework, used to identify the tacit knowledge and practical intelligence of airline leaders in this study is presented in the chapter (Judge, Colbert and Ilies, 2004; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991).
Leadership and Practical Intelligence

Leadership is an important phenomenon. It is needed to shape organizational strategy and encourage others within the organization to enable the organization to achieve its goals. Yet, the literature on leadership has focused on proximate questions of what makes a good leader, but does not provide insight into the adaptive function of leadership that enables leaders to respond quickly to internal and external changes, a process of continuous improvement. The focus of leadership studies has also not included an interdisciplinary nature of understanding the leader, followers, organizations and the industry. In addition, within tourism studies, the literature has disproportionately focused on the transformational leadership in the hospitality industry and does not provide adequate information on a contextual basis. Furthermore, it does not deliver an understanding of how leaders comprehend, select, modify or adapt their environment, that is, how leadership can be dynamic and interactive in the airline industry, an industry under-represented in both leadership and tourism studies (Horner, 1997; King et al., 2009; Lumpe, 2008).

Leadership requires an adaptive capability to react to challenges in the internal and external environment that can occur due to the followers, internal situations or external issues. Therefore, a contextual understanding of how the process of influence occurs is imperative, as portrayals of universal traits and behaviors are not context specific. The contextual factors can be cultural, national, organizational or gender-related. It is therefore crucial to understand these “contextual factors in which leadership is embedded” so as to “obtain a more general understanding of leadership” (Antonakis et al., 2004:10; Den Hartog and Dickson, 2004).
There is a re-emergence of focus on the trait theory of leadership. This new focus is different from the earlier studies of the trait theory of leadership. The initial trait studies of leadership were hindered by the way in which leadership dispositions were conceived. For example, cognitive ability was seen as a unitary construct, mostly related to academic ability without accounting for creativity and the ability to solve problems. However, there are alternative conceptualizations of intelligence that can contribute to the understanding of effective leadership behaviour. Practical intelligence is one of such alternative conceptualizations (Antonakis et al., 2004).

Sternberg’s practical intelligence approach presents an alternative model to understand the adaptive nature of leadership behaviour. Practical intelligence is the ability “to solve everyday problems by utilizing knowledge gained from experience in order purposefully to adapt to, shape, and select environments” (Sternberg, 2008: 366). This form of intelligence requires the ability to adapt to an environment, to shape the environment to suit the individual or to select a new environment. Thus, a practically intelligent leader is able to manage him/herself, manage others and also manage tasks. In this way, the approach conceptualizes leadership as a result of a combination of different variables, which can include the individual in a leadership position, followers within the organization and organizational and environmental conditions. This interdependence shows that leaders are not the “exclusive component of leadership” (Barnard 1997:91), but that the process of leadership comprises inter-related and interconnected action (Sternberg et al., 2000; Sternberg, 1988; Sternberg 2008; Sternberg and Vroom, 2002).
3.2 Deconstructing Intelligence

Intelligence is a nebulous concept. Historically, an effective leader was defined as a person with high academic intelligence, able to process large amounts of information, analyze and evaluate decisions. Academic intelligence is purported to be “the backbone of all mental abilities” (Gottfredson 2003a: 344); and is used as the conventional notion of intelligence in employment and in education; and is sometimes presented as general intelligence (“g”). In some cases, academic intelligence is referred to in the literature as analytical intelligence. However, where academic intelligence may refer to ‘book smarts”, that is, those with the ability to excel in an academic environment, analytical intelligence appears to incorporate the ability for an individual to be logical, reasoning and engaging in critical thinking. It is unclear from the literature what the difference between the two terms is. However, this study will utilise the term ‘analytical intelligence’ to refer to the ability for an individual to gather, understand and analyse complex information. (Gottfredson, 2003a; Sternberg, 2000; Brody, 2000; Schmidt and Hunter, 1998; Smith and Sadler-Smith, 2006; Sternberg et al., 2000; Gottfredson, 2003b).

Analytical intelligence is important for effective leadership as it encompasses the memory and analytical ability that a person can possess, enabling the recall, recognition, analysis, evaluation and judgment of information. However, the conceptualisation of analytical intelligence as general intelligence is insufficient, as intelligence is more than analytical intelligence alone. “The notion that there are different types of intelligence has been a part of the intelligence field almost since its inception” (Salovey and Mayer 1990:187). Seminal work on general intelligence by
Spearman (1904) recognised intelligence to extend beyond academic intelligence alone. Intelligence refers to the “capacity to learn and process information” (Smith and Sadler-Smith, 2006:91), the ability to think rationally, to reason, to act purposefully and to deal effectively with the environment. Thus, intelligence can be understood to be a broad set of abilities that is not limited to academic abilities alone, but also encompasses abstract, visual, spatial, social and creative abilities. Leadership involves the ability to generate ideas, gather information, analyse the ideas and information to reach a decision, decide on the best way to communicate decisions to others, and the ability to work well with others. Thus, effective leadership requires a broad range of abilities and depends on more than academic intelligence alone as conceptualizing intelligence as solely academic is restrictive (Sternberg and Hedlund, 2002; Locke, 2005).

Intelligence needs to be understood according to its multiple, independent components. While Hampshire et al. (2012) argue that intelligence comprises multiple and independent components, research has shown that these components are inter-related and therefore interdependent. Different deconstructions of intelligence are presented in the literature. Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences defines intelligence as “the ability to solve a problem or to fashion a product which is valued in one or more cultural settings” (Gardner, 1987: 25). He argues that there are multiple intelligences that allow the solution of different problems. In this way, intelligence is understood from the view of problem solution, that is, the intelligence required to solve a particular problem. The theory of multiple intelligences deconstructs intelligence into seven main forms: musical intelligence, linguistic intelligence, spatial intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, bodily-
kinaesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence. However, while components of this theory have been explored in the literature, Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences as a whole has not been empirically validated in the literature. More recently, intelligence is argued to be deconstructed into other forms, such as analytical intelligence, creative intelligence, emotional intelligence, social intelligence, moral intelligence and practical intelligence, which are not included in Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences (Sternberg, 1988; Locke, 2005; Kutz, 2008; Baum and Bird, 2010; Green et al., 2005; Gardner, 1987; Gardner, 1983; Sternberg, 2000; Spearman, 1904; Smith and Sadler-Smith, 2006; Hampshire et al., 2012).

While the deconstruction of intelligence into different types provides a way to understand the range of human abilities, it is important to recognize the interrelationships and correlations between these intelligences. By focusing solely on aspects of intelligence, theories of intelligence limit the inter-relation and correlation between the different types of intelligence. As an example, while it is important to understand the types of intelligences drawn upon in the leadership process, it is the recognition of the inter-relationships between the intelligences that provides a holistic perspective. For example, the leadership process of communicating appropriately with others requires knowledge about one’s audience, the content of the communication as well as the manner of communication (Sternberg and Hedlund, 2002; Salovey and Mayer, 1990).

Sternberg (1988) proposed the triarchic theory of intelligence as an alternative conceptualisation of intelligence. It argues that there are other facets of human ability
that contribute to effective leadership. The triarchic theory integrates the abilities required for an individual to function successfully in his/her environment. The theory argues that intelligence comprises three main parts: analytical intelligence, creative intelligence and practical intelligence. The triarchic theory does not indicate emotional intelligence as a main part of successful intelligence, although emotional intelligence is argued to be an important part of practical intelligence. Emotional intelligence is discussed later in the chapter. Individuals that possess the three intelligences, i.e. analytical, creative and practical, are said to have successful intelligence. That is, the intelligence required for success in life, where success is defined as the ability for an individual to adapt to, shape and select an environment in order to accomplish one’s goals. Adaptation to an environment refers to how the individual adapts behaviour to achieve a higher level of fit with the environment. For example, an individual on secondment to another country may adapt behaviour according to the cultural norms, e.g. deferring to elders in the country, in order to fit better with the environment. Shaping of an environment refers to the strategy used when adaptation is not adequate, where the individual seeks to change the environment to fit him/her. Selection of an environment occurs when an individual leaves one environment for another, in order to increase the level of fit with the environment, and is the recourse used when adaptation and/or shaping have not been successful in aligning the individual with the environment (Sternberg, 2004; Sternberg and Hedlund, 2002; Sternberg, 1988).

Sternberg’s theory of successful intelligence provides an integrative conceptualisation of intelligence. It has been empirically validated as a whole in the literature and thus, provides a useful lens through which intelligence is conceptualised in this study.
(Baum and Bird, 2010). The figure below provides a diagrammatic representation of Sternberg’s theory of successful intelligence.

![Diagram of Successful Intelligence](image)

Figure 3-1: The components of successful intelligence

Analytical intelligence has been discussed earlier in the chapter. Creative intelligence is the second component of successful intelligence. This is the ability to generate novel and high quality ideas. In organizations, creative intelligence can take different forms, i.e. where ideas that have been used in other scenarios are applied into new scenarios, redefining problems to enable the generation of new ideas, providing a new direction for an organization and the ability to synthesise distinct and seemingly unrelated ideas into an integrated form. While the ability to generate novel ideas is important, the ability to generate ideas is not sufficient for effective leadership. The ideas generated have to be appraised and analysed to ensure that the ideas are appropriate for the requirements of the organization. This requires analytical ability.
and highlights the correlated relationship between intelligences, in this case, creative and analytical intelligences (Sternberg, Kaufman and Pretz, 2003; Sternberg, 2007).

**Practical Intelligence**

Practical intelligence is the third component of the triarchic theory of intelligence. Successful intelligent behaviour is exhibited when the different intelligences are working together, as different intelligences are required in different amounts at various times. Thus, individuals require the ability to select, control and monitor the responses to different decision-making scenarios. That is, the ability to know what to do, when to do it and how to do it. Practical intelligence is the ability to adapt behaviour to the requirements of the environment (Sternberg and Hedlund, 2002, Smith and Sadler-Smith, 2006).

The practical intelligence approach has been criticised in the literature for its conceptualisation of general intelligence (“g”) as academic intelligence alone, which shrinks “the apparent generality of general intelligence” (Gottfredson, 2003:350), as g does not refer to “only broad human ability” (Gottfredson, 2003:350), but to “the most general ability” (Gottfredson, 2003:350), that can be used to learn and solve problems and is more than academic intelligence alone (Gottfredson, 2003). However, general intelligence as a term refers largely to academic intelligence and does not encompass the broad spectrum of intellectual ability. Further, the approach has been criticized for “tapping into the popular preference for an egalitarian plurality of intelligences [where] everybody can be smart in some way” (Gottfredson 2003a: 393). Practical intelligence involves the ability to select, shape or adapt to the
environment in order to achieve desired goals. Thus, practical intelligence refers to an individual’s ability to know what to do, when to do it and how to do it. The key term in practical intelligence is knowing, and practical intelligence is geared towards the ability to solve practical problems. Practical problems in this case are problems that are unformulated, have multiple possible solutions and are required for the attainment of one’s goals. In this regard, practical problems are different from academic problems, as academic problems tend to be well formulated and have one method for arriving at an answer. As such, an individual who is able to solve academic problems may not be able to solve practical ones (Wagner and Sternberg, 1987; Sternberg, 2000).

In continuation with the description provided in the previous section, where creative intelligence is required to generate new ideas and analytical intelligence is required to appraise these ideas, practical intelligence is required to know how, when and what to implement. It involves knowledge about how best to pursue the implementation of the ideas, as well as how to convince others of the necessity and applicability of the ideas, together with the consideration of the short and long term impacts of these ideas on the team, organization and industry.

**Emotional Intelligence**

This section presents the literature on emotional intelligence, an aspect of practical intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the ability to relate with people and communicate ideas and goals to others. Emotional intelligence is an aspect of practical intelligence, as knowledge about what to do and how to do it requires that
individuals are able to relate with others and communicate effectively with them (Goleman, 1995; Salovey and Mayer, 1990)

Leadership does not occur in a vacuum; rather the leader must interact with other people. Social intelligence is the ability to understand and manage oneself and others. Salovey and Mayer (1990) argue that emotional intelligence is a subset of social intelligence as these interactions are emotion-laden as leaders must perceive the emotions of others, regulate their own emotions, reach out to other people’s emotions and enable feelings of trust and recognition. Emotional intelligence is required for the creation of strong relationships with clients, employees and the organization. As the airline industry is a people-oriented services industry and leaders must be able to relate effectively with diverse audiences, this heightens the importance of emotional intelligence. However, emotional intelligence has been criticised for not being a valid concept, as emotions “are not tools of knowledge” (Locke, 2005: 427), but what is called emotional intelligence refers to the ability to be able to apply intelligent behaviour or reason to the use of emotions. Locke (2005) argues that this refers to general intelligence. In addition, studies of emotional intelligence have been criticised for having measurement issues and producing disappointing results, which are not useful for understanding leadership behaviour (Antonakis, Ashkanasy and Dasborough, 2009; Locke, 2005; Newman, 2008; Sternberg, 2008; Thorndike and Thorndike, 1920; Epstein and Meier, 1989).
3.3 The Practical Intelligence Approach

The first part of this chapter provided a link between this chapter and Chapter two. It argued for a broader conceptualisation of intelligence to incorporate other types of abilities beyond analytical intelligence, and presented the theory of successful intelligence, explaining the different components of successful intelligence. This section presents the argument for the practical intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour.

The practical intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour focuses on the “practical, problem-solving abilities of leaders” (Antonakis et al., 2004:10). As such, the approach is a refinement of the traits-based theory of leadership as it explores the extent to which the disposition to learn and to lead is a trait. The practical intelligence approach is useful to understanding leadership behaviour, as it provides a synthesis of the main leadership theories: trait, situational and transformational theories of leadership (Mumford et al., 2000; Marshall-Mies et al., 2000; Kroeck et al., 2004; Sternberg, 1988).

The situation-context specific theory of leadership explained the importance of context in understanding leadership behaviour. The practical intelligence approach acknowledges the importance of understanding the situation so as to be able to engage in effective decision-making process. It also extends the situation-contingent theory by incorporating the complexity of the environment and the context in which leadership behaviour attempts to solve practical problems. The practical intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour is focused on understanding the
strategies that leaders use to solve their problems and meet their goals. In other words, the approach is focused on understanding the strategies that are used to solve practical problems.

The strategies for solving practical problems depend on the individual, familiarity with the context in which the problem has arisen and the environment. The nature of practical problems depends firstly on the individual, as to the individual’s definition and interpretation of the problem. This means that the strategies for solving the same practical problem may differ according to the individuals. The strategies for solving practical problems also depend on the individual’s familiarity with context. Individuals with more familiarity or experience with the context can adopt different problem-solving strategies than individuals who are less familiar with the context. Yet it is unclear whether this difference in strategies equates to better practical problem-solving skills. However, it can be argued that problem-solving abilities differ according to the individuals and increases with experience (Sternberg 2000).

Goodall and Pogrebna (2012) present a compelling argument for the importance of experience in problem solving, where experience refers to the amount of time spent in the industry or the amount of knowledge and understanding about the core nature of the business of the organization that a leader possesses. However, the amount of experience alone does not necessarily lead to better problem-solving abilities. Rather it is what the leader extracts from his/her experience that can contribute to better problem-solving abilities. In addition, practical problems also depend on the environment, as this affects the strategy that may be adopted to solve a problem; for
example, there may be some cultural or organizational factors that influence the strategy that is adopted to solve a practical problem (Sternberg, 2000).

It can be seen that the strategies for solving practical problems interact with the environment, the context and the individual, and strategies adopted may be vary depending on the interpretation of the individuals. Thus, practical intelligence is the ability to learn from experience and to apply experience-based knowledge to solve problems to meet the goals of attaining better fit with the environment through adaptation of behaviour, shaping of environment or selection of a new environment. Thus, practical intelligence is required to solve practical problems (Cianciolo et al., 2004; Sternberg, 2000; Wagner and Sternberg 1987; Sternberg et al., 2000).

“Practical intelligence is a core component of leadership” (Sternberg, 2008:366). This is because “practical intelligence is used to implement the solutions and to convince
others that one's solutions are, indeed, good ones that they should heed” (Sternberg, 2008: 361). Practically intelligent leadership is “leadership that is able to decide on solutions” and “convince or influence others” of these solutions and the course of actions to take “to achieve the goals” (Sternberg, 2008: 365). Practically intelligent leaders are defined as those who are able to “use their intelligence to adapt to, shape and select environments … in order to meet the demands of changing tasks and situations” (Sternberg, 2008:369). Practically intelligent leaders are able to identify with their followers, communicate with them and are able to work with followers to implement set objectives. Conversely, leaders fail when they are unable to provide followers with a coherent story, or are unable to communicate with followers. Leadership is also ineffective where goals are not implemented successfully. As such, leaders who are practically intelligent can be effective, as they are able to adapt to, shape and select their environments, so as to be able to meet the changing demands of the tasks and situations (Sternberg, 2008).

In most organizations, leadership fails not because those in position of leadership do not know what to do, but because they have not applied what they know in the appropriate way for the solution of the problem. Leaders in organizations such as the airline industry face challenges of operating in a complex, fast-changing and pressured environment. This form of environment presents practical problems in the sense that the problems are unformulated, have multiple possible solutions and multiple methods to achieving the solutions, while the effective solution of the problems are important to the attainment of the individual’s goals. In organizations, leaders are exposed to several experiences. While leadership research has made advancements in understanding the complex phenomenon of leadership, it has not
been able to “explain the cognitive skills and knowledge that leaders use to determine what to do in a given situation and learn from their experiences” (Cianciolo et al., 2004:212; Sternberg, 2007; Sternberg et al., 1995).

Understanding leadership in complex and rapidly changing organizations, such as the organizations in the airline industry, requires an approach that supplements existing leadership theories by identifying and describing the cognitive skills that leaders use in acquiring and applying knowledge that has been acquired from experience. Contextual intelligence has been put forward as an approach for understanding leadership behaviour in dynamic environments. This is because dynamic environments are fluid in nature, multi-faceted and with various stakeholders, whose interests, which may be diverging and sometimes competing, have to be taken into account. In order to be effective leaders, leaders have to be able to diagnose the variables in their environment and act quickly and appropriately to the demands of these variables. This is an individual skill. As such, contextual intelligence requires the ability for the leader to understand the environment, be aware of the circumstances and thereafter adjust behaviour to be able to make decisions and influence others. In this regard, the leader has to have an intuitive understanding of past events, an awareness of present variables that affect the context, as well as the awareness of what the preferred future ought to be, in other words, the individual’s goal(s) (Kutz, 2008).

Contextual intelligence is defined as the ability to adjust behaviour to the requirements of the environment. Context refers to the “external, internal, interpersonal and intrapersonal factors that contribute to the uniqueness of each
situation and circumstance”, while intelligence is defined in this approach as “the ability to transform data into useful information, information into knowledge, then most importantly assimilate that knowledge into practice” (Kutz, 2008: 20). The proponents of the approach argue that experience plays an important part in contextual intelligence, as the leader has to be able to extract knowledge from different experiences. However, experience in this approach does not refer to the length of time, but an ability to learn from experience. In addition, contextual intelligence, like the other deconstructions of intelligence, is not specific to industries or job roles, but rather to the individual. Furthermore, contextual intelligence is focused not on the quantity of knowledge or sources of knowledge alone, but rather more importance is placed on the ability to be able to extract knowledge from experience.

Thus, individuals with a high level of contextual intelligence are those that are able to extract significant knowledge from their environment. In this way, the approach is similar to the practical intelligence approach, as it highlights the importance of learning from experience and adapting behaviour to an environment. However, the contextual intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour is an emerging construct and is not as established in the literature as the practical intelligence approach. The practical intelligence approach extends the arguments of contextual intelligence, and proffers a method for extracting knowledge that is gained from experience. That is the Tacit Knowledge Framework, which is the key component of this research study (Kutz, 2008).
The approach is particularly useful in dynamic environments, where leaders are required to be able to adapt quickly due to the rapidly changing nature of their environment. Thus, contextual intelligence might be a key component in effective leadership behaviour. While the focus on the context, in which the individual operates, may appear to be similar to the situation-contingent approach to understanding leadership behaviour, the practically intelligent approach is different from the modern contingency theories of leadership in that it does not focus on the behaviours of effective leadership in certain situations. Rather, it focuses on the “cognitive processes and knowledge that allows leaders to adjust their style flexibly to particular problem situations” (Cianciolo et al., 2004:215). This is because individual intellectual capabilities cannot be considered differently from the environment in which the individuals perform. Therefore, identifying practical intelligence in individuals requires the identification of a person who has “through experience gained acute sensitivity to the important information in a given situation and the knowledge of what to do in response to this information” (Cianciolo et al., 2004:215). Thus, effective leadership requires practical intelligence and practical intelligence can be a useful approach to understanding leadership behaviour.

3.4 Tacit Knowledge and Practical Intelligence

Tacit knowledge is an important component of practical intelligence. Tacit knowledge refers to “knowledge that is bound up in the activity and effort that produced it” (Horvath, 1999: ix). Thus, the knowledge possesses an unarticulated quality and the individual must extract important lessons from experience. However, for knowledge to be referred to as tacit, it should contain information that cannot be
articulated easily, for example, knowledge of how to ride a bicycle. Tacit knowledge is also referred to as experience-based knowledge and it can “foster self-awareness and contextual sensitivity” (Sternberg 1999:232). One understanding of tacit knowledge argues that all knowledge began as tacit, thus, the core of all knowledge is tacit, and as such tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge are two dimensions of knowledge. However, Nonaka et al. (1996) argue that there are two types of knowledge, tacit and explicit. Thus, tacit knowledge is different from explicit knowledge (Sternberg et al. 2000, Sternberg, 1999; Horvath, 1999).

Tacit knowledge is knowledge that is acquired from implicit learning where the individual is not taught in the acquisition of tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is also argued to be knowledge that “people don’t know they have and/or find difficult to articulate” (Hedlund et al. 1998) which can be gained either from formal or informal environments. While there is dissent in the tacit knowledge literature as to the definition of tacit knowledge, there is some consensus that explicit knowledge may contain some tacit quality; for example, knowledge about how to apply explicit knowledge in a certain way, to attain certain goals (Polanyi, 1967; Sternberg and Hedlund, 2002).

Tacit knowledge is acquired through an individual’s interactions with the social environment, as such tacit knowledge is instrumental in attaining goals; for example, an individual’s knowledge about the preferences of a client, gained through interaction with the client, has a tacit dimension, and the individual has a distinct advantage to other colleagues who have not interacted with the client to the same extent. However, once other colleagues know about the preferences of the client, the
knowledge ceases to be tacit. Thus, tacit knowledge can be made explicit by sharing or articulating such knowledge with others. Yet, this articulation is difficult, as tacit knowledge is embedded in individuals, and people know more than they can tell. In addition, tacit knowledge possesses a time-limited quality, as it can become explicit or out-of-date, because the demands of the organization, as well as experiences and the needs of the individual regarding the environment change. Thus, to remain relevant, tacit knowledge has to be constantly updated. As such, tacit knowledge is not static. For example, the tacit knowledge required for leadership is different from tacit knowledge that is required for followership, and as individuals change roles through an organization, they will need to learn new tacit knowledge as their role changes within the organization (Sternberg et al. 2000, Sternberg, 1999; Horvath, 1999).

Much of the knowledge that contributes value in an organization and increases an organization’s competitive edge, and therefore success, is argued to be tacit. This is because such knowledge is context-dependent, as for example knowledge about clients’ preferences. This knowledge may be lost if it is not captured. Therefore, it is important to identify and capture tacit knowledge that members of the organizations possess. Tacit knowledge can refer to knowledge possessed by members of an organization where the sum of knowledge is greater than the parts. This means that no one member possesses all of the knowledge in the group. Tacit knowledge is also used to refer to knowledge about how sequences should run, where the sequences are “compiled into routines or procedures that run without conscious attention” (Hedlund et al., 1998:2). This presents the need for the identification and extraction of tacit knowledge in organizations (Cimino, 1999; Sternberg, 2000).
Within an organization, there are hierarchical differences in the possession and utilisation of tacit knowledge, with novices tending to rely on standardized procedures. However, if they do know the questions to ask, they may be unable to follow correctly the course of action to take from the information that they have received, because they do not have the experiences required for them to acquire tacit knowledge. As such, experience provides opportunities to acquire tacit knowledge, and also provides context for acquiring knowledge. For knowledge to be tacit, it has to have be “grounded in personal experience, intimately related to action and not well supported by formal training and doctrine”. (Hedlund et al., 1998: 14). The criterion that knowledge should be grounded in personal experience refers to knowledge that is gained from first-hand experience or knowledge from direct observation. That is, knowledge from own-experience or direct observation of another individual, where the observation also forms a part of the experience. The criterion that the knowledge should be intimately related to action is not clear, as some tacit knowledge in leadership may not necessarily be related to action, as for example reflection, because the tacit knowledge in this case may relate to not taking a course of action (Hedlund et al., 1998; Wagner and Sternberg, 1987; Wagner and Sternberg, 1985; Sternberg and Hedlund, 2002; Sternberg and Horvath, 1999; Sternberg, 2000; Sternberg, 1999).

There are aspects of applying tacit knowledge that are difficult. The risk is in “improperly rendering tacit knowledge when it is needed for problem-solving and decision-making” (Sternberg, 1999: 235). This occurs when inadequate tacit knowledge is used in decision-making, as in the case of a novice. However, this can also occur when there is excessive tacit knowledge, such that various solutions may
be applicable in a situation, resulting in confusion about which tacit knowledge to apply, with the risk that tacit knowledge is not properly applied and problems are not solved effectively. Improperly rendered, tacit knowledge can be conservative when change is required. Furthermore, applying tacit knowledge can be difficult where organizations and the environment are resistant to change. Thus, while the possession of tacit knowledge is an important component of practical intelligence, possessing tacit knowledge is not enough. Rather, it is the appropriate application of tacit knowledge to solve problems and make decisions effectively that should constitute practical intelligence. In this regard, there are other parts of knowledge that require the ability of the individual to apply the appropriate form of tacit knowledge as tacit knowledge interacts with other parts of knowledge. There may be certain patterns of circumstances in an environment that requires a certain tacit knowledge to be deployed in certain circumstances and people with expertise are expected to have a better sense of what tacit knowledge to apply in a given situation, fitting into a pattern. The efficacy of tacit knowledge is dependent on its acquisition and effective usage. Utilising tacit knowledge is rarely done in isolation and needs to take account of other people and anticipate reactions provoked by applying that knowledge (Sternberg, 1999; McAdam, Mason and McCrory, 2007; Polanyi, 1967; Cimino, 1999; Sternberg, 1999; Ulmer, 1999).

In organizations, leaders know more than they can tell and, in some cases, more than they are encouraged to tell. Their stories are important for understanding the development of expertise. Leadership involves interaction within and outside the organization and involves much more than complex decision-making. It also involves the creative function a high sense of responsibility and an ability to convict personnel
‘sincerely’, understanding the informal organization that underlies all formal organizations, while being able to sense insincerity quickly. By looking at the different relationships between the different intelligences and how they enact a process of influencing others, practical intelligence provides a process ontology that contributes new understandings of how leadership activities emerge within particular contexts, particularly to learn how institutionalized notions of leadership are constructed in these activities (Hosking, 1997; Crevani et al., 2010).

The practical intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour provides a useful approach for the exploration of the acquisition of tacit knowledge and its application in leadership decisions. The approach is unique, as it views leadership behaviour as a function of environmental demands and the intellectual capability of leaders. It therefore presents a way to explain the behaviours of leaders in a particular context. As such, the approach links the demands of leadership to the environment and demystifies the leader by understanding how s/he knows what to do in different situations (Cianciolo et al., 2004).

3.5 The Tacit Knowledge Framework

Tacit knowledge is the main aspect of practical intelligence, and empirical work has used the Tacit Knowledge Framework as a way of understanding practical intelligence in the military, academic psychology, bank management, sales and manufacturing. This highlights its established empirical nature and usefulness, and presents the rationale for using the Tacit Knowledge Framework in this study as a way to understand leadership behaviour of airline leaders. Extant literature reveals
that tacit knowledge can be extracted from individuals through interviews, observation and tests (Sternberg et al., 1995; Gottfredson, 2003a; Gottfredson, 2003b; Hedlund et al., 2003; Wagner and Sternberg, 1987, Baum et al., 2011, Hedlund et al., 1998).

Tacit knowledge has been used in measurements of general intelligence. However, these measurements are “domain-general” (Gottfredson 2003a: 355) and do not capture the “domain-specific” (Gottfredson 2003a: 355) knowledge, which the Tacit Knowledge Framework for identifying and measuring practical intelligence attempts to do. Yet, Sternberg argues that the Tacit Knowledge Framework identifies both domain-specific and domain-general knowledge, and that practical intelligence is a measure of abilities that result in success in life and as such is useful for understanding leadership behaviour (Sternberg, 2003).

Thus, practically intelligent behaviour includes the utilisation of knowledge gained from experience, which could be tacit, but may also include some explicit knowledge. Emotional intelligence, a component of practical intelligence may also have a tacit quality. This means that practical intelligent behaviour, in this case practical intelligent leadership, refers to the ability to utilise knowledge gained from experience to attain set goals of adapting to, shaping or selecting an environment. The emotional intelligence plays an important part in this behaviour, as the leader has to be able to manage him/herself, as well as communicate and interact effectively with others. Thus, practically intelligent leadership can be seen as the successful utilisation of knowledge (tacit or explicit) with emotional intelligence to shape, adapt to or select an environment.
The figure above presents a model for understanding practical intelligence gained from the literature. The ellipse refers to practical intelligence, which incorporates tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge and emotional intelligence. However, it is possible that understanding practical intelligence for airline leaders might incorporate other components in addition to explicit knowledge, emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge. Therefore, a revised model is presented below.
The figure above presents a revised model for understanding practical intelligence showing that there might be other components of practical intelligence. It is shown to link with the other components as the components of practical intelligence are assumed to be interdependent and therefore linked.

The practical intelligence approach is one of the frameworks that have been put forward to deepen the understanding of leadership. However, the framework has been criticized for creating multiple intelligences and introducing these intelligences as a new construct for understanding behaviour. Schmidt and Hunter (1993) argue that it is not a new construct, but a modified approach of explaining job knowledge. However, they admit that the practical intelligence approach presents consistent results with other research findings on job knowledge, which increases with experience. Yet, job knowledge is different from leadership. Knowing more about a
job does not mean that an individual is able to lead others well. This is further evidence of the validity of the Tacit Knowledge Framework as an important tool for extracting tacit knowledge and identifying practical intelligence (Schmidt, Hunter 1993; Hogan et al., 1994).

Leadership requires the ability to draw from a broad base of knowledge that can be acquired either through formal training or from experience, as the requirements of leadership are not fixed, rigid or static. Further, dynamic industries, such as the airline industry, require an individual in a leadership position to be able to analyse decisions and communicate them appropriately to the individuals related within the cultural context in which s/he operates. Practically intelligent leadership is also the ability to decide the form of leadership that is required. For example, transactional leadership is required when the leader needs to adapt or modify behaviour according to the environment, while transformational leadership is required where a shaping of the environment is needed.

Existing research on leadership has been criticized for focusing disproportionately on the leader and not on the group interactions. Furthermore, leadership studies have been criticised for the dominant physicalist approach, where the leader is treated as an entity, leadership as the unbounded acts of the leader and contexts as conditions that are independent of the cognitive and social processes of the respondents. A holistic view of leadership allows leaders to address and understand issues within organizations that enable them to resolve the issues better and lead more effectively. It also provides a contextual understanding of how short and long term organizational objectives can be actualised (Fox and Spector, 2000; Parry and Bryman, 2006; Sims,
Leadership studies have emphasized the grandiose and ignored the daily interaction of leadership, which constitutes an important aspect of leadership behaviour. However, a cybernetic non-linear view of leadership can provide a deeper understanding of leadership behaviour as opposed to the linear conceptions of leadership provided by theories, such as the trait theory, situational theory and transactional theory. A cybernetic view in leadership and management acknowledges the complexity in dynamic situations, in particular, situations that are hard to control, to observe and to predict. The acknowledgement of the complexity of dynamism situations and the appreciation of the relationship between variables, seen as not solely from a causal start-point, can contribute to a more germane understanding of leadership behaviour. The practical intelligence framework provides an interdisciplinary way to understand leadership, as it combines psychology, neuroscience and management theories (Hunt, 2004; Strank, 1983; Crevani et al., 2010).

Given the apparent applicability of the practical intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour, the next point is to consider the extent to which the practical intelligence approach can be utilised in understanding the behaviour of airline leaders. It is argued that an individual with a high degree of practical intelligence will develop leadership expertise more quickly than an individual with a lower level of practical intelligence, where expertise refers to the ability to acquire knowledge and use knowledge acquired from experience effectively to solve problems. Thus, a practically intelligent leader should be an effective leader, as s/he
will be able to acquire knowledge and utilise such knowledge to make decisions and solve problems. The challenge is in how this knowledge that has not been explicitly taught can be identified. This is because what leaders know is different from “what leaders are capable of”, or what “they [leaders] are like” (Horvath, Williams et al. 1994:34; Cianciolo et al., 2004).

Sternberg and his colleagues, in their work on military leadership, found that the military literature is more focused on the leader knowledge than is the case in civilian research literature, as due to the nature of military work, practical knowledge about what to do in certain environments are outlined. As such, this work sees to bridge the gap in academia by contributing to non-military research about tacit knowledge (Horvath et al., 1994).

As discussed earlier in the chapter, the possession of tacit knowledge is also argued to provide leaders with a competitive edge, where those who possess more tacit knowledge are more effective leaders. As such, tacit knowledge is the basis for effective leadership, because leaders need to, sometimes quickly, decide on a course of action and where information is incomplete, intuition is used to decide the course of action. In addition, it is argued that a practically intelligent person is able to acquire tacit knowledge more readily than others and should be able to apply such knowledge appropriately in new situations. Therefore, a practically intelligent leader is also able to acquire knowledge (both tacit and explicit) and apply this knowledge to solve problems and make decisions (Argyris, 1999: 123; Hatsopoulos and Hatsopoulos, 1999; Cianciolo et al., 2004).
Knowledge about what is not said can be as important, if not more important, as what is said. This is because it may impact on how followers are motivated and influenced. Thus, emotional intelligence can also comprise tacit knowledge and can be measured using the Tacit Knowledge Framework, as most emotional communications are made through non-verbal channels, with emotions possibly being expressed verbally and including the ability to introspect and express them (Fox and Spector, 2000; Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Sternberg 2000).

The use of the Tacit Knowledge Framework to analyse leadership behaviour allows the research questions to be answered, as it examines the experiential knowledge that influences intrapersonal, inter-personal and organizational levels of leadership behaviour. The Tacit Knowledge Framework is able to identify what leaders have learnt about leadership from their experience as leaders. It has been used in previous context-based studies of leadership behaviour, is useful for understanding practical intelligence, which is applicable for understanding behaviour in dynamic environments (Sternberg, 2000; Crossan et al., 2008; Hedlund et al., 1998).

An experience is deemed to be tacit if the knowledge was acquired with little environmental support, was acquired from the participant’s own experience and is relevant to the attainment of own goals. Thus, tacit knowledge is defined as knowledge learned from experience. Tacit knowledge increases with work experience, although this does not mean that an individual with extensive work experience will have a high level of tacit knowledge. Rather, it is not the level of experience that matters, but what is learnt from experience and how the knowledge is utilised. The Tacit Knowledge Framework is useful for identifying tacit knowledge in
leaders and (Horvath et al. 1994) argue that this knowledge is associated with leadership success and able to identify knowledge that is required for success, understanding leadership behaviour as it provides knowledge about what airline leaders know about leadership, a topic that is under-researched in airline studies (Hedlund et al., 1998, Bass, 1990; Sternberg, 2000).

Table 3.1: Preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework (adapted from Sternberg, 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Sub-categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal tacit knowledge</td>
<td>Managing Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeking Challenges and Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-personal tacit knowledge</td>
<td>Influencing others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational tacit knowledge</td>
<td>Solving organizational problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows the main categories and sub-categories for the Tacit Knowledge Framework developed by Sternberg. The preliminary framework applies the three main categories used in the Tacit Knowledge Framework for military leadership and the Tacit Knowledge Framework for managerial success.

The categories of the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework are discussed below:

**Intrapersonal tacit knowledge**

The intrapersonal category, presents the self as an important category in leadership behaviour. The intrapersonal level is divided into two sub-categories: knowledge about managing the self and seeking challenges and control. The sub-category
“managing oneself” is focused on how a leader is able to deal with his/herself and manage his/herself, time and priorities, taking initiative. The second sub-category in the intrapersonal tacit knowledge category is “seeking challenges and control” and this sub-category refers to knowledge about how to take initiative, responsibility, taking risks and seeking challenges (Hedlund et al., 2003; Horvath et al., 1994; Sternberg, 2000).

Interpersonal tacit knowledge

Tacit knowledge is classified as interpersonal where it is related to the knowledge used in dealing with others at an individual level. Thus, interpersonal tacit knowledge refers to knowledge about how to influence others and this includes knowledge about how to motivate and inspire others, discipline, direct and develop others. Tacit knowledge about learning from others relates to knowledge about how to be receptive to knowledge from others and also how a leader is able to learn from others (Hedlund et al., 2003; Horvath et al., 1994; Sternberg, 2000).

Organizational tacit knowledge

The category “organizational tacit knowledge” refers to the knowledge that is used in solving organizational problems, for example, managing organizational culture, developing systems in the organization for employees, stakeholders and customers (Hedlund et al., 2003; Horvath et al., 1994; Sternberg, 2000).

Extant literature on military leadership and managerial behaviour was used to develop the sub-categories in earlier work on identifying tacit knowledge as a way to
understand the practical intelligence of military leaders (see Hedlund et al., 2003 and Sternberg, 2000). In the same vein, this research used existing literature on leadership behaviour to develop the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework used in this research. The preparation of a preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework is a useful starting point for the extraction of the tacit knowledge of leaders. The framework has utilised the categories of the Tacit Knowledge Framework prepared by Sternberg as a tool to understand leadership behaviour. The framework is relevant as the categories intrapersonal, interpersonal and organizational levels of tacit knowledge align with the definitions of leadership, and discussions provided for effective leadership, presented in chapter two. To recap briefly, leadership refers to the ability to influence others, which in the airline industry relates to the ability to influence others for the achievement of an organization’s goals. As such, a quasi-grounded theory approach was utilised, using the main categories of the existing Tacit Knowledge Framework to develop the Tacit Knowledge Framework for understanding leadership behaviour in the airline industry.

There is evidence that face-to-face interviews provide a rich source of collecting tacit knowledge. This is because interviews provide opportunities for leaders to share insights and stories from their experiences. In this way, tacit knowledge for success in airline leadership can be extracted and used for the development of the tacit knowledge inventory for airline leaders from the themes that emerge from the data. The preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework served as an initial guide in the classification of tacit knowledge extracted from airline leaders. However, the analyses of the data collected in some cases, yielded new categories or modified the existing categories in the Tacit Knowledge Framework for airline leaders. The next
chapters on methodology and methods explain the methodological approach of the research and the design of the research instrument (Horvath et al., 1994).

3.6 Conclusion
The chapter has presented an argument for the deconstruction of intelligence in a bid to appreciate the abilities required for successful behaviour. Practical intelligence, a component of successful intelligence, was presented as an important approach for understanding leadership behaviour. Following this, tacit knowledge, the main component of practical intelligence, was presented. This presentation is important as the identification of tacit knowledge is useful for understanding practical intelligence of leaders, and therefore, in understanding leadership behaviour. The preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework that guided the research instrument and the analyses of the data was also presented in this chapter.

Tacit Knowledge Framework acknowledges the relative and contextual nature of leadership behaviour and is therefore useful for understanding effective leadership. As such, the practical intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour, using the Tacit Knowledge Framework provides a useful construct for identifying the tacit knowledge and therefore, the practical intelligence of airline leaders.
Chapter Four

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Research is an inquiry process, a systematic investigation of a phenomenon. The research methodology covers the theoretical assumptions that underpin how the research problem is systematically solved. The purpose of this research is to understand elite leadership behaviour in the context of the airline industry. In a research study, data is collected, analysed and interpreted, so as to understand a phenomenon. Data can be collected, analysed and interpreted in a myriad of ways, and it is important to clarify the methodological assumptions that guide how a research problem is systematically solved in a research study (Kothari, 2009; Guba and Lincoln, 1994a).

A researcher’s epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions underpin their research. By discussing this, a researcher puts forward their position of how they see the world and their understanding of how knowledge is formed. This chapter presents the methodology of this research study and explains the epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions that guided the design of the research instrument. The research instrument is discussed and presented in chapter five.

4.2 Research Methodology for Leadership Studies

Understanding leadership research is a form of social inquiry. This is because the practical activities of collecting and interpreting data to answer the research questions
are able to transform the understanding of what constitutes knowledge and how such
knowledge is to be justified. Therefore, social inquiry is a process of thinking and
acting, of theory and of practice, a “continuous process of critical reflection and
transformation” (Schwandt, 2000:191).

A research paradigm guides the way in which knowledge is studied and interpreted,
while the choice of an inquiry paradigm is dependent on the research aim and
objectives. The inquiry paradigm is important to a research as it is the theoretical
framework that summarises and clarifies the epistemology, ontology and axiology of
the research and the inquiry paradigm also guides the approach of data collection and
analysis (Mackenzie and Knipe 2006; Saunders et al., 2009)

There are two main research inquiry paradigms. These are the qualitative and
quantitative inquiry paradigms. Quantitative inquiry is applicable to phenomena that
can be expressed in terms of quantity, where data is generated in a quantitative form
and is further subjected to what Schwandt (2009:191) terms as “rigorous quantitative
analysis in a formal and rigid fashion.” Qualitative inquiry on the other hand, is
concerned with the understanding of human behaviour, to discover the underlying
motives and desires of human behaviour (Schwandt, 2000).

Traditionally, quantitative inquiry, also known as the scientific method, was viewed
as the only way through which knowledge could be formed. As such, early leadership
studies were guided by the quantitative approach and, in the past 100 years,
leadership studies have been dominated by quantitative methods mainly through the
use of self-administered questionnaires, “reflecting the epistemological orientation of
many leadership researchers”, a commitment to positivism and a natural science research model (Bryman, 2011:15). The dichotomy in the chosen methodology for leadership studies is also geographical. For example, there is a difference in research methods used when comparing the North American ‘Leadership Quarterly’ journal with the Europe-Based ‘Leadership’. While ‘Leadership Quarterly’ had 64% of articles with data collected using quantitative methods, ‘Leadership’ had 51% of data collected from semi-structured interviewing, a qualitative research method (Bryman, 2011; Avolio et al., 2009).

Consequently, there are several debates about the appropriate research methodology for studying leadership. One of these is the debate about the advantage of quantitative research over descriptive qualitative research. Proponents of the qualitative approach to leadership studies argue that the quantitative methods used in leadership research are biased towards the exaggeration of the importance of leadership. The validity of research methods that use fixed-response questionnaires to collect data on leadership behaviour has also been questioned (Yukl, 1989).

A focus on the merit of one approach over the other suggests “a purity of method which is potentially impossible in social research” (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006: 198) as theoretical perspectives cannot be distinctly categorised as they share concerns and points of tension that cut across the different perspectives. Thus, Yukl (1989:278), suggests that “the purpose of the research should dictate the methodology”, the choice of data collection and the analysis methods to be employed. While the standards for the application of qualitative methods are not as explicit as those for quantitative methods, both methodologies have their advantages and their limitations.
The understanding of leadership is enhanced by the diversity in theoretical positions and research methods, together with the exploration of a variety of research contexts and settings, to provide radical heterogeneity in understandings of leadership. Due to this, leadership researchers have used descriptive qualitative methods that include observations, interviews and case studies (Yukl, 1989; Collinson and Grint, 2005).

The typification of research paradigms and methodologies as qualitative or quantitative is confusing in the literature. Qualitative and quantitative terms should be viewed as “adjectives for types of data and their corresponding modes of analysis, i.e. qualitative data as data that is represented through words, pictures or icons and analysed using thematic exploration; and quantitative data as data that is represented through numbers and analysed using statistics” (O'Leary, 2004:99). Qualitative research on leadership is descriptive and aims to identify common themes and behaviours, using content analysis of the behaviour of leaders. While descriptive research is “too imprecise for reaching firm conclusions about specific relationships, it provides some insights into the nature” of leadership (Yukl, 1989:273), and by so doing, contributes to the understanding of leadership behaviour (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006).

Understanding leadership requires the consideration of the contexts in which the leaders operate, who in this study are senior executives in the airline industry. These contexts are socially determined, arising through many complex arrays of physical, social and other external factors. While it is rare that a research question adheres
exclusively to a particular research philosophy, the details of this study point to the interpretive paradigm, because the interpretivist/constructivist viewpoint offers a pathway between “disciplined inquiry and artistic expression” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:x). Therefore, the paradigm for this study is the qualitative inquiry paradigm.

4.3 Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with “what is considered acceptable knowledge?” and seeks to answer the questions “What is Knowledge?” and “How do we know what is real?” The epistemology of a research study is the research philosophy and it is guided by the bigger question, “Where does knowledge come from?” The epistemology of a research study is also concerned with the quality of the knowledge gained by the research (Guba and Lincoln, 1985; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Guba and Lincoln, 1994b; Seamon, 2000).

The dominant epistemology for earlier leadership studies was positivism. This was because the earlier studies sought to establish personality traits and attribute the characteristics of effective leaders as a way to be able to measure leadership. In this way, leadership was researched by looking at “putative science of individual conduct informed by psychological and economic theory” (Case et al., 2011:242). The next section will explain the positivist and interpretivist philosophies, as well as hermeneutics, and provides the rationale for the choice of interpretivism as the epistemological assumption that undergirds this research study (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006).
Positivism

Positivism is referred to as the scientific method and is based on rationalistic philosophy. According to the positivist philosophy, the purpose of science is to “offer causal explanations of social, behavioural and physical phenomena” (Schwandt, 2000: 196). The positivist approach undertakes research in a value-free way by formulating specific hypotheses that will be tested, confirmed or refuted, where “the researcher is independent of and neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research” (Remenyi et al., 1998:33). Yet, “the decision to adopt a seemingly value-free perspective” is itself suggestive of the “existence of a certain value position” (Saunders et al., 2009:112).

However, positivism argues that scientific knowledge can be rationally reconstructed by the means of explanatory statements of theories and hypotheses, and descriptive statements by the means of observations. Positivism assumes that the social world can be studied in the same way as the natural world, and that there is a causal nature for a phenomenon. Within the positivist philosophy, O’Leary (2004:5) states that “social, cultural and historical dimensions of understanding were regarded as extra scientific and irrelevant” to the epistemological account of what genuine scientific knowledge was. Therefore, “through observation and measurement in order to predict and control the forces that surround us” (O’Leary, 2004:5), a hypothesis or theory can be tested. Genuine scientific knowledge is seen as the accurate representation of an independent reality, and the process of inquiry was carried out by a logical syntax. Positivist research is aligned with quantitative methods of data collection and data analysis. Therefore, as the inquiry paradigm for this research is qualitative, the positivist approach is not suited for this study (Schwandt, 2000; Mackenzie and
Within qualitative inquiry, there are three main epistemologies: interpretivist, hermeneutics and social-constructivism. Interpretivism became dominant in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century as a response to the dominant positivist philosophy. Within the interpretivist philosophy, social action is viewed as meaningful and different from the natural sciences. The focus of research within an interpretivist perspective is to understand the meanings that constitute action, identifying the dependence of meaning on the “context and intentions of the actor” (Schwandt, 2000: 191).

The interpretivist philosophy “emphasizes the contribution of human intention to knowledge without sacrificing the objectivity of knowledge” (Schwandt, 2000: 193). That is, it is possible to understand subjective action in an objective manner, because the researcher is able to objectify what is to be interpreted and remains “unaffected by and external to the interpretive process” (Schwandt, 2000: 194) as the researcher should be able to transcend his or her historical circumstances, so as to be able to reproduce the meaning and intention of the social actor being observed. However, the extent to which a researcher can be objective in his/her acquisition of “an inside understanding of the actors’ definitions of a situation” remains debated (Schwandt, 2000; Saunders et al., 2009).

Hermeneutics argue that understanding is neither a rule nor a procedure. Rather,
understanding is a condition of being human. In this way, Gallagher (1992:87) argues that “understanding is interpreting”, and the researcher does not have to attempt to disregard socio-historically inherited bias or prejudice in order to be able to understand social action clearly, as the traditions and prejudice that shape us as humans are not under our control and cannot therefore be set aside at will. Instead, tradition is a “living force that enters into all understanding” (Gallagher 1992:87) and shapes human behaviour and the way in which the world is understood. Consequently, tradition influences the researcher’s interpretations, as the researcher is unable to literally and metaphorically step outside of his or her own skin. By focusing on the clarification of the conditions in which understanding takes place, hermeneutics is concerned with understanding what is involved in the process of understanding (Schwandt, 2000; Gallagher, 1992).

Understanding involves the engagement with a researcher’s own standpoint, biases and prejudices, as well as the examination of these socio-historically inherited preconceptions. In this regard, the understanding of human behaviour is an existential and practical experience, produced in the dialogue that results in a growth of inner awareness and contributes to the broadening of experiences and self-awareness. As a result, hermeneutics argue that meaning is non-objectivist, but is mutually negotiated by interpretation. Therefore, in order to understand the part of the sentence or act, the inquiry must grasp the entire complex of language, beliefs and intentions (Schwandt, 2000; Gadamer, 1983).
Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is a relational theory of social meaning, in which concepts and models are invented to understand human action. This understanding of human behaviour does not happen in isolation, but “against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, and language” (Schwandt, 2000: 197), historical and sociocultural dimensions to the construction of knowledge. In this regard, social factors play a part in knowledge construction and individuals, as social actors construct knowledge actively, not passively. The active construction of knowledge takes place by individuals’ interpretations of different situations as a consequence of their own world-view. These interpretations of different world-views affect actions and also affect the relationships between social actors in an environment (Saunders et al., 2009).

Within social constructivism, language is not primarily a tool for gaining an objective knowledge of the world. Rather, language is “what the world allows us to have” (Schwandt, 2000: 198) and is a way through which social actors express and realize their way of being in the world. Therefore, social constructivism argues that the process of inquiry and knowledge production is a function of social interactions and a part of negotiations of social values and interests (Schwandt, 2000: 199) that provide an array of narratives that “welcome inhabitation” (Gergen, 1994:78).

The social constructivist philosophy provides a means by which deeper understandings of leadership behaviour can be realised. In addition, the social-constructivist philosophy encourages continually reflections on the meanings that influence human behaviour. Leadership studies exist within social and political
contexts that have shaped understandings of leadership. As such, leadership, the process of influencing others, is produced through social interactions. Since this study aims to understand the phenomenon of leadership behaviour, the social-constructivist philosophy is the main epistemological assumption of this study, which attempts to explore the subjective meanings that influence the actions of social actors in leadership positions and their interpretations of their actions. (Gergen, 1994; Case et al., 2011).

4.4 Ontology

Ontology refers to the nature of reality. It is concerned with knowing what is real and the assumptions that influence the perspective from which the nature of reality is being observed. These assumptions influence the research approach, design and consequently the methods for data collection and analysis. There are two distinct philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality: realism and idealism. Realism argues that reality exists independently of the mind and as such is external and objective; such that the researcher is independent of what is being observed. Therefore, knowledge is objective. Idealism on the other hand argues that reality is a creation of the mind. As such, reality is subjective and not external. The two distinct aspects of ontology, objectivism and subjectivism, are thus discussed in the subsequent sections (Iacono et al., 2009).

Objectivism

Objectivism argues that reality exists independently through time and can be studied unrelatedly to yield “generalized knowledge about systems, mechanisms and process”
(Cunliffe, 2011:653). Knowledge production is primarily concerned with removing the barriers between what is known to the knower and what is unknown (to the researcher), in order to arrive at the truth (Brummett, 1976:22). Objectivism therefore emphasizes the removal of personal, social and moral bias, to attain the comprehension of truth. This generalized knowledge is linear and transcends time, as time can be experienced “sequentially and universally” (Cunliffe, 2011:654). As the variables are interdependent, the knowledge produced is sequential. Therefore, objectivism views knowledge as replicable and cumulative, as researchers are able to identify its composition, structure and how it works, with “emphasis on accuracy, explanation and prediction” (Cunliffe, 2011:653-654).

Objectivism has been criticised for not accounting for the dependence of human behaviour on factors such as emotions and values. Yet these factors are important, as people give meaning to their experiences and the construction of reality is in its meaning. Meaning is not discovered, but created, as it is taken from experience and communicated with others. For example, the laws of nature are ways in which the observations of nature are represented and not nature itself. Objectivism, by not taking into account the contextual factors that affect reality, muddles the nature of human behaviour. Furthermore, Brummet (1976) argues that the assumption that researchers can be objective is oxymoronic, as the nature of research means that research involves participation of the researcher.

To this extent, research is not value-free. Without participation from the researcher, there would be real detachment, and therefore, no observation at all. Consequently, the objectivist viewpoint infers that the existence of a phenomenon, such as
leadership, is external to the social actors that experience it. This viewpoint is simplistic. Rather, leadership is a phenomenon that is constantly being re-created and communicated through social interactions and other contextual factors to which “individuals attach certain meanings, rituals and myths” (Saunders et al., 2009: 111). This process of communication is the creation of the meaning, as the knower who is the research subject or participant, and the researcher come together to co-create the meaning of the phenomenon at that instance, which is itself affected by other contexts, resulting in the componential element of knowledge creation: the knower can define the things that in turn define the knower and meaning is constantly changed, as reality occurs in a process of continuous creation (Brummet, 1976).

**Subjectivism**

In organizations, the objectivist researcher will observe behaviour, physical structures and symbols as a way to identify what Cunliffe (2011:649) terms as the “rituals, traditions, norm and values that constitute an organization’s culture”, as a way to determine the impact of culture on the performance of the organization. Subjectivist researchers on the other hand seek to understand the meanings of behaviour within an organization. When viewed as a binary, researchers have to choose one of either a subjectivist or an objectivist approach. The nature of reality according to subjectivists is known through the experience of those who live it. However, the binary object distinction, indicative of Cartesian dualism that views the mind as separate from the body, the person as separate from the world, the inner private self as separate from the outer public self and the individual as separate from the society, has been eroded. This is because dualism is flawed as the subject and the object are not separate, but
intertwined entities, which means that each produces the conditions that enable the
other. Further, when humans are studied to produce a set of traits, roles or cognitive
processes, then an “epistemological representation of an ontological subject” occurs,
thereby objectifying the subject. As a result, the subjective versus the objective stance
“no longer holds” (Cunliffe, 2011:652-653) as strongly in research (Giddens, 1984).

An alternative conceptualization of ontology is as the two ends of a spectrum, where
objectivism in its assumption that the nature of social reality is concrete and
structural, lies on one end of the spectrum, while subjectivism lies at the other end of
the spectrum. In this way, research occurs at a point on the spectrum and where it
leans more towards the objective side, can be said to be objective, and when it leans
more towards the subjective side, can be said to be subjective.

There are many versions of reality and this depends on the meanings attached to
actions by social actors. Reality is more subjective in nature as reality is subject to
rules and laws, which are socially constructed within human action and human
interpretation. Knowledge is therefore experiential and personal, as it is based on the
individual understandings that result from subjectivist experiences of the world.
Social realities are thus constructed and “perceived, interpreted and enacted in similar
ways but [are also] open to change” (Cunliffe, 2011:654). These shared meanings are
negotiated and time and location specific, as time and place are also subjectively
experienced. The ontological assumption of this research is that reality is subjective
and this assumption guided the collection and analysis of the data (Cunliffe, 2011).
4.5 Axiology

Axiology is concerned with research values and biases. It is also a measure to establish the trustworthiness of a study. In this study, the self is acknowledged as a source of knowledge, where the researcher’s history, gender, social class and race, shape the research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

Reflexivity

Axiological assumptions include personal and epistemological reflexivity. Personal reflexivity refers to the reflection of the ways that the researcher’s values and experiences have influenced the research. Epistemological reflexivity is concerned with the reflections on how the researcher’s assumptions of the world and about the nature of knowledge have influenced the research process, together with a consideration of the implications of these assumptions on the research findings (Willig, 2001).

This is because the experiences of the researcher and the methods for data collection are interconnected. The researcher’s experiences form an integral part of the research process as these experiences influenced the choice of research topic, research methods, research design, and the interpretation and presentation of findings. The researcher, as a value-bound individual cannot be detached from the context of the study. Rather, the researcher is a positioned subject with life experiences that influence the insights gleaned from the research. However, acknowledging and incorporating the value-bounded nature of the researcher in the research process does not lessen the rigour of the research (Iacono et al., 2009; Rosaldo, 1989).
The decision to undertake a study to understand leadership behaviour reveals the researcher’s interests in human nature and leadership behaviour. Its situatedness in the tourism industry, of which the airline industry is one of the sub-sectors, disclose the researcher’s interests in the multi-faceted tourism industry that includes a complex web of public and private organizations, interconnected and interdependent on one another. It also reveals the socio-cultural, economic and political background and interests of the researcher, based on the decision to understand leadership behaviour in the global airline industry. In addition, the choice of the qualitative inquiry paradigm, as a departure from the quantitative-based leadership studies, reveal the researcher’s values that human behaviour is contextual and textured, and therefore knowledge about human behaviour must be sought using methods of qualitative inquiry.

Finally, the assumption that reality is subjective and knowledge is socially-constructed further reveal the researcher’s values and belief systems regarding the nature of reality and the source of knowledge. In sum, the choice of the research topic, the research aims, research theories, research inquiry paradigm and research methods reveal the researcher’s values and belief systems, and produce value resonance where the inquiry paradigm and underlying theories are well-matched (Lincoln and Guba, 1986).

The results from the study were interpreted and narrated by the researcher. This involved an element of the researcher’s influence on the interpretation and reporting of the study, highlighting the socially constructed nature of the research findings.
4.6 Rhetoric

Rhetoric is concerned with the way in which interpretation is carried out and communicated. To the extent that truth is mutual agreement, the truth is therefore relative and subject to change, persuasion and power dynamics. As such, every form of interpretation is revisable. However, the important factor in the communication of a research study is the justification by practical reasoning of the particular interpretation. This justification is subject to criteria of quality. This quality is assessed by the internal coherence and correctness of the interpretation. Rhetoric is needed to give truth its meaning, as the truth and is important to understand experiences. This study has sought to identify and capture the tacit knowledge of airline leaders in an accessible format, using the tacit knowledge items boxes. The tacit knowledge items were then developed and presented in the form of a tacit knowledge inventory, a plain language inventory that might be useful to airline leaders (Schwandt, 2000).

4.7 Conclusion

The chapter has presented the philosophical assumptions that influence the choice of methodology, and has provided the justifications of the chosen methodological assumptions. The research study was conducted within a qualitative inquiry paradigm, using the social-constructivist philosophy to answer the research questions. The choice of the inquiry paradigm corresponds to the use of the Tacit Knowledge Framework and was based on the clarification of the epistemological, ontological, axiological and rhetorical assumptions of the study. Chapter five presents a detailed
explanation of the design of the research instrument, together with a discussion of the techniques used to establish the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study.
Chapter Five

Research Methods

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed research philosophies and provided the rationale for the choice of the qualitative inquiry paradigm and the social constructivist research philosophy within the subjectivist research ontology for this study. This chapter discusses the research methods that can be applied for qualitative inquiry, and provides justification for the research instrument that has been used to meet the research objectives of this study.

The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was utilised in this study as a guide for data collection and analysis. The chapter also discusses the measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the research study. Finally, the ethical issues that have been considered in this study are explained.

5.2 Research Methods

A method is “a way to a goal” (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009: 82), and the methods of a research study detail the strategy used to move from the research methodology to the design of the research instrument, to present how data was collected and analysed. The research method adopted is dependent on the research question. As explained in chapter four, the inquiry paradigm for this study is qualitative inquiry within a social constructivist research philosophy. The research paradigm guides the choice of method and this study adopted qualitative research methods to solve the research
problems as these are appropriate for the study of social phenomena and enable the research questions to be answered (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Iacono et al., 2009; Myers and Avison, 2002).

A research study may apply mixed methods where both qualitative and quantitative methods are used for data collection and/or for data analysis. Research can also be undertaken by the use of multiple data collection techniques within one inquiry paradigm that is a multi-method approach. This may be, for example, the use of multiple qualitative data collection techniques in a research study; or conversely, the use of multiple quantitative data collection techniques. The multi-method study is different from the mixed-methods research in that the mixed method generates or uses both qualitative and quantitative data in the research study (Saunders et al., 2009).

Research methods for qualitative inquiry

Quantitative inquiry employs data collection techniques that generate or use numeric data. For example, positivism describes research method “as the set of rules which can be used in a mechanical way to realize a given aim. The mechanical element is important [as] a method shall not presuppose judgment, artistic or other creative abilities” (Elster, 1980:295). Qualitative inquiry, on the other hand, is concerned with understanding the experiences and actions of people as they engage with their environment. In this way, data collection techniques for qualitative inquiry generate or use non-numerical data, such as questionnaires, participant observation, interviews and focus groups (FitzGerald et al., 2008).
An overview of these techniques is presented below.

**Questionnaires**

Questionnaires have been used extensively in leadership research, as it allows for the collection of a large amount of data from the population in a relatively economical way. This is because questionnaires are cheap and quick to administer, as several data can be collected. Moreover, questionnaires are generally accepted by organizations as a form of data collection and respondents are familiar with the instrument of data collection. Further, the availability of web-based questionnaires allows for the questionnaires to be quickly administered to large samples. When compared to an interview, questionnaires remove “the risk of interviewer effects arising from interviewers’ characteristics and the demand effects arising from the presence of an interviewer” (Bryman, 2011:19). As they contain a large number of closed questions, there is control over the research process, and coding would not be time consuming.

However, such data is subject to limitations. In addition to the low response rate, there is also the common-method bias, also known as same-source bias, where respondents to a questionnaire supply data to questions on leadership behaviour and leadership effectiveness in the study. That is, the responses cover the leadership variables and leadership outcomes. Furthermore, “leadership researchers have long been aware that the field is probably over-reliant on questionnaire studies” (Bryman, 2011:26). As such, new and different ways of collecting data to enable the
understanding of the complex and elusive phenomenon are required. In addition, questionnaires that require answers on leadership from followers are usually influenced by the followers’ prior knowledge of the leaders’ performance and the answers provided are only partly in terms of actual leadership behaviour observed, thus, presenting some problems of causality. Further, leadership effectiveness is not easy to measure or rank. It was also shown by research on leadership behaviour and performance that leadership behaviour is dependent on follower performance, organizational structure and departmental performance. Further, there is a limit to the amount of questions a questionnaire can ask and as a result, data that can be collected by the surveys is not as wide-ranging as other research strategies. Therefore, based on the discussion above, the survey strategy using questionnaires was not adopted for this research study (Bryman, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009).

**Diary and log analysis**

Diary and log analysis as a data collection method provides a means of observing behaviour. The diary and log analysis can also be used to collect data as a basis for follow-up interviewing. As the duration of the diary log exercise might not be fully representative of other periods of leadership behaviour, there are problems with representation. Further, having a diary log might cause a modification of the behaviour of respondents for the duration of the diary log. This final point is not unique to a diary and log analysis, as other methods of data collection might also induce some level of influence that will make respondents change their normal behaviour for the duration of the data collection exercise. This research study did not utilize a diary and log analysis in consideration of the added risk that the intended
participants, who are in senior executive positions, might not complete the diary log thoroughly due to its time-consuming nature (Bell, 2010; Oppenheim, 1992).

**Participant Observation**

Observation is the most fundamental of all research methods. Social scientists are observers of human activities, and observations include the physical settings within which the activities take place. Participant observation is rooted in anthropology for ethnographic studies and involves the researcher as a participant in the situation that is being observed. In this regard, the researcher observes the subjects and records the observations for the purposes of scientific investigation. As a participant observer, the role of the researcher in the organization is that of an observer-as-member, and “while the views of the researcher are enriched by the (...) experience, the angle is not strictly neutral” (Iacono et al., 2009: 45). This is because the researcher, as a part of the context of the phenomenon that is being observed, is influenced by this context (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2000).

In leadership research, observation is rarely the primary method within a qualitative research study. However, observation provides a way of viewing what leaders do, as opposed to what they say they do, or what others say they do and it is a useful data collection technique in organizational research. This data collection technique exposes the researcher to observe the different viewpoints of stakeholders within the organizations and “capture the tacit knowledge of industry experts” (Iacono et al., 2009: 44). Data from observations can be collected in a non-systematic manner with no formal interviews and no transcription of any verbal exchange (Iacono et al., 2009;
Participant observation was considered as a data collection method for this study, as it provides the opportunity to observe leadership behaviour and gain useful insight into how leadership is enacted in the airline industry. However, the use of this technique presents several challenges. While participant observation provides depth and rich insight due to its focus on a situation for a specified duration of time, it is a time consuming method of data collection. In addition, the method has been criticised for its lack of generalizability and lack of objectivity, as the researcher is a member-observer and not an independent observer. Another challenge of using participant observation in organizational research is gaining access to an organization and the determination of the role of the researcher within the organization. Access when granted may come with strict conditions on confidentiality. The researcher also has the additional challenge of maintaining trustworthiness and authenticity, while reconciling his/her views with personal experience in the analysis and the reporting of findings (Iacono et al., 2009).

**Interviews**

Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Structured interviews are mainly used in quantitative research, where the interviewee answers a series of questions, most of which are closed questions. The interviews follow a standard format with emphasis on fixed response categories to ensure that there is uniformity in the behaviour of interviewers. As a result, structured interviews are easy to replicate. In semi-structured interviews, although the conversation is allowed to
evolve from the interview, the questions that set the topics and issues to be covered are determined in advance. In unstructured interviews, the respondent is given the freedom to discuss opinions on a particular issue. In an unstructured interview, the interviewer records answers that might be prodded further in the interview. With unstructured and semi-structured interviews, the advantage lies in the potential for discovery; there is scope for new, rich data to be collected with issues emerging from the interview that the interviewer might not have considered before. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews are complex, because “they demand greater skills from the interviewer” (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2002:101). In-depth interviews require the interviewer to have a thorough understanding of the “research problem, its purpose and the information that is being sought” (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2002:102), as the quality of the interviews depends to a large extent on the knowledge of the subject matter by the interviewer and the interviewer’s ability to pose interview questions and follow-up questions as necessary (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009; Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2002; Geertz, 1994; Shankman et al., 1984).

Both semi-structured and unstructured interviews are flexible research instruments, as they are applicable to different research design contexts. As such, they can be used within different research techniques. Interviews are considered to be one of the best data collection methods and qualitative interviewing provides data that is amenable, as the data can be applied to different analytic strategies. Nevertheless, interviews may pose problems of objectivity, as the data analysis is subject to the researcher’s interpretation and background. The social-constructivism paradigm that this study is being carried out through recognizes this and also acknowledges the researcher as a co-narrator in the study (Bryman, 2011; Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2002).
In qualitative research interviews, knowledge is produced through the social interaction of the interviewer and the interviewee, as the mode of data collection goes beyond the mechanical set of rules and processes that are typical of quantitative research data collection. In this regard, the information provided can be viewed as social interpretations, and not “transparent representations of organizational routines, decision-making processes, or professional diagnoses. They construct particular kinds of representations with their own conventions” (Atkinson and Coffey, 1997:47).

To this end, the information provided by participants consists in interpretations that form a story. Stories have plots, themes and characters. The research question is the plot, the characters are the participants in the study and the themes were developed in the analysis of the data. The conversation can be understood as a story that the participant chooses to tell the researcher through the use of words, as s/he narrates his/her experiences to the researcher. This is because different people may interpret the same event in different ways. As such, participants provide their version of events: a story (Silverman, 2000; Sternberg, 2008).

**Semi-structured interviews in the form of conversations**

A semi-structured interview can be regarded as a conversation with a purpose between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewees are referred to as participants, as the process of conversations involves parities, the interviewer and the interviewee, engaging as co-narrators in a cyclical process of dialogue and reflection on how they have gained knowledge through their life experiences and how this
knowledge has informed their understanding of the phenomenon being researched (Moser and Kalton, 1971; Dexter, 1970).

The term “conversation” was used in correspondence with participants, as it signified a relaxed approach to data-collection. A conversation is an informal exchange of information and ideas. It is particularly useful to use this terminology when one considers the senior level of the participants contacted and the time pressures they face which might make them reluctant to have a restrictive interview (Young, 2009).

Further, the conversational approach helped to stimulate the participants’ memories which they could present in an informal and personal manner, allowing the co-narrator to capture the development of the leader’s perspective on issues, clarify concepts and the relationships therein (Bolden and Kirk, 2005; Ladkin and Weber, 2011).

The adaptable nature of the conversations allowed the researcher as the co-narrator to return to a topic several times, probe responses further and investigate the motives and feelings behind responses. Conversations allow for a robust understanding of the responses; what tone of voice, facial expressions (where face to face, or carried out by video) and if there are any hesitations, additional information that questionnaires do not provide (Bell, 2010).

While the term ‘conversation’ was used in the correspondence with participants, it is worth reiterating that the structure was that of a semi-structured interview.
Analysis of Autobiographical Writings

The three main functions of a leader are communication, problem analysis and decision-making. An analysis of the content of communications by leaders can provide some information on the intentions of the communicators and contribute to understanding leadership behaviour. Further, information by followers, as well as existing analyses of the texts by reputable organizations, can be revealed and incorporated into the study, enriching the data collected. A wide range of texts can be analysed, including textbooks, journals, letters, transcriptions of speech, web content, company files, published reports by management consultants, magazine and newspaper articles. The levels of analysis of the units are flexible, from a single word to phrases, sentences and entire documents (Insch et al., 1997; Iacono et al., 2009).

The analysis of autobiographical writings provides a way through which leadership behaviour can be understood. Autobiographical writing can include autobiographies, biographies and memoirs. The main difference between the two is that where an autobiography focuses on the entire life of its subject, the memoir focuses on some parts of the subject’s life only. Biographies are similar to autobiographies; the autobiography is written by the subject, or co-written by the subject, whereas the biography has been written with access to the subject or personal documents on the subject. The autobiographical writing seeks to describe the true person by providing “the opportunity to connect storytelling and identity” (Reveley, 2010:284; Senn, 2006; Oakley, 2010; Buchanan and Tollison, 1986).

As they provide first-hand accounts of individuals’ experiences, autobiographical writings and memoirs are a useful source of qualitative data that offer a window into
the thoughts, motives and reasons for behaviours of an individual. However, autobiographical writings have been criticised for bias of “a constructed life” (Buchanan and Tollison, 1986:509), due to the subjective choice of material for the story, the choice of the interpretive framework, raising questions of trustworthiness of the data. Smith (2005) argues that there is a difference between empirical evidence and narratives people craft about their experiences to shape perceptions and portray a skewed reality, as the stories that individuals tell inform the social construct. Yet, it is this social construction of the stories in memoirs and autobiographies, through the delicate negotiation between the individual, the subject and the co-writer (where applicable), that provides the ‘stories’ presented in the narrative of the autobiography (Smith, 2005; Oakley, 2010; Power et al., 2012).

As a “compendia of facts” (Oakley, 2010:426), these writings are useful in qualitative research for gaining insights into “human lives from a lived perspective” (Oakley, 2010:426), and constitute a type of social science enquiry, as by attempting to understand the socially constructed individual, the memoir or autobiography can contribute to the understanding of the general. What is hidden might be more important than what is said, and autobiographical writings might not reveal the whole or part of the truth, but obscure and evade important information, as experiences may be recounted to portray the subject in a more positive light, with negative elements concealed or downplayed. However, memoirs and autobiographies cannot provide experiences that are markedly different from the truth given the constraints on the author by readers who might be able to point out obvious misstatements. Therefore, the incentive to provide the truth is increased due to the risk to credibility of the entire autobiography or memoir, and damage to the reputation of the subject, should
misstatements be identified in the autobiography. The unchallenged entry of a biography into the public domain signals its acceptance and legitimisation, where the autobiographical writing becomes “established truth” (Smith, 2005:10) and in some ways may provide more truth than in an interview, where the participant’s statement of events might not be fully accurate or truthful (Evans, 1993; Buchanan and Tollison, 1986; Oakley, 2010).

As the writings provide an approved documentation of the experience of the leaders, they are able to answer questions that would have been asked in interviews. The autobiographical writings were chosen based on the selection of available sources in the airline industry. In addition, these autobiographical writings were for individuals for whom gaining access for interviews would have been difficult. In addition, the information provided in the autobiographical writings was found to be similar to that provided in other interviews on understanding leadership behaviour that the individuals participated in. That is, the version of truth that the autobiographical writings contain, further reinforce the writings as “established truth”. In this way, the data provided in the autobiographical writings, an important source of research data, can be assumed to be very similar to what would have been shared, had a conversation been held with the subjects (Reveley, 2010; Seaman and Smith, 2012).

Documentary analysis emphasizes the subjects’ interpretations of a phenomenon and the delineation of context, thereby enabling the researcher to acquire a deep understanding of how different variables in the phenomenon being studied fit together. While the analysis of documents has been used for about sixty years, it is sparingly used in leadership research. This is unfortunate, as the method provides an
opportunity to examine written data in order to discover rich and contextual data. Where it has been used in leadership research, it has contributed to a deep understanding of leadership. Examples include the examination of patterns of causal reasoning from senior executives and staff (see Bettman and Weitz, 1983), the determination of the effects of stress on leader intelligence and group performance (see Gibson et al., 1993), a test of personality and charismatic leadership theories (see House et al., 1991), an investigation of leadership behaviour and personality characteristics (see Howell and Higgins, 1990), the examination of the cognitive process that managers use to understand and analyse business problems (see Isenberg, 1986) and Meindl et al.’s (1985) examination of the extent to which an interest in leadership is associated with the performance of firms (Insch et al., 1997).

The scant use of the analysis of documents has been attributed to its time-consuming nature. However, the unobtrusiveness of the method is an advantage. In addition, “the texts can be treated as traces of an author’s world view at a point in time and immune to retrospective construction” (Barley et al., 1988, 27 – emphasis added) and is able to provide great detail over multiple time periods, thereby allowing for a deep analysis over the stages of leadership behaviour. For example, this would include the decision that was made, why the decision was made, to include the contextual reasons for the decision, the implementation of the decision, and finally its outcome(s).

5.3 The Design of the Research Instrument

Data on leadership behaviour may be collected from multiple sources that may include documents, interviews, direct observation and participant observation. For this study, data was collected from two sources: autobiographical writings and semi-
structured interviews. As several sources of data were used for data collection, the data is triangulated. Triangulation, trustworthiness and ethical considerations are explained in the final section of the chapter. The design of the research instrument was guided by the epistemological questions of “‘what can be understood about leadership’ and ‘how do we go about learning it?’” (Stake, 2000:436; Iacono et al., 2009; Seaman and Smith, 2012; Oakley, 2010; Saunders et al., 2009).

The use of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT)

For this research, the definition of the CIT will be the same as used by Chell (2006) and an adaptation of Flanagan’s original definition: “The critical incident technique is a qualitative interview procedure which facilitates the investigation of significant occurrences (events, incidents, processes or issues), identified by the participant, the way they are managed, and the outcomes in terms of perceived effects. The objective is to gain an understanding of the incident from the perspective of the individual, taking into account cognitive, affective and behavioural elements” (Flanagan, 1954: 2). The critical incidents are usually gathered in research by asking participants to talk about an experience that they have had. By “obtaining a representative sample of factual incidents” (Flanagan, 1954: 2), a phenomenon can be deeply understood.

The data was collected from autobiographical writings and conversations in the form of semi-structured interviews. The data was collected using the same conversation guide as a format for extracting data from the autobiographical writings. CIT allows the researcher to focus on the context, strategy and outcomes of incidents and then identify patterns that emerge in relation to questions that ask: ‘What happened?’
‘Why did it happen?’ ‘How was it handled?’ and ‘What were the consequences?’ (Chell, 2004).

For interviews, while the CIT provides a rich source of data as participants have free range with regards to their responses and what they determine as incidents that are most relevant, the technique has been criticized for recall bias, that is, relying solely on the memory and truthful selection of incidents by the participants. However, as the incidents recounted are critical, the participants are able to have good recall. Other criticisms include the lack of accuracy, reliability and validity that may “arise due to ambiguity of word meanings and category labels” (Bell and Lockwood, 1997: 409). However, the CIT has been used in occupational settings focusing on the tangible and less tangible factors that might influence managerial and employee behaviour. By its use in various settings, the validity and reliability of the data from CIT have been established (Chell, 2004; Bell and Lockwood, 1997; White and Locke, 1981).

The use of the CIT in data collection and analysis was advantageous in guiding the decision on elements for inclusion in this study, particularly for a phenomenon such as leadership, where the whole story of the research cannot be told, because the “whole story exceeds anyone’s knowing or anyone’s telling” (Stake, 2000:435).

**Pilot Study**

Ghauri and Grønhaug (2002) recommend a pilot participant number of three to five participants as sufficient. The pilot study was carried out with two participants who were in senior management position in the airline industry. The reason for this was to
ensure that the participants, for whom access was crucial and difficult, were preserved for the main data collection.

The aims of the pilot study were to test the research instrument, assess whether the research timeline is realistic and feasible, to determine the effectiveness of the research technique and to identify any logistical problems that might occur, to collect preliminary data, and to refine the research question and research plan (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001).

The interview schedule for the pilot was a basic one, to ensure the conversational flow of the interview and to provide opportunity to refine and develop the interview guide.

The initial conversation guide is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Guide for Pilot Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5-1: Conversation Guide

The pilot interview was fully transcribed and any names mentioned during the interview were given pseudonyms to preserve confidentiality. Thereafter, the
transcription was examined to better understand the data, and to extract themes and topics that emerged from the data. Feedback on the interview style, in the form of another conversation, was obtained from the participants who commented positively on the flow of the conversation. One of the participants commented that she felt like she was being listened to, as opposed to the researcher going through and ticking off a list of questions. She stressed the importance of maintaining the flow of the conversation, listening and adapting the questions to the participant, so it does not feel like an interview (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002).

The pilot study provided useful lessons that were incorporated in the refinement of the research instrument.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons from the pilot study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conversation Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Vitae or Profile of participant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Refinement of research question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5-2: Lessons from the pilot study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The lessons from the pilot study led to a refinement of the conversation guide. The updated conversation guide was prepared using the research objectives as a starting point. This was to ensure that the conversation guide was prepared to meet the research objectives and for researcher clarity (Bell, 2010; Ladkin and Weber, 2011).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding of Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Participants were asked for their understanding of leadership. This was to introduce the participants to the conversation and gather what they understand by leadership. Responses from this acted as the foundation block of the rest of the conversation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding of Leadership behaviour in the Airline Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Participants were asked about their experience of working in the airline industry. They were also asked about their rationale for choosing to work in the industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This was to examine the motivations behind their choice of industry and to find out if from their experience, the airline industry was a unique one.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifying Tacit Knowledge: Critical incidents in their experience of leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• It is expected that a few incidents will be listed. Following this, as mentioned above, the participants were probed for more information about the incidents, what happened, why they reacted in a certain way, what they particularly liked about their action what they disliked and reasons; respondents will be asked to select the 3 most critical incidents for exploration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All interviews should be prepared for. The preparation includes a clear statement of the research problem and the drafting of the conversation guide, also known as the conversation questions. The conversation questions were prepared to ensure that there was congruence with the research problem and the questions to be asked in the time allowed. It also allowed for each conversation to follow a similar format, and in this way, allow for comparisons between comments shared by participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Guide for the Researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research working title:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding leadership behaviour in the commercial aviation industry</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To warm-up the conversation before the interview properly.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I hope you have been able to read through the confidentiality agreement. Please sign it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Before we begin, do you have any questions about my research study or this interview?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> To gently introduce respondent into the interview and to understand if s/he reflects on leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn more about the individual’s understanding of the term ‘leadership’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gather examples of incidents that affected the leadership behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is leadership something you think about?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Tell me what leadership means to you?
• How would you describe your leadership style?
• What would you say are the factors that help you to be an effective leader?
• Can you give me any examples of instances where you were effective as a leader?
• What would you say are the factors that hinder or limit your performance as an effective leader?
• Can you give me examples of instances where you look back now and think you could have taken a different course of action?
• Why so?

B To understand the context of the airline industry and motivations for working in the industry.

• Can I ask how you came to work in the commercial airline industry?
• Can you tell me more about your experience working in the commercial airline industry?
• Why have you stayed this long?
• If respondent has left the industry by the time of the interview, ask “why did you leave and when?”
• What are you doing now?
• What is unique about the commercial airline industry?
The updated conversation guide was further tested on two other participants to ensure that the data collected met the research objectives of the study. Tacit knowledge and critical incidents were not mentioned in the conversation with the participants. This is because people ascribe different meanings to terms and people might understand tacit knowledge to mean different things. In addition, some individuals might understand critical incidents to refer to the grandiose, rather than important incidents that occur in the daily interaction of leadership. Rather, by asking participants to share their experiences, the conversation was guided by the researcher to ensure that the research objectives were met (Crevani et al., 2010).

### 5.4 Main Data Collection

#### Before the conversations

Following the initial referral or contact with prospective participants, an email was...
sent out to provide detailed information about the research and invite them to participate in the study. Appendix One displays an example of an email sent to prospective participants. Emails were used as this proved cost-effective and is an effective means of communication in this day and age. Following their agreement to participate in the study, prospective participants were sent a letter confirming the meeting date and time, together with a conversation guide and a confidentiality agreement (presented in Appendices Two, Three and Four respectively).

The letters were sent via attachment to email for ease of distribution and also to save on postage and paper costs. A copy of the letter sent to participants is presented in Appendix One. The letter introduced the researcher as a PhD candidate and provided some information about the researcher’s research and background, to give credibility and assuage any doubts about the researcher’s competence. It explained the purpose of the research and the research questions, and described the type of information to be collected. It also indicated the possible duration of the conversation. A conversation guide was also attached to the email. The conversation guide provided some information on the conversation, the format of the conversation and the themes of the research that guided the conversation. It also informed participants that the conversation was to be recorded. The participants were invited to respond by return email to signify their acceptance to participate in the study.

The letter further informed participants of their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. No financial inducements were offered in this study, and as such the initial email made no mention of it although the confidentiality agreement re-stated this. The benefits of participation, i.e. the opportunity to contribute to research
environment and knowledge on leadership within the airline industry, and the opportunity to share and reflect on past experiences were highlighted (Saunders et al., 2009).

Prior to the scheduled appointment time, a confirmation email was sent to each participant. The confirmation email included a conversation preparation guide. The conversation confirmation letter, attached to the email, requested the participants’ CV and provided details of the location, date, time and duration of the meeting.

5.5 Participants’ Selection

The criteria for the participants in this study were that they are in senior management positions and have strategic responsibility as part of their role in the commercial airline industry. The length of time in senior management was not specified, and neither was the size of the airline specified. The type of airline service provided was also not specified, and this was to ensure that participants were included from both full-service carriers and low-cost carriers. This was to ensure that the data provided a global perspective of leadership in the airline industry, and to ensure that the views of senior management were comprehensively represented.

The participants were selected according to their offer of “opportunity to learn” (Stake, 2000:446), as defined by access, where access was taken to mean that the most time can be spent with the participants. In this regard, the potential for learning is different and a “superior criteria to representativeness” (Stake, 2000:446). Although most CIT studies include minimal description of the participants that are
providing the critical incidents, this study provided a detailed description of the participants in order to provide contextual texture to the research and allow for richer understandings of their comments (Gremler, 2004).

**Participants in the Study**

“Fieldwork is permeated with the conflict between what is theoretically desirable on the one hand and what is practically possible on the other” (Buchanan et al., 1988:53). Time and other constraints can limit the extent to which the desirable is achieved. In total, thirty-five individuals were contacted for this study and positive responses were gathered from twenty-five participants.

Three participants were contacted using the researcher’s personal network. Typically, senior leaders do not respond to cold-call emails. This method has been proven to be effective in eliciting a high participant response rate for the elite level of participants in this study. As a check, five other senior executives in the airline industry were contacted directly, only one of who responded. However, emails with introduction from someone resulted in a positive interest in the study and increased the likelihood of participating. Access to elite interviewing, the interviewing of individuals in senior management positions in multinational firms, is difficult. This highlighted the fact that the snowball method was the most effective form of gaining access to elite individuals for participation in research (Goldstein, 2002; Welch et al., 2002).

After each conversation, the participant was asked to refer other people to the researcher. The level of analysis in this study was at the senior executive level, where the executives have very busy schedules. The research design was prepared and
utilised according to what was feasible. Strategies, such as sending reminders and requesting meetings to be held over Skype and via telephone to minimise costs, ensure convenience for participants and to ensure that adequate data could be collected for the study. Thus, it was only possible for conversations to be held with fifteen individuals as one individual was unable to make the scheduled meeting time and offered to complete responses in a written form. “In the conflict between the desirable and the possible, the possible always wins” (Buchanan et al., 1988:54; Goldstein, 2002; Welch et al., 2002).

Of the twenty-five individuals who responded positively, conversations were held with sixteen participants, and one participant provided written responses. Autobiographical writings of four other leaders were examined using the conversation guide, to extract data for further analysis. The total number of participants in this study is thus twenty-one. This number is at the top range of the recommendation that studies using the qualitative interview approach should have between five to twenty five incidents. Smaller samples allow for more in-depth investigations to be carried out, and present the researcher with time to prepare for the interview, carry out the interview and analyse the data collected Conversations were scheduled until data saturation was reached (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009; Saunders et al., 2009).

The tables below present the positions held by the participants, as the criteria of being at a senior level in the airline industry was a key requirement for the selection of participants for this study. In the discussion and analysis that follow in chapters seven through to ten, the participants have been given pseudonyms to maintain
confidentiality. The majority of the participants were male (eighteen out of the total twenty-one). Most of the participants had worked in the airline industry for all of their careers and were still in the industry. Those who had left, returned to the airline industry, and in other cases, were employed in other sectors of the Travel and Tourism industry (Thornton, 2014).

The sampling frame for the study was designed to ensure that the participants represented the global airline industry. As mentioned, there were eighteen male and two female participants in this study. The final ratio of men to women in the study was eighty-five per cent to fifteen per cent of women. This is lower than the gender representations at the senior management level of business leaders, where women comprised of twenty four per cent of senior management positions. While this study is not focused on gender, this observation is discussed in more detail in chapter ten (Thornton, 2014).

The table below details the positions held by the participants in this research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions held by participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5-4: Participant List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>Chief Executive Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Communications and Corporate Affairs Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Chief Commercial Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Country Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Airline Sales and Marketing Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Country Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Head of Industry Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Chief Strategy Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Regional Commercial Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Global Head of Sponsorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Head of Industry Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Airlines represented in the study

Below is a list of the airlines the participants have worked at. This information was collated from the Curriculum Vitae of the participants and also from the conversations.

<p>| <strong>Twenty-seven airlines are represented in the study</strong> |
|---|---|
| <em>Africa</em> | |
| 1 | Afrijet |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Airline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Air Mauritius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bellview Airlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kenya Airways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Red One Airlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rwandair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>South African Airways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The Americas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>American Airlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Delta Airlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>South West Airlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Viva Aerobus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Asia (including Middle East)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cathay Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Etihad Airways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Gulf Air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Japan Airlines (JAL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Malaysia Airlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Tiger Airlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Australia and New Zealand</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Air New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Qantas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Europe</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>British Airways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>British Midlands Baby</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.6 Data Collection

This section provides the general remarks about the process of data collection. The data was collected in two stages, from autobiographical writings and from semi-structured interviews in the form of conversations.

This study focused on Cianciolo et al.'s (2004) suggestion for leadership studies to provide context-based insight into leadership behaviour. The study focused on the senior executives in airline organizations, using the Tacit Knowledge Framework, an approach that enabled the specific contents of the tacit knowledge gained from experience of senior executives to be presented (Sternberg, 2000).

The table below details how the research questions, guided by the research aim to understand the leadership behaviour of senior executives within the context of the airline industry, have been answered by the study.

| 22 | EasyJet          |
| 23 | KLM              |
| 24 | Lufthansa        |
| 25 | Ryanair          |
| 26 | Scandinavian Airlines |
| 27 | Virgin Atlantic |

Table 5-6: Airlines represented in the study
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Aims</th>
<th>How it has been met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the meaning of leadership</td>
<td>Literature review of leadership theories (Chapter two)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To understand the meaning of leadership in the airline industry</td>
<td>Understanding the airline industry and how leaders deal with the unique challenges it presents (Chapter six)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of an approach to study context-based leadership behaviour</td>
<td>Presentation of the Practical Intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour (Chapter three)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation of the practical intelligence approach as an approach to understand leadership behaviour (Chapter ten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify the tacit knowledge of senior executives in the airline industry</td>
<td>Use of the tacit-knowledge framework to understand the leadership behaviour of leaders in the airline industry (Chapters seven to nine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To understand the role of tacit knowledge in the leadership behaviour of senior executives in the airline industry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To capture the tacit knowledge of senior executives in the airline industry</td>
<td>The tacit knowledge from the data (conversations and autobiographical writings) were captured in tacit knowledge items boxes (Chapters seven to nine)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To develop a Plain Language Tacit Knowledge Inventory for airline leadership

Presentation of the Tacit Knowledge inventory for airline leaders (Appendix Seven)

To critically evaluate the Tacit Knowledge Framework

Evaluation of the practical intelligence approach and Tacit Knowledge Framework for understanding leadership behaviour in the airline industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Airline Leader</th>
<th>Source of Autobiographical Writings</th>
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</table>
The table above presents the four main sources of autobiographical writings used in this study. Desk research was also carried out on the leaders and these revealed further documents, written interviews and newspaper articles. These additional sources were used to corroborate the information presented in the autobiographical writings, however, the data collection and subsequent analysis was carried using the four main sources identified above.

The autobiographical writings were read and re-read several times to gain familiarity with the data. Following this, comments that contributed to the research aim were noted. The writings were then re-read a third time to ensure that all relevant comments had been noted. These comments were then typed out as transcripts and inputted into the NVivo 10 software, for data analysis together with the transcripts from the conversations.

The use of the autobiographical writings in the first stage of the data collection process was beneficial as it provided additional opportunity to test the researcher
conversation guide for its usefulness in achieving the objectives of this research. They also provided a way to familiarise with the inner world of airline leaders, and the language used, and therefore contributed to the confidence of the researcher during the interviews, which were carried out in the second phase of the data collection.

Conversations

Conversations were the second stage of the data collection process. Prior to the meeting with the participants, a guide to the conversations was sent to each participant detailing the format of the conversation and the research aims (see Appendix One). All participants were assured of confidentiality that their names and names of others they mentioned will not be referred to in whole within the text of the thesis. A copy of the confidentiality agreement is provided in the Appendix Three. The conversations began with a brief introduction of the researcher and stated the purpose of the research, to understand leadership behaviour of senior executives in the airline industry.

Managing the Conversations

The conversations were opened with the researcher confirming that each participant had read the confidentiality agreement and was in agreement with it. All participants confirmed that this had been done. Some participants completed and returned a scanned copy of the confidentiality agreement. However, the majority of the participants confirmed their agreement with the confidentiality agreement verbally.
Following their confirmation, an overview of the research was presented, and participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

Thereafter, the conversations were gently guided towards a discussion of the participants’ understandings of leadership. The conversational format of the interview meant that the researcher was able to adapt the research instrument according to the participants’ approach to the conversation. In some cases, participants provided answers to questions that would have followed at a later point of the prepared conversation format, and it was important that the researcher was actively listening to the participant and so avoided asking questions that had been answered earlier in the conversation.

Throughout the interview, simple and concise English was used and, where possible, the use of terminology or concepts was avoided. Where terminology or concepts have to be used, their meanings will be clarified to the participants. During the interview, time will be controlled to ensure that the objectives of the interviews are met and to manage the participants’ expectations. “A constructivist approach necessitates a relationship with participants in which they can cast their stories in their terms” (Charmaz, 2000:525); it involves listening to their stories. Open-ended questions were asked and participants volunteered examples of experiences that have shaped their leadership behaviour, while others required deeper probing. The specific questions on experiences were asked when the researcher felt the participants were comfortable with the research topic and some familiarity had been established. It was important that the researcher was familiar with the subject and current affairs in the airline industry, as some participants asked for the researcher’s opinion on current
affairs. This was important to show preparation in advance of the conversation and ensured that the conversation was taken seriously (Saunders, 1997; Oppenheim, 1992; Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2002:106).

By asking participants to talk about the incidences they have had from their experience, it enables data to be collected from the perspective of the participant. Of particular interest were the incidents chosen, why they were chosen and how participants identify, describe and evaluate leadership. The incidents shared provided insight into how the participants perceived and classified the incidents that happened to them. It was remarkable and insightful to note the types of incidents shared.

The participants provided rich and detailed examples of their leadership experience and the rationale for their behaviour. It was understood that the accounts given by the participants may be partial or biased, but this constitutes the reality of the participants, and it is how they view the world and also what shapes their future actions. It is also understood that the research can only present an interpretation of data provided by the participants. The conversations allowed detailed, concrete accounts to be obtained and provided rich data. The interview was also beneficial to participants as it provided them with the opportunity to reflect on a number of key issues and events (Bitner, Booms and Tretault, 1990; Gremler, 2004; Chell, 2004).

The aim of the conversations was to elicit knowledge, based on practical and personal experience, and the responses were corroborated back to the participants during the conversations, as a form of member check to ensure that the researcher fully
understood the lessons from the stories. Participants were asked to follow up questions, to enable deeper understandings from the stories of their experiences.

The conversations were conducted over a five-month period from July to November 2013, with seventeen senior executives of the airline industry. The conversations were held face to face (eight conversations), via Skype (four conversations) and over the telephone (four conversations). One participant (Jonathan) requested for the conversation schedule to be sent to him, which he filled in and sent back as a word document. While this was not the preferred format for the data collection, the researcher had to be adaptable to the demands and schedule of the participant, and it was decided to include the data in this study, given the deep insights provided by the participant, and the senior level of the position he held (Chief Executive Officer of an airline).

Most of the conversations lasted for an average of about forty-five minutes, although some conversations lasted for shorter periods (twenty-six minutes) and others for much longer (one and a half hours). The conversations were recorded with the iTalk application on the iPad. The participants responded positively to the conversational format of the interviews:

Allegra: “Just looking at your conversation guide, it’s lovely, because the way you have even discussed the structure in terms of what you want to speaking about, is very fluid, because ultimately and especially, our industry is fluid... to be rigid, would actually create gaps in being able to move forward.”
Seth: “Thank you. I like the thorough preparation. I like your personal style. I like the way you engage in the discussion and get your counterpart to talk. So you are doing this very well, very professionally.”

Fitz: “My friends enjoyed discussing with you, saying that you work thoroughly and well and that you will produce a good study on leadership!”

5.7 Analysis of the data

The researcher, allowing for full immersion with the data, transcribed the conversations. With in-depth interviews, such as the semi-structured format that was used in this study, asking open-ended questions allows the participants to answer in their own thinking and their own words; as opposed to close-ended questionnaires. Although the open-ended nature of the conversations posed an additional task for data analysis and coding, as the data analysis took longer than it would have taken if the interviews were structured or questionnaires were issued to participants. In addition, the use of an extant conceptual framework, the Tacit Knowledge Framework, provided a useful coding frame. The data was transcribed by the researcher to increase familiarity with the data and to also highlight any unusual comments or comments that required further probing from the participant.

The transcribed data was read through for familiarity with the data and a preliminary identification of common themes and outliers. The participants from both the autobiographical writings and conversations were given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality, for ease of reference and to bring their stories to life. The
pseudonyms were matched to the population represented in the study. For example, where female pseudonyms are given, the participant has been female. The data collected from autobiographical writings, together with data from conversations, were uploaded onto the NVivo 10 software for coding. The data from both methods were analysed together and the findings were also fused together and presented in subsequent chapters. In this way, the results from the two methods were fused together, allowing a seamless interpretation and presentation of the results from the study. In addition, the use of more than one method for data collection provided the opportunity for the research objectives to be “examined from various angles” (Barbour, 2001: 117).

In the first stage of data analysis, the themes were allowed to emerge from the data. The data was coded according to the critical incidents shared by the participants. This was to identify if there was similarity between the incidents shared by all participants. The same data was also coded according to the themes that emerged from the critical incidents. This step was very useful as it enabled themes to be identified outside of the Tacit Knowledge Framework, which could have influenced the data categorisation.

While the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework (presented in chapter three) provided a priori themes, the data was not forced into these themes. Rather through researcher familiarization with the data, themes were allowed to emerge from the data. In this way, the researcher remained open to the discovery of new themes that may not be reflected in the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework.
### Table 5-9: Preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Sub-categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intra-personal tacit knowledge</td>
<td>Managing Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeking Challenges and Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-personal tacit knowledge</td>
<td>Influencing others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational tacit knowledge</td>
<td>Solving organizational problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the second stage of the data analysis, the data was coded according to the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework presented in chapter three, which is represented and applied to the collected data. The initial themes of the preliminary framework were compared with the existing themes presented by the categories in the Tacit Knowledge Framework to evaluate the level of fit. In this way, the Tacit Knowledge Framework guided, but did not restrict, the analysis of the data. Stage three of the data analysis involved the comparison of the themes that emerged from the data with the categories of the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework, as some themes emerged from the data collection phase that deepened the categories in the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework, and some themes emerged that were not in the preliminary framework. The coded data from the categories were reviewed with the original transcripts to ensure that all relevant comments were correctly coded (Sternberg, 2000; Chell, 2004).

In this way, the results from the study were analysed and categorised using an iterative process of the researcher reading, re-reading and coding and re-coding with
the NVivo software to familiarise with the data and manage it, while ensuring the key findings are preserved. The categories were printed out for review and the data was rearranged within the categories presented in table 5-9 above, for smooth representation into the results presented in the subsequent chapters.

These stages of coding were time-consuming, but proved to be useful in gaining familiarity with the data and also confidence that the themes that arose from the data were correctly categorised and established the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study. Themes that did not fit into the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework were not forced into the existing categories. Rather they are presented in the chapters that follow. These themes also contributed to the modification of the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework and are discussed in more detail in chapters seven through nine (Gremler, 2004).

5.8 Interpreting the data

Following the coding of data into the categories, it was necessary to interpret the data. This was done by reviewing the responses in the categories holistically to identify common strands in each category and by reading through the transcriptions again to ensure that the context of the participant’s responses was maintained. The data collected from the conversations and the autobiographical documents are reported and distilled into the thematic sections below. A conscientious attempt has been made to ensure that the responses of every participant have been fully included in the chapters.
Member Check

The conversations ended with the researcher asking participants’ permissions to be given a short summary of their conversation as an additional form of member check. All conversation participants except one agreed to this member check. Some participants requested a summary of findings from the entire data collection process, and this was included in the member check that was sent to the conversation participants. Member check was done in the form of a summary sent in the form of an infographic, with a cover email that explained the sections of the infographic. The cover email and the infographics sent to conversation participants are presented in appendices five and six. The member checks were sent out to conversation participants in January 2014 (see Appendices Five and Six). Six responses were obtained from the member checks. Participants responded well to the format of the summary, with responses including:

Allegra: “Wonderful to see your efforts coming to life. Your results, and their creative approach to communication, are very strong.”

Khalid: “Have read the document a couple of times and it captures the key elements in recall from our discussion. Also, well-structured and designed.”

Imogen: “I have read the summary and it pretty much sums up what we discussed and as you said, what we did not say which is in the summary came from other sources. Thank you for the time to share and I hope you were able to achieve your goal. Reading the summary is insightful for me.”
The summary of the conversations was presented in the form of the Tacit Knowledge Framework; the results were synthesized and fed into the development of the Tacit Knowledge Framework for Airline Leaders, presented in the next chapter.

The results from the data collection are presented as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Leading in the Airline Industry: In their own words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding of Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership in the Airline Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Seven</td>
<td>Stories of Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Tacit Knowledge Framework: Intrapersonal tacit knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Eight</td>
<td>Stories of Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Tacit Knowledge Framework: Interpersonal tacit knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Nine</td>
<td>Stories of Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Tacit Knowledge Framework: Organizational tacit knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Ten</td>
<td>Key findings and conclusions to the research study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5-10: Presentation of the results from the study: stories of leadership

5.9 Evaluation of the quality of the research study

The quality of a research study is assessed by the “appropriateness of the research method to the scope of the investigation” (Iacono et al., 2009: 46). The quality of the research study is also referred to as its level of rigorousness. In naturalistic inquiry, that is research undertaken using the qualitative inquiry approach, rigor is evaluated according to the two main criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity. Naturalistic inquiry is different from conventional scientific (quantitative) inquiry for reasons
previously discussed in the preceding chapter. Therefore, the criteria for conventional scientific inquiry do not apply to naturalistic inquiry, as they do not take into account the influence of context on the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1986; Schwandt et al., 2007).

The inquiry is value-bound, as it includes the values of the researcher, which are revealed from the choice of inquiry, type of methods engaged and choice of phenomenon to study. Therefore, within the qualitative inquiry approach, the researcher is identified as part of “a web of beliefs, practices and standpoints” (Schwandt et al., 2007:11). As such, the interpretations of the research study are socially constructed and possess cognitive, social and political dimensions (Schwandt et al., 2007).

Qualitative inquiry argues that there is no single convergent reality. Rather multiple realities are inherent in the real world and these realities are socially constructed to produce diverging inquiry with the possibility of reaching different conclusions from the same set of data, arising from differing values and belief systems. This emphasizes the need for the realities to be studied holistically, so as to encompass the interrelationships that exist between variables. As such, action is illuminated by the explanation of the interacting factors, events and processes that led to it. The fact that a qualitative researcher can be objective about the phenomenon under study is rejected. Rather, the researcher and the respondents are in an interactive relationship of “mutual and simultaneous influence” (Lincoln and Guba, 1986:17) where both parties are able to learn together and from one another. The nature of qualitative inquiry also abandons the fact that the truth is context-free. Consequently, qualitative
inquiry argues against the assumption that generalizations from a research study “can
and should be sought” (Lincoln and Guba, 1986:17). Instead, acknowledging the
boundedness in time and context of human nature, qualitative inquiry aims to produce
“idiographic working hypotheses” (Lincoln and Guba, 1986:17) that are related to
specific contexts. Therefore, the criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity were put
forward as criteria for qualitative inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1986).

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is sub-divided into categories: credibility, transferability,
dependability and confirmability. The conventional inquiry criteria parallel to these
are internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity, respectively.
Credibility is established in this study by prolonged engagement with the
phenomenon and participants to “identify saliences in the situation” (Lincoln and
Guba, 1986:18). Triangulation of the data and member checks also contribute to the
credibility of the study.

Member checks involve “the continuous and informal theory testing of information
by soliciting reaction of respondents” (Lincoln and Guba, 1986:19) of the
researcher’s reconstruction of the interviews and observations.

Transferability is established with thick and descriptive data that provide narrative on
the context, so as to enable judgements about the level of fit of the research findings
to be made by other researchers who apply all or part of the findings to a further
study. Dependability and confirmability is established by an audit trail of the process
of data collection and analysis of the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1986).
Authenticity

The second criterion of naturalistic inquiry is authenticity. Authenticity is sub-divided into fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity and tactical authenticity. Fairness identifies the subjective nature of, and consequently the existence of “value-pluralism”, in naturalistic inquiry. The criterion of fairness seeks to ensure that the research findings are presented in as balanced a way as possible, although the notion of balance is itself problematic, due to the possibility that “certain values will be diminished and their holders exploited” holders (Lincoln and Guba, 1986:20); while the values of others will be enhanced, to the advantage of their. In other words, the empowerment of some stakeholders will inevitably result in the impoverishment of other stakeholders. Therefore, the researcher has a role to ensure that all stakeholders are empowered from the conclusions of the research study, such that the process of giving recommendations is a negotiated one, ensuring fairness and providing “a balanced view [that] presents all constructions and the values that undergird them” (Lincoln and Guba, 1986:20).

Fairness was achieved in the design of the research instrument by ensuring that different values and belief systems are explored with the key points and reasons for not adopting them, and the reasons for adopting an alternative set of values and belief systems are presented in the research study. Fairness, ontological and tactical authenticity were achieved at the interpretation stages by the member checks undertaken in the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1986).

Authentication also refers to the ability of the research study to contribute to an
increased appreciation of the complexities (in the phenomenon being studied and/or
the research process) that may previously have been poorly appreciated or not
appreciated at all. That is, the study has educative authenticity if it raises the level of
consciousness of stakeholders to that of a more “sophisticated and enriched
construction” (Lincoln and Guba, 1986:22). Readers of the study should be able to
understand the constructions of others who might possess different values and belief
systems. While educative authenticity does not attempt to accommodate all values, it
simply tries to increase the understandings of stakeholders and readers of the
phenomenon being studied. Therefore, this study provided an opportunity of feedback
to respondents, should they wish to access its findings.

The results from the study have been disseminated through presentations and oral
narratives. Finally, catalytic authentication was achieved through the facilitation and
stimulation of action, following the presentation of the research findings, which have
influenced the research process of the Africapitalism project, the research project the
researcher is working on at post-doctoral level. The table below provides a summary
of the criteria to ensure the quality of this study, together with the techniques that
were applied to ensure that the criteria are met (Lincoln and Guba, 1986).
Figure 5-2: Techniques to establish trustworthiness and authenticity

### Triangulation

Triangulation, the use of different techniques for data collection, ensures the trustworthiness and authenticity of the data. Interviews are time-consuming and provide subjective information. As such, it was important that questions were as carefully worded as possible. Participants were also asked if they understood the question, and the summary of the comments was shared following the discussion to ensure that what was intended was understood. There is also the possibility of interview bias. Interview bias occurs when there is a distortion of judgment. This definition of bias is also subjective, as what might be a fair and unbiased point of view for one person, might be judged as prejudiced by another person. The key to
mitigate this is to constantly question the data and adopt a critical attitude towards the interpretation of data. This required discipline. The research strategy of using a multi-method approach to collecting data strengthens the research design, as it allowed the data to be triangulated (Bell, 2010; Bell and Opie, 2002).

The process of triangulation reduces the risks of measurement, sampling and procedural bias. The risk of measurement bias arises in data collection, while sampling bias occurs when the population being studied is not covered in entirety. In reality, it is difficult to collect data from the entire population, but the use of multiple methods ensures that sufficient data is collected from the sample by utilizing different methods of collection. The member check sent to all participants also contributed to the quality of the data. In short, triangulation allowed for the strengths of each method to be maximized and contributed to the quality of data collection. Moreover, it reduced errors that may arise in data analysis. This research study is triangulated by the use of multiple sources of data collection and by the member check (Insch et al., 1997; Saunders et al., 2009).

To establish trustworthiness and authenticity, the data is presented objectively and in a clear manner. The data was triangulated with other sources of data collection and in comparison with extant literature. In this way, “the reader is able to follow the researcher’s argument [and] assess the validity of the findings, but form his/her opinion” (Iacono et al., 2009: 45).
5.10 Ethical Considerations

Social inquiry is a practice and understanding human behaviour and capturing that knowledge into public form involves moral and political commitments. Moral issues of human agency and political factors of technology, institutionalization and professionalism all affect the practice of social inquiry. As such, ethical considerations must be cogitated, as researchers and respondents relate to one another on the socio-temporal occasion of the research, and it is important to determine the role and responsibility that the researcher has in and to the society (Schwandt, 2000).

Ethics are the “norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and relationships with others” (Cooper and Schindler, 2008:34). Ethical issues arise in research, as “qualitative researchers are guests in a private world” (Stake, 2000:447). This is because the portrayal of lives and expressions of others present risks of exposure, embarrassment and self-esteem. Researchers should therefore have good manners and observe the code of ethics. The ethical issues to consider in a research study commence from the research design phase and continue through to the data collection, data storage, data analysis and the presentations of findings phases. These considerations include confidentiality, security of the researchers, particularly in deciding the location of the interview.

An ethical issue that runs through the research process is that the research should not cause “embarrassment, harm or any material disadvantage” (Saunders et al., 2009: 160,184). Ethical problems and issues that have been anticipated include asking for corroborative information from those in a more junior position to respondents.
However, it was decided that this might place this category of respondents in a
disadvantaged light, and might cause embarrassment to those respondents in more
senior positions. Therefore, this course of action was not pursued, and was eliminated
from the research design. In its place, documentary analysis of communications and
analyses of leadership behaviour in the airline industry were undertaken, as these
included commentaries from other members of the organization.

Following the guidelines from the University’s research ethics committee, this
research study did not fall under the parameters of receiving opinions from the
research ethics committee, as it does not need one. That notwithstanding, researcher
sensitivity to the effect of the study on participants was upheld throughout the study
(Saunders et al., 2009).

The CIT requires a skilled interviewer. The researcher undertook interview training,
read extensively on how to conduct interviews to ensure that the skills of
understanding and handling emotional distress, establishing a rapport of trust and
confidence, required for the CIT interview were gained prior to the interviewing.
Pilot interviews were carried out to test the research design. Participants were
informed about the use of a tape recorder to record discussions, and they were offered
the opportunity to review the draft report findings for comment.

The data collected has been stored anonymously after transcription and personal
information will be stored in accordance with the guidance provided in the Data
Protection Act, 1998. Confidentiality was offered to all participants.
5.11 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the main qualitative research methods that were considered for this study, and the rationale behind the choice of two methods: semi-structured interviews in the form of conversations and documentary analysis of autobiographical writings of senior executives in the airline industry. The design of the research instrument was discussed in detail, with an explanation provided for the use of the Critical Incident Technique to guide the collection and analysis of the data. The Tacit Knowledge Framework was also used to analyse the data and the findings of the study, together with suggestions for future research, are presented in chapters six through to ten.
Chapter Six

Leading in the Airline Industry: In their own words

6.1 Introduction

The main data collection stage of the study comprised twenty-one participants. The data was collected using the research instrument outlined in chapter five. The results are presented according to the format presented in chapter five, which are: understanding leadership, leadership in the airline industry and the Tacit Knowledge Framework. The categories ‘understanding leadership’ and ‘leading in the airline industry’ are presented in this chapter, and the ‘Tacit Knowledge Framework’ is discussed in chapters seven, eight and nine. The chapters (seven to nine) contain substantial quotes from the participants in order to present thick description, rich data and evidence of the conversations. The results from the study were triangulated with the results the literature and as such, the chapter provides a rich understanding of senior level leadership behaviour in the context of the airline industry.

6.2 General Observation from the study

An important observation in this study was the proportion of women to men in senior positions in the global airline industry. In this research, the percentage of women in this study was fifteen percent, with only three women out of a total of twenty-one participants. This scarcity of women in elite leadership positions has been extensively researched with various theories put forward to support the claim that female leaders are discriminated against in senior positions, due to prejudice and the stereotypes. This is not unique to the airline industry alone and a scarcity of female leaders is
observed in other industries as well, although there are some industries (e.g. education healthcare, social work), where women are better represented in senior positions, as revealed by Eagly and Carli (2004) in their research on the effects of gender on leadership.

6.3 Understanding Leadership

It is important to understand leadership behaviour in the context in which it is enacted, as leaders and the process of leadership do not occur in a vacuum, and “leadership is the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others in particular contexts around specific tasks” (Spillane et al., 2004:5). This section introduces the participants of the study and provides their responses to the question: ‘What does leadership mean to you?’ As expected, the responses revealed several meanings of leadership to encompass the traits, skills and dispositions of a leader, and this range is also represented in the diversity of theories that seek to define the ‘amorphous’ phenomenon that is leadership (Bennis, 2007).

Leadership comes from a natural affinity to lead:

Abi:

“I do think that one of the innate qualities of leadership comes through what will be a natural form to start with, and a natural affinity to do it, it’s an intent in my opinion. Leadership to me is making decisions, taking risks, and being passionate. All three mainstays of leadership, in order to engage those around you, and bring them with you, have a way of quickly analysing a situation and finding a solution, that means decision making.”
Abi’s explanation that leadership ability is an innate quality is reminiscent of the trait theory of leadership. She refers to leadership as requiring, at a basic level, a natural form to begin with, and it is thought provoking that she extends this to what a leader does. Then she went on to classify this into three, the three mainstays of leadership, which she defined as making decisions, taking risks and being passionate. For Abi, leadership started with the individual, extended to the people around and included working with them to make decisions.

By so doing, she provided some of the traits, skills or dispositions that a leader should have: the ability to make decisions, take risks and be passionate, which are akin to Avolio’s (2007) and Bennis’ (2007) lists of the competencies of leadership and resonant with the resurgence in focus on the trait-based perspectives in leadership studies (Zaccaro, 2007).

Allegra, the second female in the study, presented a similar viewpoint, indicating that leadership involves action. In her opinion, leadership was about working with others to find a solution:

Allegra: “I see leadership more as a verb rather than a noun. How do you get parties to work together? How do you develop that understanding, how do you move things forward? How do you deal with crises whether it is political, natural, economic or social – and it is leading through that.”
It is important to note the words used by Allegra in her response, she provides a participatory understanding of leadership, emphasizing working together with others and also the action-phase of leadership. This appears to agree with Eagly and Carli’s (2004) argument that women leaders tended to view leadership as more participatory and democratic.

One of the participants gave examples of certain qualities that a leader should exhibit:

Seth:

“Leadership is primarily about integrity and passion. By integrity I mean the integrity of the individual that would be the leader and under integrity I mean in particular, reliability and honesty. Passion is important because with passion I refer more to people. You lead people and you manage things. So there has to be a passion for people.”

Seth defined integrity as comprised of reliability and honesty. This confirms Bennis’ (2007) argument that a leader should have vision, the ability to motivate others, be trustworthy and optimistic, and have integrity.

It is noteworthy that unprompted, Seth distinguished between leading and managing, as “you lead people and you manage things”. While this is a different view of what a manager is, who is responsible for others, it confirms Zalzeznik’s (1998) view that managers, in addition to their roles of project managing and maintaining structure in organizations, also have leadership roles.
Leadership as a toolbox:

Two participants, Fitz and Xavier, perhaps reflecting a male viewpoint of leadership, referred to leadership as a toolbox, where the leader had different tools in his toolbox, which he selects according to the requirements of the situation at hand to deliver results.

Fitz:

“Leadership is a tool used to be more effective in delivering on the results, which one pursues.”

This reflects the continuous process of leadership. It is interesting that Fitz used the word ‘pursues’, revealing a sense that a leader should be proactive in discovering more effective ways to lead others and deliver results, answering the question: “leadership for what?” This is in accordance with the literature on the role of leadership in driving forward the goals of organizations, particularly in dynamic industries (Antonakis et al., 2004).

Imran echoed Fitz’s comments:

“Leadership is something you have to have to drive forward an organization. It is a combination of having a strategic vision of the future of where the organization has to get to, and then an operating capability of driving the whole organization down that path.”

Imran’s definition extends leadership from the process of leadership to the qualities that are required by a leader, which he explained was needed “to drive forward an
organization.” He stated that vision was important, but was not enough for this. Rather, vision has to be combined with a capability to implement it. This view of leadership to drive forward an organization is comparable to the theory of transformational leadership where the leader is future-oriented and committed to achieving goals that continue to drive the organization forward (Eagly and Carli, 2004).

Imran went on to explain some of the factors that contribute to the effective implementation of a leader’s vision:

“Part of leadership is making sure you’ve got the right people around you, that they’ve got very clear objectives as what they are doing to contribute to that strategic direction. And once of course you sit down with them to make sure they are absolutely on track to complete their piece of the puzzle in order that the whole organization moves forward.”

This comment echoes Avolio’s (2007) argument that leadership constitutes an interaction of several elements of leadership, including followers, the context, the time and the leader. It also confirms House’s (1996) work on leadership as encompassing more than the traits the leader has, thus including the people whom the leader works with. In addition, the leader has to be able to communicate clearly with his/her followers to ensure that they are able to deliver their parts.

Leadership requires vision

Vision is important for leadership, particularly at the senior management level. Vision refers to the ability to create an outlook for the organization, to create goals
and objectives for the organization. Vision is a key requirement for leadership and differentiator between leaders and managers (Zalzeznik, 1998; Kotter, 1998; Conger 1998, Rotemberg and Saloner, 2000).

Christian: “You will find that the most successful people in aviation are those people who have a vision. Leadership is all about vision, what do you see for the organization, where do you see yourself.”

Jerome: “It is up to the top executive to become a true leader, devoted to creating an environment in which employees can accept and execute their responsibilities with confidence and finesse. He must communicate with his employees, imparting the company’s vision and listening to what they need to make that vision a reality. To succeed, he can no longer be an isolated and autocratic decision-maker. Instead, he must be a visionary, a strategist, an informer, a teacher and an inspirer.”

Allegra: “The starting point for any leadership is that you are able to create and communicate a common vision for your team.”

Allegra’s comment above highlights an important aspect of vision, i.e. being able to create something, a future that might not necessarily exist. This means that leadership also incorporates elements of problem-setting, where the leader explores the environment and discovers problems that s/he then goes ahead to formulate strategies with which to find solutions to the problems.

Allegra’s comment also points to the notion that the vision needs to be
communicated. She explained what this communication entails.

Allegra: “I think that is very important. It needs to be clear, it needs to be compelling and you need to tailor it, you need to be able to adapt what that [the vision] is, so that it makes sense to people.”

She explained that the created vision needs to be communicated in a clear and compelling manner, so as to enable others to buy in to the vision, and this may require tailoring the message so that people understand what the vision is, entailing elements of transformational leadership (Rotemberg and Saloner, 2000; Conger, 1998; Antonakis et al., 2004).

This ability to visualize a future and get people to buy in and understand where the organization is going is also echoed by Hans’ and Khalid’s comments below.

Hans: “I’ve worked for some people who are incredibly good managers, but I won’t classify them as a leader in any shape or form. They are not providing any vision for where they want to go. Innovation, I think, is a strong aspect of leadership, not necessarily of itself, but particularly people feeling that they understand where you are going as a leader.”

Khalid: “You have a vision and you share it and you can pull people along on a journey with you. And you can be, you don’t necessarily have to be ruthless, you’ve got to be assertive about who is going to make the journey with you, who can actually get you there.”
Khalid also commented on the importance of communication

Khalid: “communicating, so everybody understands what their role is and they understand the work that has to be done.”

The importance of people in the process of implementing a leader’s vision:

Gihan: “What leadership boils down to, is people. Whatever your style, whatever your method, you need to believe in yourself, your ideas and your staff. Nobody can be successful alone and you cannot be a great leader without great people to lead.”

Jerome: “A business executive need not have detailed, specialised knowledge. I am the president of a large airline, but I can neither fly a plane nor repair one. A leader...must have much more general qualities: good business sense and a broad understanding of how things fit together – the relationships among individuals and groups inside and outside the company and the interplay among the various elements of the company’s operations. What is required is strategic thinking, or “helicopter sense” – a talent for rising above the details to see the lay of the land. The ability to understand and direct change is crucial for effective leadership. The leader can create a secure working environment that fosters flexibility and innovation. The leader is a listener, communicator and educator – an emotionally expressive and inspiring person who can create the right atmosphere rather than make all the decisions himself.”

Christian: “Leadership is all about vision, what do you see for the organization, where do you see yourself, how do you interact with people.”
Hans: “I think it is about having a vision which effectively says ‘this is where we are going to go’, and the ability to take people with you along that particular line. [Leadership] comes down to inspiration and one is about vision.”

Khalid:

“When I look at a good leader, I see someone that has got a good vision and can share that vision and you can go on a journey with them. You know where you are and what you are going to get to.”

This identification of the importance of sharing the vision with the right people, who are able to work with the leader to actualize the vision, is critical. Particularly, as earlier studies of the literature on leadership have focused on the leader without an appreciation for the role that people play in achieving the set objectives. As Bennis (2007:4) argues, “leadership exists only when there are followers.” Further, while it is important to be able to set the right vision, it is also very critical that the vision is effectively implemented (Avolio, 2007).

Xavier provided some insight on the process of implementing the vision:

Xavier:

“Leadership for me is about how you build the team, how you improve people, how you impart your vision, your direction, and then how you make sure that that is executed.”

Xavier’s comment provided a comprehensive summary of what leadership meant:
building a team, developing others, sharing vision and executing the vision effectively. His comment resonates with the transformational theory of leadership where the leader motivates others and develops them to be leaders themselves (Bass, 1990).

However, there was one unexpected comment from Andre who said:

Andre: “I believe organizations thrive under a benevolent dictator.”

He qualified this by explaining that “committees create mediocrity”, as committees require consensus building, which on the one hand guarantees that “nothing really horrible occurs”, but on the other hand means that “nothing really super” occurs either. Andre’s comment about committees came from his experience of working with committees and his frustration with the pace at which decisions were made. His comment on the need for benevolent dictatorship echoes Feuer’s (2011) argument that organizations thrive under benevolent dictatorships, where benevolent dictatorship is one where the leader does the right thing for the right reasons and makes the decisions without spending too much time on building consensus with others. Chapters seven and eight present more discussion on risk, decision-making and effective communication with a diverse audience.

Leadership requires a reflective viewpoint:

Carlos: “I think it [leadership] is something you have to think about, because one of the most important things I’ve learnt is that you need to be conscious and aware of how you lead. So you can naturally be good at something, but it’s always good to be self-aware. When you have a team of people who look to you for motivation and for
inspiration, you have to be conscious that you are a role model, and you have a very important role to play in bringing those people and giving them opportunities and leading by example.”

His comment provided a deeper meaning of leadership, where the leader is aware of how s/he is perceived to be by others, and introduces the notion of leader as a role model and mentor. This characteristic of the leader, in setting an example, is resonated in the responses provided by Jonathan and Oliver.

Jonathan:
“Leadership means showing others the best way at all times.”

Oliver:
“I would hope that it is positive, encouraging and lead by example...I would hope the lead comes from what they see me do.”

A different response was received from Jerome. Jerome defined a leader as a person who is able to:

Jerome:
“Bring together the knowledge that is available and then create the pre-requisites for the work to be done.”

Jerome’s definition portrayed the leader as a bricoleur, a person who brings together available information and knowledge and is able to fuse them to create objectives
The responses revealed that understandings of leadership were not as demarcated as the academic debate environment would like them to be, into distinct theories or categories. Rather, by providing some characteristics of a good leader and sharing the factors that influence the process of leadership that participants related, leadership is an important phenomenon with several components: person, followers, situation, context. In essence, leadership is the ability to influence others to achieve set objectives; and understanding leadership behaviour requires the appreciation of the process of leadership as an interactive web, comprised of the leader, the followers, organization and context (Grint, 1997; Sternberg, 2000).

This section has introduced the first part of the findings from the study; how participants understood the meaning of leadership. As mentioned earlier, leadership does not occur in a vacuum, but is context-specific, and the next section presents findings on leading in the airline industry.

6.4 Leading in the airline industry

Bennis defines leadership as a tripod with three parts made up of the leader, the followers and the common goal, which depends on the context of leadership. Following the general overview on leadership provided by the participants, the conversation was guided from abstract and general understandings of leadership towards a more specific understanding of leadership in the context of the airline industry. Understanding the context within which leadership occurs is important to
understand leadership behaviour as it influences the leader, the followers and the results of the process of leadership. Different contexts might lead to different ways of assessing leadership behaviour, and effective leadership behaviour in one context might be ineffective in another. Avolio (2007) also argues that a focus on the industry type of leadership provides an integrative contribution to the understanding of leadership (Avolio, 2007; Bennis, 2007).

This section presents the results from the conversations focused on understanding the context within which the participants operated, in an attempt to understand more about why and how the participants came to work in the industry, why they have remained in the industry, and what their experiences of leading in the industry have been.

Motivation for working in the airline industry

The choice to work in a particular industry or organization depends on the intrinsic and extrinsic features of the job. O'Reilly and Caldwell (1980) argue that intrinsic job features, such as the opportunity to learn and for promotion, result in higher job satisfaction than the extrinsic features of salary and location of the organization. This argument lends itself to the motivations that participants in this study indicated for deciding to work in the airline industry. The participants used very distinct phrases in talking about why they came to work in the industry.

Attraction to the industry

Carlos and Fitz both were both ‘attracted’ to the industry:
Carlos:

“I was always attracted to aviation in terms of what it had to offer. I was pretty young, I saw an opportunity and went for it.”

Fitz:

“The sector becomes part of you. It is a very engaging sector, and I guess anything which involves travel, encountering people from all over the world, has an element of attractiveness. It is a very attractive sector in that sense.”

Oliver described the industry as a sexy business.

Oliver:

“It is a bit of a sexy business and that involves the planes. Planes are sexy when it comes down to it, and that’s why we have planes all over the offices. You go into any airline guy’s office and it’s always the same, some version of planes around.”

Oliver’s comment on the ‘sexy’ nature of the airline industry and his reason for having planes all over the office, and also referring to airline ‘guy’, while he means male executives in the airline industry, revealed a male perspective on working in the airline industry. While it is not the premise of this study to focus on gender and leadership, it is important to highlight relevant observations in the discussions on findings. The typification of Oliver’s response as a male perspective could be stereotypical, and although it is not the intention to conform to stereotypes, as not all stereotypes are accurate, stereotypes do influence expectations of behaviour and characteristics, and in some cases, are self-fulfilling, as people behave or use
language that confirms stereotypical behaviour, as in Oliver’s example above (Eagly and Carli, 2004).

Love was another word that was used in relation to working in the airline industry:

Ibrahim: “I love this industry.”

Imogen: “I found out that I loved aviation.”

Fun was another word used to describe working in the airline industry.

Jeremy:

“You meet people. You talk with people every day and you are having fun.”

Imran:

“It [the airline industry] took me to a life of living outside the UK for about 12 years, (...) and I thoroughly enjoyed it. In those days, there was no computerization, so when you had a flight planned, to decide how much fuel an aeroplane needed to fly for 10 hours, you had to get out meteorological charts, the fire drill, the operating manuals that told you about the fuel flows through the engines, and all that stuff, work it out manually. So those were real old days of old aviation, and it was fun.”

The above comments present an interesting conceptualisation of work as fun, providing some evidence of a positive attitude towards working for an airline. For Imran, this made working in the industry very interesting as compared to jobs in other industries. Thus, the degree to which the individual fits with the environment correlates with the level of commitment to the industry, and this argument
characterizes the reason participants gave for continuing to work in the airline industry (Ford, McLaughlin et al. 2003; Blau, 1987).

The participants explained that the unique role the industry played in the global economy and its dynamism were two of the major reasons for continuing to work in the industry:

Carlos:
“It touches on most people’s lives in some way, it’s incredibly dynamic, and it’s a global interesting business ... and once you are in, there's a lot of opportunity to do different roles, to move around a lot, and it’s a pretty interesting community. It’s never dull, so you kinda get hooked.”

Jerome shared: “The richest reward of all is being proud of your work. I remember how those I respected frowned when I took my first job at the tour operators. If I have a job that allows me to help people have the best weeks of their lives, then no professor in the world can tell me my business is of questionable worth.”

Hans:
“The airline industry is absolutely fascinating. I mean I could’ve worked in, my first job would’ve been drug manufacturing or something and I don’t think I would’ve enjoyed it quite so much. The airline industry is huge, vast, complex, heavily regulated and such that every day ... you think what the hell is going to happen today?”
Raoul shared:

“I certainly like the fact that it is a service industry, I think that is an interesting to be involved with so people oriented and you have to be able to deal with that so well and that has its challenges, if you are selling consumer goods, it’s really around distribution and ultimately they are all very similar.”

Raoul’s comment above emphasizes one of the key characteristics of the airline industry, i.e. that it is a service industry with a high-level of contact with customers, presenting the challenge of ensuring that customers are provided with quality service (Yee et al., 2013).

“I think it is really interesting watching the delivery, particularly, given that it is kind of culture based, so many airlines are based on nationality. [His airline’s] style versus Singapore style, and those types of things, really interesting, and from my perspective working in [this] market is that idea of [our] brand operating internationally what that means, what the expectations are of [our nationals] travelling on [the airline] versus people coming to [the country] on [the national carrier] and how we manage those type of things is interesting.”

Raoul also made a very insightful observation on the culture-based nature of service delivery by airlines. His comments provide deep insights on the issue of service delivery.
delivery by comparing the different expectations of the airline’s service delivery by different customers, again highlighting an additional challenge some airlines face as ambassadors for their national cultures.

Most of the participants have worked in the industry for over twenty years. An observation that Carlos made:

“I think other sectors have higher churn. Again I’ve not seen data, but ... I’ll be very surprised if there's many sectors that have the stability of aviation in terms of people working in their jobs.”

Carlos’ comment about the low level of churn in the airline industry was an interesting one, and detailed online searches were made to corroborate the level of churn in the airline industry. However, concrete evidence was not found to substantiate Carlos’ statement. This is a suggestion for further research, to establish the level of churn and stability in the airline industry, as compared to other sectors in the travel and tourism industry, and other industries such as the financial services industry. One reason for the low level of churn could perhaps be due to the fact that some employees in the industry have always wanted to work in the industry and have had little inclination to leave, as exemplified in Oliver’s case. Oliver has had a fairly typical career in the airline industry; he has always wanted to work in the industry, started immediately after school and continued to work in the industry for over twenty years:

“I was one of those geeky kids who always wanted to be in the airline business.”
One advantage to the low levels of churn observed in the industry is the opportunity it presents for leaders to develop deep technical knowledge of and extensive experience within the industry. However, there is a risk that low levels of churn limit innovativeness and the opportunity to learn from others (Goodall and Pogrebna, 2012).

Carlos’ comment below provides insight into the challenges of low levels of churn in the industry:

“It’s probably an issue in some stage for certain people where you’ve got very little churn. I suppose in other businesses, the more churn, the more opportunities there are for young people coming up and that's an issue if everyone is staying all the time and you have very little churn I guess in terms of opportunity. If you are growing it’s okay, you’ve got apprenticeships, and people on the older end of the spectrum retiring and there is an opportunity, but it’s slower.”

He also highlights the need for a change, as the industry adapts to the requirements of operating in a tough environment:

“In my time, we very much used to recruit internally. So you move people around internally. In recent years, that’s changed, and we are looking externally a lot more for expertise. So very often, you train up into something, whereas in recent times, for example, the last two people I’ve recruited have been external and they’ve been professionals ... In the old days, what you’d do is you’d identify somebody in the business who is very good, and you can train them into the role. You can still do that
if the person is capable. We still do it, but we rarely went outside whereas we are doing a lot more now. A lot more expertise has been brought in in specialist areas, because the business became much more specialised. Less general, more specialised. I think that’s just the way things move.”

Carlos’ comment regarding the level of churn in the airline industry was an interesting one, and although data on churn in the airline industry could not be located, the fact that most of the participants in this study have spent their entire working career in the airline industry, corroborates his comment. It will be interesting to understand why the airline industry has a lower level of churn as compared to other industries. This is a future research possibility.

The role of the industry in the global socio-economic environment

Participants referred to the important role of the industry in facilitating travel and the movement of people and goods. This is resonant with the values the participants placed on the industry and echoes Judge and Bretz’s (1992) argument that the attributes and characteristics of a work environment affected job choice decisions, including the decision to remain in a certain environment.

Oliver explained that the industry played an important part as the facilitator of the movement of people and goods:

“Travel is important for humanity … you can’t go solve a health crises in East Africa if you don’t get there. You can’t go give a philosophy seminar in China if you can’t
get there, so we facilitate a lot of work the world needs in ways that if we don’t do it, if it’s not done in this kind of, sure you can take sailboats like they did in the old days, but you couldn’t do it effectively.”

Fitz:

“It certainly helps many other sectors to generate much more, so I guess it is the multiplier effect, our sector. We are more like a tool, to help the tourism sector, the distribution sector, manufacturing sector.”

Seth:

“Getting people together, it is enlarging horizons. The product as such of aviation is mobility and I think is one of the key ingredients of freedom, it is the ability to move out of one country, one region, and quickly get into another.”

The above comments point to a salient fact: human activity is made possible by transportation; as such, transport infrastructure is a vital aspect of society. The airline industry is an agent of globalisation, as it provides connectivity and access for people and goods at the local, regional, national and international levels, through the creation of more transport flows, linking geographical spaces for economic and social purposes. Therefore, it is important to appreciate its critical contribution to trade, investments, tourism and societal development (Grübler, 1990; Carruthers et al., 2008; Janelle and Beuthe, 1997).

However, Seth explained that the industry’s role in facilitating connections was undervalued by the industry itself:
Seth: “This enlarging horizons, meeting people, is actually quite intriguing, because I like to say that the industry does not actually understand the value of what it is providing. If you take the telecoms industry, you will find that there are pictures when they show themselves, when they market themselves of smiling human beings have a smart phone in their hands and the motto is we bring people together. Whereas in actual fact, in the airline industry, you find too many airlines that show aircrafts and engines in their pictures. It is not the telecoms’ industry that brings people together ... they are still in their respective offices. They are not brought together, whereas in the aviation industry, we’ll bring people together. Yet we show the engines and the aircraft. We don’t show the people that come together.”

Seth shared that the airline industry is not advertised to highlight its role as the connector of people. However, there have been some advertisements by international airlines such as the WestJet Christmas Miracle advert, and the British Airways ‘Bringing People Together’ advert (see Bender, 2013 and London Air Travel, 2013). Sheppard (2002) provides a compelling argument for this under-appreciation of the airline industry’s role as a provider of access. He argues that the underappreciating arises as a result of the type of product, which is one that provides a flow, to link places together, towards the consumption of other products, including that of the industry, but because its key role is a conduit for the consumption of other products, the airline industry itself is not as valued for the important role it plays in connecting people and places (Janelle and Beuthe, 1997; Sheppard, 2002).
Seth added, “so I find this aspect of bringing people together acutely satisfying, motivational and one of the key enrichments in my life has been to understand the diversity, just of the region of Europe.”

It is rather unique that Seth referred to his career in the airline industry as one of the key enrichments in his life, crossing the line between the personal and the professional:

“It’s an industry where I have met a lot of wonderful people that have had a huge impact on my life and made me very happy.”

The internationality of the industry and the opportunity to meet new people
Another characteristic of the industry shared by participants was the opportunity it provided to meet new people and to gain exposure to other cultures. While this does not relate directly to their leadership behaviour, the importance placed on this intrinsic feature by participants reveals their personal characteristics, which they sought to fill by working in an organization whose characteristics aligned with theirs, and will have had an impact on their leadership behaviour (Judge and Bretz, 1992).

Oliver:
“There’s just something about it. There’s the inherent internationalness of it, a lot of people go to school to do international business, but then what do they really do with it, very little, maybe they handle foreign exchange transactions once a month or maybe they call the office in London from time to time. But we do international.”
Robert:

“I always wanted to travel to meet people ... I always had that urge. But at one point, you have to settle somehow ... and the industry which helped me to still be able to travel, to see the world and to settle in a company, was the airline industry. I was all over the world. It was great! I like to meet people, I like to meet civilization, I like to understand how it works in other countries, and that is what I did, [the industry] allowed me to do that, so that is why I stayed that long, twenty eight years.”

Robert’s response touched on travel, but his comment on travel was from a personal viewpoint that he had always wanted to travel to meet people, and after some time in another industry, he realized that he needed to combine his passion for travel with a ‘settled’ job, so he left his previous role, and decided to work in the airline industry, as it met his two intrinsic needs: passion for travel and a stable job.

However, the participants also shared some of the challenges they faced, while they worked in the industry:

**Low profit margins**

The participants shared that the industry had several challenges, of which the most important was its low profit margins:

Carlos:

“The industry is a very unprofitable business. It’s shockingly unprofitable, and there's very few airlines making money.”
Robert:

“The margins in the airline industry - and that is the bad part of the whole thing – it is very small, and the break-even point is very high.”

This inherent unprofitability increases the pressure on senior executives. High fixed costs for aircraft, including taxes, labour and fuel and the challenge of sacrificing the passenger yield to keep seats filled. The challenge to maintain passenger yield is also related to the time-dependent nature of airline seats, where once the aircraft has taken off, unsold seats on the particular flight expire, as they cannot be sold to another customer (Costa et al., 2002; Borenstein, 2011).

Ibrahim:

“It is unique in that it never makes any money either, so you are under constant pressure all the time to improve productivity and reduce costs.”

The comments on low-profitability are similar to Costa et al.’s (2002) who argued that the airline industry faces more volatile conditions than many other industries. These conditions include increasing fuel costs, increasing competition due to the expansion of low-cost carriers, labour costs, exposure to financial, security and terrorism crises, as well as natural disasters; while maintaining safety records (Low and Lee, 2014).

Rapidly-changing

The airline industry has experienced rapid change. Deregulation of the industry, the rise of technology, the threat of terrorism and security concerns have contributed to
the changes in the environment within which the airline industry operates. The environment has become fast moving and less harmonized, a challenge that Seth referred to as “confusion galore,” and he gave an example of this:

Seth:

“An aircraft crashed and the first survivors who scrambled out of the wreckage sent some photos from their mobile phones to their [family] who were taken by surprise who then contacted the airline who then contacted the agent at the gate of the airport who said the aircraft had just landed and is taxiing and so he had been unaware of the fact of what happened. So the social media was so quick, even before the airline themselves realized what happened, this speed of change and the scope of change is so fundamentally different to what we experienced ten, fifteen years ago.”

This dynamic environment requires leaders to be able to anticipate and to be quick to comprehend the scope of changes, since especially in many cases, they have multiple consequences. This anticipation and comprehension have to lead to quick action. Leaders also have to be able to quickly change their strategic position and modify behaviour to ensure that goals are implemented and executed in a timely manner (Harrington et al., 2005).

Robert shared that the rise of the low-cost carrier had completely changed the model of operating in the airline industry. The day after our conversation, he sent a follow-up email on his reflections:

“The challenge of the new society is that we have moved from a hierarchic society to an organic one.”
Complexity

Another challenge the industry posed to participants was its complexity. It was evident from the comments provided by participants that the complexity of the industry was one of the reasons they enjoyed working in it. This observation raised questions on the type of person for whom complexity and dynamism is attractive. This is echoed in Judge and Bretz’s (1992)’s work on individual choice of organization, based on the extent to which the characteristics of an organization and the attributes of working in it fit with his/her own personal characteristics. In this regard, it can be said that the characteristics of the airline industry, its complexity and dynamism, fit with the personal characteristics of the participants. It also leads to questions on how these participants are able to thrive in such complex environments, highlighting themes of resilience, confidence, ability to work well under pressure and a disposition towards risk-taking. These themes are discussed in chapter seven.

The industry is comprised of several component parts, and Robert provided an example of the machination of the industry by focusing on a small aspect, and in this way, he provided some context for the level of complexity inherent in leading an airline organization:

Robert:

“The smallest part of the organization, stations where the planes come in, get cleaned, where they get kerosene in, food, put the passengers and so on, which itself is already a complicated matter.”

From Robert’s comment above, an appreciation is gained for the complexity of the
internal environment of airline organizations.

This complexity, if not managed appropriately, could lead to dire consequences:

Khalid:

“It is a highly complex, capital-intensive business and you’ve got to do certain things in the right order and at the right time or you can screw the business up quite badly.”

Another complexity issue was the time-sensitive nature of the industry.

Oliver:

“One of the peculiarities of the airline business, I suppose, is that it is a very time sensitive business. If the plane is going to leave, while it's nice to have strategic projects, and we do have our sales plans and our operational plans and our action plans etc., but by definition, a lot of it is happening today, tomorrow, the next day, whether you plan for it or not. So you have to, you spend a lot more time in reactive mode, than in proactive mode.”

In my conversation with Seth, he said: “it is more appropriate to focus on the possibilities of tomorrow rather than needs today.”

I asked him: “the aviation industry looking at the need of tomorrow, isn’t it that sometimes it is so highly pressured that sometimes you really do not have the time to always look so far ahead within the aviation industry? Or do I have that wrong?”

He replied: “Well, no, you don't.” He went on to give a breakdown of the industry,
presenting an overview of the structural changes in the airline industry in the past decade. He then said, “What I find sometimes lacking is a strategic view of where we want to go ... and the courage to then implement that.”

Thus, as a reactive, rather than proactive industry, the airline industry has found itself in the position of reacting to changes in the environment, adapting rather than shaping the environment within which it operates.

Raoul provided a compelling reason for the airline’s reactive nature:

Raoul:
“I think it is a function of a little bit, it is pretty hard to make money so you don’t have the same kind of freedom, you are impacted by uncontrollable aspects so much ... we had the middle east uprising, had fuel prices going up incredibly, we had an earthquake, the city was completely destroyed, we had the tsunami in Japan ... that was completely or almost completely out of our control. I think you are always kind of on the verge of those types of things occurring. You go from making never great profit to not much money or losing money as happens across the industry and so there’s always probably a need for constant adjustment as opposed to long term. That might not be the best approach, but I don’t think it, I think because it is really hard to make money, people are always fighting to survive it, and maybe we do need a more long term outlook.”

Robert shared this unpredictability: “the big boss or the leader cannot control everything. An incident can happen.”
Xavier:

“There will always be thing that the airline business is susceptible to. When volcanic ash closes the airspace for a week, whether you are Ryanair or British Airways, it’s gonna affect you.”

Overcoming the challenges in the airline industry

Raoul and Xavier suggested that these challenges could be overcome. They provided two alternative but feasible views as to how the challenges of profitability could be tackled. Raoul suggested that the alliances presented a way to combat the issues of competition:

Raoul:

“I think you’ve got big alliances and too big alliances, now increasingly the case, you’ve got partnerships outside of the airlines. I think you are starting to see a lot more effective partnerships. It is almost as a result of the need to actually give a little bit ... this is the competition in that particular industry means nobody makes any money, it is sort of the reality. I guess you always have to have some sort of competition, otherwise you run into issues in terms of commerce commissions and otherwise.”

However, Xavier on the other hand was insistent that the issue was with the industry’s mind-set. He called for a change of this mind-set in the industry’s approach to profits, after his “religious conversion” from working with a legacy carrier to a low-cost carrier:
Xavier:

“The airline business historically has tried to be all things to all people whether you are a millionaire or you are on unemployment benefit, we can fly you. Whatever you need to go from London to Paris or you need to go to 15 cities between here and Sydney, we can help you. Whatever you’ve got a dog and you need to put it in a hold, or you’ve got a baby, we can help you. So in trying to be appeasing every whim.”

This mind-set of trying to appeal to diverse customer needs has to change, and this trend has been observed in service industries, which have been faced with diverse customer needs and increasing competition. These service industries are providing creative solutions by tailoring their product offerings, to serve the needs of one or more particular demographic(s) of customers (Costa et al., 2002).

Xavier said: “A lot of airline managers have become apologetic about profits and have an enormous quantity of excuses for why they didn’t make money. It’s oil, political unrest, the economy, everything except their ability as a manager and the low cost airlines don’t have the safety. The equity is generally private money. It’s much more entrepreneurial in terms of its performance and therefore, all of these excuses are not justifications for why you dint make money. There will always be thing that the airline business is susceptible to. When volcanic ash closes the airspace for a week, whether you are Ryanair or British Airways, it’s gonna affect you.”

He continued: “I think treating these things as challenges that need to be overcome
as opposed to excuses to explain what your poor performance, is a mind-set difference and part of that is that the low cost airlines generally target a much higher return on capital, a much higher margin. So even in a bad year they still make profit, and in a good year, they make fantastic profits. The airline business is a cash flow, turnover business. We make generally modest margins on a very big turnover, so growth is important.”

Xavier’s argument on the superior performance of low-cost carriers to legacy carriers is supported by Jarach (2004) who states that the low-cost carriers provide a simple business model that is appealing to a wider market, and therefore provides a superior economic model for air travel. While low-cost carriers are better at cost management than legacy carriers, the low-cost carriers are not exempt from challenges. They are also exposed to the challenges of external disruptions and cyclical market behaviour. However, it appears that there may be a difference in leadership attitudes towards the low-cost and legacy carriers.

Alexander: “Our strategy is about running the airline the way people want. Low fares, high capacity at busy times, flexible tickets.”

Alexander also commented that the low cost model was the way people want an airline to be run.

Borenstein (2011) suggests that the low-cost model may be better able to respond to the challenges of operating in a dynamic and highly competitive environment through restrained growth and effective cost management.
Xavier’s comment also criticized the dominant traditional model of airlines to provide a “wide geographic coverage” for travellers, as it was mentioned by Costa et al. (2002). Furthermore, he argued that the attitude towards expansion to new destinations or providing higher frequencies should change from being a “land-grab”.

Xavier:

“We use this phrase about you have to earn the right to grow. You don’t just grow because the market is there, you grow, because you are making money and you earn the right to spend more money on airplanes, because you are making money, not because you can articulate an opportunity. That is though how most other industries work. It is just we’ve convinced ourselves in the airline business it doesn’t apply to us. It’s not just about making money. It’s about having a presence, being a land-grab you need to protect that route from competition. It doesn’t matter how much you lose, as long as you stand your ground.”

Oliver also touched on the importance of restraint in leadership:

“A lot of the times, you see airlines that go crazy, expanding, and then don’t do the cutbacks, and then you are in trouble.”

When he (Oliver) was asked to open a new route:

“My initial reaction was yes, who doesn’t want to open a route, and I even got figures to show that it probably would be pretty good. The bottom line was that it wasn’t really due to our fault; the market just didn’t expand as fast as we thought it
would, but if I look back, would I have heartily endorsed it? No? The numbers, I would be a little more reticent now.”

Airlines traditionally expanded rapidly to increase their economies of scale and reduce the competitiveness gap with other service providers. However, the operating environment faced by airlines has changed in the industry, and Oliver’s comment is a significant lesson on the importance of growing slowly with regards to route expansion, aircraft investment and workforce recruitment to lower the risk. This is because when demand declines or becomes stagnant, reducing the airline’s operations is expensive and difficult (Borenstein, 2011; Fan, Tan et al., 2014).

Arguing for this reticence in expansion, Costa et al. (2002) provide an example of the high utilisation model used by some airlines in the United States and the United Kingdom. In the model, the airlines do not offer a broad coverage, rather, routes are designed to maximise the use of aircraft and also reduce operational costs, resulting in lower fares for passengers and higher profit margins.

Oliver explained that:

“I think it’s a common vice in the airline business, we never say no to a plane. You want more, yes fine, we’ll take them and that leads to a lot of things that probably should not happen and it leads to a lot of places that open and probably should not and a lot of places that get more service, and sometimes you make a good thing go bad by overwatering it. You can take something that is working very well and you put too much supply into it and it goes down the tube, because your costs have gone up, etc. etc., I think that is from an airline leadership point of view, it is always easy
Oliver’s comment is resonant with Xavier’s and both acknowledge the need for airlines to move away from the traditional and dominant model of expanding coverage, towards a more targeted approach to meeting customer needs. While this is counter to the culture in the airline industry, they shared their views on the importance of the industry needing to revise its traditional operating structure and adopt a new model that is better suited to its current operating environment, as indicated by Costa et al. (2002).

The complex external and internal environment, within which airlines have to operate, provides an appreciation for the challenges leaders face in ensuring the industry is profitable and safe. The industry has had to cope with many disruptions, fuel costs and also other shocks that include, but are not limited to, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks (9/11), rise in security issues, financial crises, natural disasters and other acts of terrorism. It is anticipated that these disruptions are to be expected in the future. However, Borenstein (2011) argues that these disruptions, which have happened over the past thirty years, should have been anticipated, and are therefore not the major causes of the lack of profitability. He argues, using the example of the profitability of the low-cost carrier in comparison to the losses of legacy airlines, that airlines through restrained expansion and effective cost management, can maintain consistent profitability. These two points, restrained growth and cost management, are paramount to the survival of airlines as the industry faces the challenges of operating in a dynamic business environment.
This identification of the failures of the current operating model in the airline industry highlights the need for a new model, and one in which leadership plays an important role. Buttressing this point, Seth acknowledged that there was a need for leaders “to encourage, motivate, to develop new models, new solutions for the problems in the airline industry.”

Synthesis

This section has presented the understandings of leadership by the participants in this study. It has also contributed to an appreciation of the uniqueness, dynamism and complexity of the airline industry. The airline industry is truly unique, as it provides a time-dependent product and operates on a global scale, connecting people and transporting goods from one region to another. In addition, the industry has to maintain safety records and leaders have to be able to ensure their organizations are well-run on a daily basis, while providing strategic vision and goals to drive their organizations forward.

The common strand that ran through their responses was their passion for the industry as the main reason for staying in the industry. They explained that this was, because it is complex, unique, dynamic, fun, fast-paced and interesting, as well as it presented them with an opportunity to explore the world and meet people from all over the world. In their words, the industry was a truly global industry.

The participants also shared some of the challenges they faced in their role as senior executives. The challenges include operating in a rapidly changing environment, particularly the move from a hierarchical to an organic environment. The wider scope
of change and the speed of change due to technology and globalization also presented challenges that included managing information effectively.

The participants admitted that the fast-paced, dynamic nature of the industry presented challenges for leadership and reduced the extent to which leaders were able to proactively shape their environment. Rather, the airline industry and its leadership have been mostly reactive, although participants highlighted the need for the industry to be more proactive and strategic and the need for a new type of airline leadership, to enable the industry to better cope with its current challenges, and the challenges of the future.

One observation following the analyses of these responses is the revelation of the participants’ dispositions to risk and capacity for stress by choosing to work in an internally and externally complex environment. The fact that the participants are in senior positions in the airline industry presents evidence of their ability to thrive under pressure and suggests emotional strength and resilience (Loehr and Schwartz, 2001).

This observation leads to the question, “what are the characteristics of an airline leader?” Another observation is the introduction of terms of masculine discourse in the airline industry. This observation is supported by the proportion of male to female participants and the choice of words used by participants to explain their motivations for working in the airline industry, a fast-paced, high-pressured, complex industry, where little or no profit is made. Another observation is the introduction of themes of decision-making, attitudes to risks, consensus and communication with various
audiences. These themes are captured in the discussions in chapters seven, eight and nine, and also assimilated in the Tacit Knowledge Inventory for airline leaders, presented in Appendix Seven.

6.5 Conclusion

The chapter has provided results from the first part of the conversations and presented general understandings of leadership within the context of the airline industry. The analyses provided have confirmed the definitions and the process of leadership given in academic literature. The above discussion, supported by comments provided by participants and the literature, while presenting an appreciation of the challenges of leading in the airline industry, have revealed the need for a new form of leadership in the industry, if it is to become better able to compete in the complex and dynamic environment within which it operates.

However, before proceeding to suggest what this new leadership should be, it is important to understand the inner world of leaders and how this inner world interacts with others in the organization and outside of the organization to enact leadership behaviour. This is because understanding leadership behaviour at a senior level within the context of the airline industry has several strands and layers, the first part of which was presented in this chapter. The next chapters (seven to nine) present the findings, analysed according to the Tacit Knowledge Framework.
Chapter Seven

Stories of Leadership: Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the results from the conversations with participants that relate to the intrapersonal tacit knowledge category of the Tacit Knowledge Framework. As mentioned in chapter six, although the findings have been presented in categories, this distinction did not occur neatly in the data. Rather, the categories have been used to manage the data and to provide a way for the reader to gain insight into leadership behaviour in the airline industry. Many of the themes are strongly linked and the categorisation has been applied for efficient management of the data.

During the conversations, questions were asked to allow participants to share their experiences of leadership. As in chapter six, this chapter contains verbatim quotes from the conversation transcripts, shown in quotation marks and italicized. The words of the participants are presented to give texture to the chapter, present the stories of the participants and reveal the complexity of leading in the airline industry. Where words have been removed from the quotes for confidentiality, they have been marked by “…”, or where extra words have been added to clarify meaning or to ensure that the essence of the conversation was captured, these are shown in square brackets “[ ].” In some cases, the researcher’s comments or questions are provided to elicit more information from the participants. Where this has been done, the comment is attributed to ‘Researcher’. The aim of this chapter is to identify the tacit knowledge
of airline leaders from the stories they share about their experiences of leadership. As such, this chapter contains verbatim quotes from the transcripts to provide a feel and sense of the stories shared by the participants.

In line with the argument that all knowledge has a tacit dimension (see Polanyi 1967, McAdam, Mason and McCrory 2007), the responses provided by participants that relate to the themes are presented. However, as defined in chapter three, an experience was deemed to be tacit, if the knowledge was acquired with little environmental support, was acquired from the participant’s own experience, and is relevant to the attainment of own goals (Sternberg, 2000; Srivastava and Thomson, 2009).

In this chapter, the data was coded into themes guided by the intrapersonal categories of the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework. New themes that did not fit into the intrapersonal categories of the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework emerged during the analysis of the data. These themes are learning from others, intuition, resilience and resourcefulness. They are discussed in this chapter, and are fed into the Tacit Knowledge Framework to provide an updated ‘Intrapersonal tacit knowledge’ category.
Tacit Knowledge Items

The identification of the tacit knowledge items was instructed by the format used by Sternberg and his colleagues in their work on identifying the tacit knowledge of military leaders (see Sternberg, 2000; Hedlund et al., 2003; Hedlund et al., 1998; and Horvath et al., 1994). It has also been used in this study as a way to highlight the tacit knowledge identified from the conversations with participants. Sternberg’s (2000) identification of tacit knowledge items was presented as a summary of the findings from his research in the format of ‘If/Then/Because’ statements. The format was adjusted in this study and the tacit knowledge items are presented in boxes following the relevant sections in the Tacit Knowledge Framework, to enable the reader better identify how the tacit knowledge items were identified. The tacit knowledge items were constructed in the format of the importance of the participant’s comment(s) to leadership and the rationale for such importance that is, situation, intervention and explanation. The tacit knowledge items are presented in the format of ‘It is important for a leader/(And)/Because/(And)’. (And) is used to link two parts of a sentence.

Following the presentation of the quotes and discussion of the findings, the tacit knowledge items extracted from the conversations are presented in boxes as ‘Tacit Knowledge items’. The boxes also enable the clear presentation of the tacit knowledge items identified by the researcher. The tacit knowledge items in the tables summarize the conversations, highlight the tacit knowledge items identified in the conversations and feed into the Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Airline Leaders presented in Appendix Seven.
7.2 Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge

The intrapersonal tacit knowledge category focuses on the knowledge about the management of self, as well as seeking challenges and control. The responses in this section were coded according to the categories that emerged from the initial literature review relating to intrapersonal tacit knowledge (Sternberg, 2000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge</td>
<td>Managing the Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeking Challenges and Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge</td>
<td>Influencing Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning from Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Tacit Knowledge</td>
<td>Solving Organizational Problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7-1: Preliminary Categories of the Tacit Knowledge Framework (as presented in three)

The above table was previously presented in chapter three and contains the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework as introduced by Sternberg (2000). This framework was used to categorise the data presented in chapters seven to nine. The relevant column for this chapter is the first one, the intrapersonal tacit knowledge, with categories as detailed below:

- Managing the self
- Seeking challenges and control

7.3 Managing the self

Managing the self is an important starting point in the process of influencing others, as the self is an important component of leadership behaviour. “Tacit knowledge
about managing the self refers to knowledge about how to manage oneself on a daily basis so as to maximize one’s productivity” (Wagner and Sternberg, 1985:439). From this definition, the category refers to knowledge about the self, knowledge about how to motivate the self in order to accomplish goals, including knowledge about how to prioritize tasks (Wagner and Sternberg, 1985).

Several themes arose from the conversations that were found to relate to the managing of the self. These are: self-awareness, learning from experience and changing the self.

**Self-awareness**

Self-awareness was one of the themes that arose from the conversations. While definitions of self-awareness vary, it can be defined as a focus on evaluating the inner self to lead to self-knowledge. Self-awareness is linked to emotional intelligence, as it is a form of introspection that can also be the catalyst for a change in behaviour. It is important for leadership and leaders with a higher level of self-awareness are more effective than those with lower levels of self-awareness (Ashley and Reiter-Palmon, 2012; Ladkin and Weber, 2011).

However, there are different motives for introspection, which could be for self-knowledge or as a form of self-criticism. Where it is towards a constructive evaluation of the self, self-awareness can contribute to effective leadership. This is because leaders, who are self-aware, have a deeper sense of self-knowledge, and this deeper sense enables them to act consistently, engendering trust in their followers (Ashley and Reiter-Palmon, 2012; Diddams and Chang, 2012).
Carlos explained: “When you have a team of people who look to you for motivation and for inspiration, you have to be conscious that you are a role model, and you have a very important role to play in bringing those people and giving them opportunities and leading by example. So I think there's an element of being self-aware, of being a leader. That helps in terms of making sure you behave appropriately.”

According to Carlos’ comment above, being self-aware involves a consciousness that others are observing his behaviour, and as a result, it is important for a leader to lead by example and to behave appropriately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be self-aware and conscious that s/he is a role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because s/he has a role to lead by example and provide examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And self-awareness helps the leader behave appropriately</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Tacit Knowledge item was identified from Carlos’ comment and presented in the box above. The item was constructed from Carlos’ comment about the importance of self-awareness to leadership and the rationale he gave.

The first line explains the importance to leadership: It is important for a leader to be self-aware and conscious that s/he is a role model.
The second line provides the rationale for this importance: Because s/he has a role to lead by example and provide examples.

The third line is a continuation of the rationale provided: And self-awareness helps the leader behave appropriately.

It is presented on another line for presentation purposes. This is the format used for the Tacit Knowledge items presented in boxes that appear in this chapter and the subsequent two chapters.

Self-awareness also includes knowledge about own strengths and weaknesses. Some of the participants shared their strengths and weakness. In other words, introspection can reveal knowledge about what motivates the individual (Wagner and Sternberg, 1987).

Khalid shared his strength: “I am a subject matter expert on commercial aviation, because I know a little bit about a lot of things ... I’ve got to be able to communicate strategy and convert that into plans, convert that into executable steps or bites for people, and I’m pretty good at that.”

However, Khalid also shared his weak area: “[I’m a] much stronger written communicator than oral communicator.”
The tacit knowledge in this relates to the fact that self-awareness can involve a painful process of introspection, as it can reveal strengths as well as weaknesses (Diddams and Chang, 2012).

Khalid shared his awareness of his strength and weakness, and personal knowledge of the type of work that he should do, which then influenced his decision to work in an area that capitalizes on his strength as a written communicator.

Khalid: “A lot of the stuff I do is written communication.”

Khalid shared that he was a stronger written communicator than an oral communicator, and he also shared how he tapped into this strength by moving into a role where a lot of his work involved written communication. While it is important for a leader to tailor his/her role to suit strengths, by focussing on strong areas alone, the weak areas may not be developed. Khalid’s comment did not explain how he had sought to develop his identified weak area of oral communication; rather he had chosen to focus on his strong area. This leads to the question of whether self-awareness should lead to a focus on eliminating weaknesses, or the strengthening of strengths alone.

Xavier and Imran provided some insight into how a leader can manage weaknesses.

Xavier: “Good leaders are people that are confident about their own inadequacies. So people who are good leaders will know and often reflect this in their hiring. So if you know you are not that good at something, you will hire someone who is really good, to help you and protect you and to guide you.”
This relation of being self-aware to being confident about inadequacies is an interesting comment, as inadequacies are not usually perceived as confidence-worthy.

Imran: “It’s so important to build a team around you that can compensate for your weak areas. If, for example, you are not good with finance, then you need a really strong finance director alongside you to make sure that they are running the numbers correctly, the accounts, the cash flow and all those kind of things. If you are not good marketer, then you need a really hot marketer who is going to be doing that side.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for the leader to be aware of his/her weak areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And to build a team that can compensate for his/her weak areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this enables the leader to be managing a team of expert professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And the team is better placed to achieve its potential.</td>
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</table>

However, Xavier shed more light on his statement by explaining that good leaders were those who were aware of their weaknesses, sought to mitigate the effects of these weaknesses by employing people who were strong in their weak areas. Xavier’s and Imran’s comments on how to manage weaknesses by employing people to compensate for weak areas, is an important one, as it dispels the notion that the leader is all knowing and all capable. Rather, it reveals the human side of leadership, through the leader’s admission of vulnerability (Diddams and Chang, 2012).

The admission of one’s weak areas can be challenging for leaders or those in senior
positions. However, it is not discussed that this admission would have to be public, but rather, an awareness that then leads to action where the leader seeks to actively compensate for his/her weak areas to ensure that the team as a whole is strong. This introduces the theme of team building, which is discussed in the next chapter, under the interpersonal tacit knowledge category.

It appears that effective leadership is one that is self-aware and confident enough to employ others that are able to compensate for the leader’s weak areas.

Although Xavier and Imran commented on the importance of self-awareness about strengths and weaknesses, they did not comment on whether a leader should develop his/her weak areas, or even how these may be developed. Rather, it appears that leaders realize the importance of being aware of their strength and weaknesses, and then choose to focus on roles that utilize their strengths, while they employ other people who are able to compensate for their weaknesses. While effective leaders have strengths, this does not mean an absence of weaknesses. The focus of the participants on strong areas and delegating to compensate for weak areas, demonstrates a form of pragmatism, as a focus on strength or talent can add more value and enable the leader to be more effective in the organization, rather than a focus on fixing weaknesses, which may be a distraction and inhibit the leader’s attainment of goals. However, if the leader has a profound weakness that affects his/her ability to lead effectively, the leader can focus on fixing that weakness (Folkman, 2014; Bregman, 2014).

Abi admitted her weakness: “I can be very disruptive, so I have to be more respectful of that, and I'm learning sort of how to better discriminate those different kinds of
ways of looking at things.”

She explained that her passionate personality sometimes overwhelmed people and affected her ability to communicate effectively as a leader: “I have to think, okay, they are not going to hear me, they are going to only see passion, so I have to tone a little bit of that. It is not to take it away, but it’s just to make sure that to be received, you can't just be overwhelming to some people.”

She explained that she had sought to fix this weakness by adapting her behaviour to her audience: “So again, it’s the antenna. I might be able to be overly enthusiastic with you, but not with a person next to you, because they will just go, what is with her? I don’t want to be an overwhelming force.”

Abi also shared how she had tried to use her self-knowledge to change her behaviour: “Probably the biggest thing for me in learning how to more effectively lead, is to be succinct and how to bring it down to a one page statement, how to, when you are talking, to keep the passion out of it a little bit in order to be clear what you have to say. I mean I'm not going to be a dispassionate leader, but I have to learn when I feel the excess starting to build.”

As such, she had sought to adapt her behaviour to her audience and her comments are an example of a process of introspection that revealed weaknesses and a decision to fix the weaknesses, in order to be a more effective leader.
According to Carlos, self-awareness can be taught. He gave examples of training courses he had attended that had played an important part in his learning to be more self-aware. His comments echoed Ashley and Reiter-Palmon’s (2012) argument that leaders can be trained to be more self-aware. He shared his experience from one of the leadership training courses he had attended.

Carlos: “I’ll mention one which was very interesting … This one was about how you behave as a leader, what’s expected of you and in terms of how you are perceived, and it was basically, I’ll describe it briefly as turning a mirror on yourself and being aware of your day to day behaviours as a leader and how they impact those around you.”

As highlighted in chapter three, for an experience to be deemed as tacit and for knowledge learnt from such an experience to be tacit, the knowledge should have been gained with little environmental support. Although training courses can be a form of environmental support, the individual’s application of the knowledge from the experience can have a tacit dimension, as it relates to attainment of own goals.

According to Carlos: “it was very interesting and very valuable, and … for me the biggest learning probably was how your teams look to you and how gestures, body
language, not just what you say, can have a profound effect on those around you and in your teams.”

He shared that the knowledge he had gained was about how to motivate his team members by demonstrating his own motivation, using body language and also verbal language, as well as establishing trust.

Carlos: “You want your team to be motivated, you need to be motivated. If you want your team to do something, you have to be prepared to do it as well, you need to be able to engender trust, you need to be able to give people space to develop and be creative and you need to support them in that. So I think that’s what’s important about being self-aware.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be a role model and lead by example, inspire and motivate others,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To do this, s/he has to be able to identify own strengths and weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And this will improve his/her effectiveness.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to realise the profound effect that body language and gestures have on others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because being self-aware enables the leader to behave appropriately.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Carlos delineated another component of being self-aware. His comment highlighted the importance of non-verbal communication and why leaders should be aware of how their body language and gestures may be perceived by others. This is an important observation, as a leader’s body language, a form of non-verbal communication, can influence how others perceive him/her. Therefore, it is important for a leader to be aware of how his/her body language may be interpreted by others (Trichas and Schyns, 2012).

Learning from experience

‘Learning from experience’ was another theme that arose from the conversations with participants. Experience can be a source for learning, developing or improving new skills and behaviours. The ability to learn from experience or what may be learnt from experience is also influenced by the openness of the individual to the lessons gained from experience. As such, experiential learning is subjective, as it is shaped by the context of what the individual already knows and also the individual’s own personal disposition, such that the same experience may result in different learning for different individuals (Conger, 1998; Zundel, 2013).

Carlos: “I think in terms of, I mentioned earlier about experience, when you start, when you are thrown in the deep end in any job, you are always going to make mistakes, and ... you just reflect and say I could’ve handled that differently and I think that comes with experience.”

Carlos’ comment reveals what ‘learning from experience’ can mean.

Carlos: “I think you learn from experience, you see areas where you took certain
things too seriously, you beat yourself too much over things that maybe were not that important in the end, and that's all learning that's all good, I see all that as really useful and really helpful.”

Carlos’ comment on the advantages of learning from experience echoes Judge, Piccolo and Kosalka’s (2009) comment on the role experience plays in learning.

Raoul shared that he had learnt from his experience to understand the situation and the people that he is working with.

Raoul: “It is probably one of those key points to understand different markets and the likes, what are the people you are working with trying to achieve. Not so rushing, saying this is how it is without understanding the situation.”

From Raoul’s comment above, it appeared that a leader taking the time to understand a situation before acting was important for effective leadership. This is, because rushing into prescribing actions for team members without taking the time to understand their situation, may entail some risks, as for example, prescribing the wrong action or failing to understand motivations of team members.

Seth: “I proposed a radical change to the way in which the organization should be run ... and I tried to reduce it to a logo, a striking one sentence. So I said we would have radical change to the organization to adapt to the radical changes in the market. And the analysis was correct, and proposed suggestions were also correct, so that wasn't the problem. The issue was the follow-up.”
Seth’s comment above reveals the mistake that can be made when a leader is passionate about things and tries to get members of his team to be passionate, too, but they are unable to develop the same or similar level of passion, because they had not been involved earlier in the process.

Raoul gave an example from a past experience.
Raoul: “Things were moving too slow, we had discussions with CEO, members of the executive [board] and everyone wanted this to occur, but then you end up being the person in-between.”

Raoul explained his past behaviour and gave a reason for why he is more conscious of his current behaviour.
Raoul: “I’ve probably done that [overtake others] on a couple of occasions. That is why I am conscious of making sure that you articulate things upfront and be pretty clear on what you are trying to achieve. So then it is probably one of the key parts, not looking to overtake.”

Thus, the ability to communicate effectively with diverse audiences is important in leadership, as the leader has to be aware of the different expectations and motivations of different audiences, the needs and challenges of the members of staff. Raoul also shared some of the pressure that being the person in-between created in managing his boss and those he was delegating to.
Raoul: “Those guys are saying, nothing is happening so fast, but you still got to get people who are involved through the daily up to speed, get them working effectively. So, if you jump in too hard, too fast, you can lose people. So that's probably, I would say, the biggest learning I've had in that sense.”

Tacit Knowledge items

| It is important for a leader to try to understand the team environment and dynamics |
| And to try not to rush in when delegating |
| Because rushing in introduces the risks of the leader taking over the situation |
| Whilst not fully understanding it and discouraging future support from the team. |

Raoul shared that he had learnt how to manage communications and expectations between the CEO and the team members, how to balance different perspectives and objectives, and to ensure that set goals are met.

Raoul’s comment above and the conversation we had, indicated learning. It appeared he was in a transition process, and on analysis, and comparison to the responses given by other participants, his viewpoint and comments may have been due to the fact that he was a recent senior executive, and so he was in the process of adapting into his new role as a senior executive leader. This is displayed in the comment above, his attempt to stem eagerness when delegating and taking the time to give detailed delegation. A similar observation was made in comments given by Imogen and Jeremy who were relatively new (when compared with other participants in the conversation) to the senior executive role in the airline industry. Leadership is a multi-level phenomenon, in the sense of influencing others, leading is enacted at
various levels in the organization. However, the process of leadership varies according to the levels in the organization with middle management being concerned with operational goals and the ability to coordinate others to achieve the set goals, while senior management and the top management team are involved with strategic leading, development and communication of vision, together as setting the long-term objectives for the organization (DeChurch et al., 2010).

Seth, a more experienced airline leader, explained his staff’s issue with the radical change he had proposed.

Seth: “My own staff found it bewildering and it’s too much in too short a time.”

One of such risks is what Seth shared in his example, which was his failure to carry his staff along with the decision to radically change the organization.

Seth shared: “Then I lost them [his staff].”

Similar to Raoul’s experience, the issue was not with communicating effectively with the leaders of the organization or other members of the top management team, but with communicating effectively with team members, perhaps signalling that leaders might be more open in their communication with their CEOs, or at least, in times of radical change or implementing strategy, where the decision is made with members of the top management team, cascading this to other members of staff might be problematic. Seth’s experience highlights the importance of the ability to effectively manage people networks, by communicating effectively with different audiences, in
this case in addition to his peers, Seth needed to be able to communicate effectively with his staff, so that they would be able to buy into the reason for change (Conger, 1998).

*Seth:* “All the CEOs understood ... but my own people didn’t ... it was too radical, too much in too short a time.”

Interestingly, Seth was able to identify the reason for this lack of buy-in from his staff.

*Seth:* “They had always been used to me saying this is the problem, this is the way forward. Let's do this, this and this, and then they would.”

Therefore, his style of leadership in the past was very involved and hands-on, a leader who distilled information to his staff, and prescribed the way they should go. This resulted in his staff becoming lost and confused when he presented a radical change to the organization as they were not used such a major change. Seth’s leadership style had created dependencies in his staff, a form of ineffective leadership (Conger, 1998).

*Seth continued:* “And I think that what happened then was just not effective, because if you don’t have people with that passion buying into the need for that change, then it becomes too academic and becomes too much.”

However, Seth also revealed an interesting comment from his experience, which related to his length of tenure as a leader in that organization.
Seth: “I must admit, that this was after eight years in my tenure... and it's probably not only an indication of not getting people to really follow me, but it was also indication that I actually needed to leave, I needed to change ... the time had come for someone else with different qualifications and different qualities to then get that kind of radical change.”

Seth shared his experience of trying to implement a radical change programme in his organization, which was met by resistance from his team, primarily because he had previously been a different type of leader. Seth’s comment above touched on a key lesson he learnt from experience, i.e. knowing when it is time to leave an organization. The experience resulted in his departure from the organization, as he explained that the organization needed someone different, a different type of leader for the organization’s period of radical change. Seth’s comment above, regarding the leadership personality required for implementing radical change, touches on theory of transformational and charismatic leadership, where a leader is able to share the vision with the organization and encourage commitment from others (Judge, Piccolo and Kosalka, 2009).

Seth: “The leader has certain personality and I am not someone who will shout, scream and bully people, and try to get that radical change imposed by ... terrifying people.”

However, it is interesting to note the qualities he ascribed to the ‘new leader’: “someone who will shout, scream and bully people... to impose.”
Seth’s comment reveals the stereotypes about charismatic leaders. However, Judge, Piccolo and Kosalka (2009) and Conger (1998) agree that leadership traits or characteristics have two sides, a bright side and a dark side. In this case, the bright side of a charismatic leader includes his/her ability to speak well in public, encourage commitment from others and ensure that the organization goes successfully through a period of radical change. However, the dark side of such a leader may include elements of bullying and inability to get along well with others (Judge, Piccolo and Kosalka, 2009; Kant et al., 2013).

Furthermore, Seth explained the risk to the integrity of a leader when s/he changes his/her leadership style.

Seth: “People then say that’s not him ... it does actually question the integrity of the leader.”

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<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be consistent</td>
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<td>In his/her behaviour with the team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because it is important for the team, that a leader is a person of integrity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to realise that a different person might be required</td>
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<tr>
<td>When radical organizational change is required</td>
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<tr>
<td>And that it might be time for him/her to leave.</td>
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Not all lessons from experience entail leaving the organization. Khalid explained that he had learnt the importance of prioritizing the needs of team members.

Khalid: “When I was leading a team, an issue that I know was burning them wasn’t such a big deal for me. A few times, I couldn’t address it myself, but a CEO could, if I reported it to him. With hindsight sometimes, you think I should have managed upwards, not just [manage] more effectively, I should’ve managed upwards in a more timely fashion.”

He continued: “I shouldn’t have waited two months, I should have just gone straight and said this is gonna hurt my team. And after all, the team, whether you are a good leader or a great leader, can come down to that line, where they see you as something that concerns them and the business.”

While Khalid did not share what the issue at the time was, the fact that he delayed action may have been due to the difficulty of the management decision, and echoes Simon’s (1987) observation in his study of leaders, where difficult management decisions are delayed or postponed.

Again, similar to Raoul and Seth’s comments on importance of passion, from both the leader and the staff in the organization, it was important to maintain that passion by prioritising the needs of team members.
Khalid: “Most people you work with have some passion for the business. So again it’s I suppose a behavioural element that something is really doing you, you want to deal with it more quickly….So that is something I think I’ve learnt.”

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to realise the importance of the issues that his/her team are facing</td>
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<td>And resolve these issues in a timely manner</td>
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<td>Even if it requires escalating the matter to other members of senior management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because this demonstrates that the leader is able to empathise with his/her team issues.</td>
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Khalid admitted his error in not escalating the issues of team members quickly and he was surprisingly honest when he stated, he would have dealt with the incident more swiftly, had it been an issue that related to him.

He shared the importance of managing upwards, another aspect of leadership, which is different from managing subordinates and introduced themes into the study about the different audiences a leader has to communicate with, as well as the ability to manage superiors and peers. This is an interesting point, as the leadership theories tend to focus on managing followers and subordinates, without incorporating the other forms of leadership, influencing peers and superiors, in an organization (Conger, 1998).

Imran shared another lesson he had learnt from experience. This example related to
working in a different culture, both in terms of organizational culture and also national culture, while he was working in America.

Imran: “It was an interesting time, because I was probably the only foreigner Brit inside their American organization ... In that top tier of people, there were probably forty people – thirty-nine Americans and me.”

This is an interesting example, as not only was the organizational culture different, but being of a different nationality to everyone else in the organization also posed some challenges.

Imran shared his experience of working as a foreigner in another organization, his comments revealed the challenges of working in a foreign organization, particularly with the cultural part of the organization. He also presented the difficulty he faced, where organizational culture superseded rational logic. His comments resonate with Judge, Piccolo and Kosalka’s (2009) argument that organizations have their own culture, which impacts on how an individual ‘fits’ within the organization, and therefore, impacts on his/her effectiveness as a leader.

Imran explained the culture within the organization.

Imran: “The culture of the company was kind of following down the track that the great leader decided ... and if the thirty-nine Americans were determined to implement something the boss said, then no more amount of rational logic was going to divert them from doing it.”
Researcher: “Okay in terms of that, would you say the factors that hindered, was it more in terms of understanding the cultural differences or understanding the [manner of] communicating?”

Imran: “Yeah, I think I was naïve to assume that business logic and rational decision-making would influence the whole culture of an organization.”

He shared what he had learnt: “So it was just a lesson for me on how corporations work.”

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<td>It is important for a leader to be aware of the power of an organization’s culture</td>
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<td>And to know that an organization’s culture is able to disrupt business logic and rational decision making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because this enables the leader to be prepared in the event of such situations.</td>
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His comments presented the view of learning from experience as a constructive tool for leaders, to understand themselves, the people around them and also the organizations within which they operate, learning that business logic and rational decision-making might not be sufficient to influence the culture of an organization.

For Carlos, the learning from experience came from feedback he had received. Feedback can be a useful form of information as it provides information on behaviour and effectiveness as perceived by others within the organization (Huxham et al., 2008).
Carlos: “I’ll be very frank with you. We do a lot of performance feedback and 360 degree feedback ... one of the areas that I am often identified as needing to improve, is being, the ability to ask for help when it’s needed. So, the ability to feel that you are comfortable in asking for help, rather than trying to do it yourself. So that is a recurring theme.”

Carlos: “If your team see you very busy, you are under a lot of pressure, and they feel they might be able to help, but they are not gonna ask, so they want you to be able to say ‘would you mind helping me’?”

He explained that the lesson was to remember that he had people he could delegate to. Delegation is discussed in detail in Chapter eight as part of interpersonal tacit knowledge.

Carlos: “Remember that you’ve got a bunch of people around you who are very competent. And don’t be afraid to say them I’m struggling with this. Or I need this.”

This comment, on learning to be more vulnerable and open with team members, is a very revealing one. This is because it shows a different side of leadership, where the leader should be able to share with team members. It is interesting that Carlos used the word ‘afraid’ in his comment, again suggesting the sense of fear that might arise from revealing vulnerability or struggles. Yet, the leader is not expected to be all-knowing. Rather, the leader, like mentioned earlier in this chapter, should be aware of own strengths and weaknesses, and be able to select team members who compensate for his/her shortcomings, thus, constructing his own “environment”. However, the
leader has to provide the team members with the opportunity to help by being open and willing to ask for assistance when required (Conger, 1998; Judge, Piccolo and Kosalka, 2009).

He shared another lesson from his feedback: “The listening, like I said, sometimes when you’ve got a lot to do, you don’t listen enough. You need to make a conscious effort to listen more. So they are areas I’ve identified, are areas I’d like to do a bit better.”

Carlos’ lesson from experience arose from his experience of the 360-feedback process in his organization. He explained that he had learnt from this experience of feedback to understand how he is perceived and made suggestions of areas of improvement. In his experience, the feedback process has been a constructive one, as it enabled him to learn about areas he could improve.

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be able to ask for help from team members</td>
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<td>Because this signals to them that you value them</td>
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<td>And enables them to use their expertise to contribute to the success of the team.</td>
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Jeremy shared a lesson that related to his experience within an organization. In this case, the situation related to the implementation of a strategy for his airline organization:

Jeremy: “I thought it was going to be an easy thing... but unfortunately it didn't work that way.”
He shared how the experience had made him feel: “I felt I must have lied to my people, and I thought I have to think how to change the perception of my people and see how they will move, so I had to do a 360 degree U-turn, telling them I'm sorry, what I met on ground is different from what I told you.”

He explained that he managed this by communicating with the other members of the management team and apologised, stating:

Jeremy: “Can we start again?”

He commented on the process: “It took them a lot of time, a lot of persuasion for them to understand what I'm saying.”

Jeremy shared his experience of a mistake he made, how the experience of making a mistake made him feel. He explained how he managed the situation by apologizing and then attempting to start again. He admitted that the mistake was costly and took a lot of time, but that it had taught him an important lesson on strategy implementation and the process of strategy implementation, which began with creating public awareness. This resonates with Simon’s (1987) observation on how a leader can remedy mistakes and leadership errors.
Tacit Knowledge items

It is important for a leader to know when implementing a strategy
To try to get as much information as possible, before the implementation
Because this enables the leader to understand more about the industry and reduces the risk of error.

Tacit Knowledge items

It is important for the leader to know when s/he has made a mistake
And to admit this by communicating to the relevant parties in the team
So that they are aware of what is happening in the organization, and are able to understand the situation.

Allegra shared a confidential incident about working with political and business leaders, where it appeared that all the decisions had been agreed upon to implement a strategy, however, in this particular incident, the implementation failed. She shared her reflections on this incident:

Allegra: “Sometimes you have the best intentions, the best people that are able to do it, but you look back and think, how come I didn't achieve or meet what I wanted, or the goals I wanted to meet. And then you realise that perhaps it’s because of other things in the environment, but then that’s also what I want to understand. Like what you’ve said now, what kind of environment are you operating in, and how does that limit or reflect on your ability to meet the goals you have?”
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<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tr>
<td>It is important to realise that sometimes with the best intentions and the best people</td>
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<td>The goal is not achieved because of other things in the environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>As these can limit a leader’s ability to meet his/her goals.</td>
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Allegra’s comment presents an interesting point regarding the limitations a leader has due to the environment within which s/he operates.

Seth shared some of his reflections from his experience, when he tried to initiate radical change across the organization.

Seth: “When too many factors come together that cumulatively give rise to the need for a radical change, which the individual is not prepared to do. Because the individual can only go to the limit of his own comfort; and having to leave that zone of comfort all together, with no idea or no assurances that it is going to be temporary, is very difficult.”

The individual in this case refers to members of staff. Seth’s comments gave an insight into what had happened in the organization.

Seth: “It becomes so difficult, that the person goes back to that zone of comfort by saying it is not my problem, it’s him, he needs to leave, then it is impossible.”

The impossibility refers to the impossibility of actualising change, which becomes challenging due to the presence of several factors.
Seth shared that these factors included: “The accumulation of both the people as well as the changes in the environment that require a different approach.”

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be aware that a time of change may involve too many factors which presented together at once, may confuse team members because team members may be unwilling to leave their comfort zone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is important during a time of change for the leader to try to carry team members along so that they are aware of the long-term plan for the organization because this ensures that the leader does not lose the commitment of team members, which might make the organizational change more difficult.</td>
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Robert had left the organization he worked in, and on reflection he shares a lesson he should have insisted on, i.e. the importance of information management.

Robert: “One thing, maybe I should’ve insisted on that you have to have a good reporting system, so that every day, you get a key review about what’s happening in the company, financial, commercial, in a very synthesised way. The best thing is to have one or two brilliant people around you, who can synthesise, because if you want to read big blocks, it’s impossible. So you have to have something, and I used to
It is important for a leader to have a good reporting system
And employ a team who are able to synthesise large amounts of information
Because it is impossible for the leader to have the capacity to read every document.

It is important for the leader to make the time out daily, in the morning
To read synthesised reviews of events and happenings that might be of relevance
To the activities of the company
Because this enables the leader to be aware of what is happening around him/her.

Khalid shared an interesting point about how he reflected when things were not going so well, but also when things were going well.

Khalid: “So if things are going really well, I sometimes reflect on what role leadership played in that, if things are not going well, I’m thinking, boy, there are some quite bad leadership attributes here, and that is one of the causes of why things are not going well.”

This is unique, because most participants have shared experiences where they felt they did not take the right course of action, or made a mistake and it is interesting to hear the views of a participant who also reflects when things are going well, as a way
of learning from positive experiences.

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to take the time out</td>
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<td>To reflect on the role that leadership played in a situation</td>
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<td>As this provides opportunity for learning.</td>
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This section has presented the findings from the conversations that related to ‘Learning from experience.’

It appeared that some of the participants were critical in their assessment of their past behaviour. This observation was made in a conversation with Ibrahim. Ibrahim was not forthcoming with sharing experiences of times he had acted very well. He appeared to be more critical of his behaviour and explained the reason for this.

Ibrahim: “Yes, the times I screwed up, I remember those ones very well and I try my best not to make the same mistakes again. But the times that we do well, to be honest, I don’t, because it's worked out and we have sort of moved on.”

Ibrahim’s comment above is interesting. He further stated regarding the need for continuous improvement.

Ibrahim: “You only think about why did I fail this time and what can I do to get it right another time? You say, why I didn’t get it right, so I just have to find a better way of doing it next time.”
Ibrahim’s comment was also insightful concerning a key observation during the conversations. Participants provided lessons from experience that occurred from something they had not done, as opposed to lessons from experience of what they had done, and what they had done well.

In most cases, the participants shared lessons from mistakes they made. This theme presented interesting discoveries. Firstly, when participants were asked to share an experience when they felt they did particularly well, there was some reticence during the conversation and some of the participants had to be probed to share this information. However, the next question, when they were asked to share what they could have done better, some of the participants were more forthcoming and presented several examples of instances from their past when they felt they could have taken a different course of action.

This could be one of two things, either the desire to appear modest or humble, as after being probed, or asked the question in another way, they shared their experiences, or it could also refer to a disposition of those in senior positions to seek to continually improve, which might perhaps explain why they are in senior leadership positions in the first place. This section has also led to questions on whether people are more willing to learn from negative experiences than from positive ones, or perhaps more willing to share experiences of learning from a mistake or fault, rather than from a more positive one.

**Learning from others**

Learning can occur from own experience or also from others, from observation of the
behaviour of others or from engagement with others. This is a new theme that arose from the analysis of the data. The existing learning from experience theme was observed to refer to the experience of the individual and did not consider the learning that may occur from the observation of and the interaction with others (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer and Welch, 1998).

Seth shared an incident that made a deep impression on him.

Seth: “I can relate to an incident or experience that deeply impressed me. It was not from me, but it impacted and it really influenced me. And what he did was, he reduced a hugely important program for the reinvention of the airline into three words: he said we need to reduce the cost, restructure, reshape and reposition.”

He identified what it was that he had learnt.

Seth: “This art of getting a multi-year program reduced to 3 words: reduce, restructure, reposition was brilliant, because it got people, irrespective of where you work in the company, to understand what was required, to understand the sequence of events and also to understand the urgency, because it was honed in on everyone. And it was credible, because he started with himself.”

Seth explained how he had tried to utilise the lessons from this experience in his own leadership.

Seth: “I proposed a radical change to the way in which the organization should be run ... and I tried to reduce it to a logo, a striking one sentence. So I said we would have radical change to the organization to adapt to the radical changes in the market.”
Learning from others can involve an element of imitation, which involves the human pre-disposition to imitate others who might have similar issues, similar problems, similar alternatives and similar pay-offs. However, imitation also has its risks, for example, where the issues’ alternatives and consequences are not accurately identified (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer and Welch, 1998).

Khalid’s experience was similar to Seth’s.

Khalid: “I learnt the importance of focus on the long term, I learnt that from a guy I worked with, who ran BA and he came from Cathay Pacific ... and what I learnt from him was focus. He came in and he just said, just the way he could cut through complexity and make things simple. Like no one could understand what was wrong with the business, so he just reduced it to a simple tag line – he said it is a great airline, but a poor business. And that helped focus people on what he was going to say.”

He explained why focus was so important in leadership.

Khalid: “When he used the opening line ... it helped him focus, helped the audience focus on what he was going to say and helped to take a lot of people with him. [People] that had a lot of change fatigue, some hard nuts, he sort of managed to
break a lot of them and take them with him on a journey to help fix the business. That was quite an important message.”

Indeed, it appears that airline leaders, faced with the challenge of communicating complex messages, appreciate the ability to distil complex messages into simple taglines, to ensure that other people are able to focus on the key message.

Learning can also occur from working with a coach, who is able to work with the individual to facilitate the learning from experience. While the coach is working with the individual to facilitate his/her learning from experience, this finding is placed in the category ‘learning from others’, as the coach plays an important role in learning from experience (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer and Welch, 1998; Rose, Loewenthal and Greenwood; 2005).

Xavier explained that he had learnt from a coach.

Xavier: “I think my style evolved as I perhaps got older and more mature and more experienced. I certainly had coaching and I think most senior executives should have coaching, even if they don’t believe they need it. I think it’s quite lonely as you go up the chain, your peer group becomes smaller and smaller.”

He explained that his style had evolved and shared a key fact, that leadership can be a lonely process, as peer groups diminish. This poses a challenge from which the leader can learn. In his case, he had had coaching and he explained that it was useful learning for him.
Xavier continued, heralding the importance of learning from others: “*Don’t be afraid of taking advice. Don’t be ashamed of asking people and don’t be hesitant about surrounding yourself with smart people.*”

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be willing to learn from outside the peer group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because the peer group contracts</td>
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<td>And leadership at senior level is very lonely</td>
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<td>And to have coaching as this provides the leader with an opportunity to learn</td>
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<td>And to nurture and polish his/her leadership skills.</td>
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In his comment, he highlighted an unexpected fact, i.e. asking for help or taking advice might be perceived as a sign of weakness. Xavier’s use of the words ‘afraid’ and ‘ashamed’ is interesting, and reveal some of the reasons that leaders might be hesitant to ask for help, because they are ashamed to show that they do not know, or they may be afraid to take advice given by others.

Khalid shared an example.

Khalid: “*Then I worked with a couple of leaders. I will call them procrastinators – you will be frustrated, because they won’t deal with an obvious problem and that would eventually become a much bigger problem. That sort of taught me quite early about fixing things that you know are going to blow up in your face, maybe in a couple of years. The sort of work I’m in, you try to explain the significance that if we don’t do this now, you will have these consequences in five years. And they are the sort of people that don’t tend to deal with simple things like poor performance of an*”
executive or a persistent operational problem from one part of the business; they tend to have those attributes."

Interestingly, Khalid linked procrastinating with missed opportunities.

Khalid: “The thing I found in common with that is those sort of people that don’t address things, are the sort of people who tend to miss opportunities ... they don’t see things, they tend not to be strategically focused.”

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<td>It is important for a leader to be proactive and not procrastinate</td>
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<td>Because when an obvious problem is not dealt with,</td>
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<td>It can become a much bigger problem with significant consequences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be proactive to address issues when they come up</td>
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<tr>
<td>As unaddressed issues can lead to missed opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because this means the leader is not strategically focused</td>
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<tr>
<td>And not able to take hold of opportunities when they arise.</td>
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Khalid’s comment above revealed the attributes he perceived to be those of bad leaders: leaders who delay action needlessly, leaders who are not strategically focused, people who miss opportunities and people who do not fix persistent issues are those who also miss opportunities in business as they are not focused.

Ibrahim shared a deeply personal example about someone he had learnt from.
Ibrahim: “I also think CEOs like David Neeleman, the founder of JetBlue, who is now running a company called Azul in Brazil, I think I drew a lot of parallels, because he inspired me ... He has ADHD\(^2\) and sometimes I think I am borderline ADHD ... So I drew some parallels with David Neeleman and then obviously seeing him in action at my time at JetBlue, he just inspired me.”

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<td>It is important for a leader to look for others to learn from</td>
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<td>And to draw parallels from others who inspire him/her personally and/or professionally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because this enables the leader to continue to develop and become a more effective leader.</td>
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For Xavier, a person he had learnt from was Michael O’Leary.

Xavier: “I think Michael O’Leary is someone I hold in very high regard – he’s a great leader. If you look at what he’s done for his business, his clarity of position, his ability to articulate. Even if you disagree with his vision, he’s very clear about it.”

Oliver shared the importance of having a mentor.

Oliver: “I think what has been of influence to me and to most people who are similar to me, it’s been a mentorship relationship, and usually not official. But there’s always

\(^2\) ADHD: Attention Deficient Hyperactive Disorder
been sort of one guy at any given time in my career who has taken an interest in me, who has shown me the unofficial stuff, who has taken a little more time.”

He explained his unofficial mentor relationship.

Oliver: “I find myself calling, saying let me bounce this off of you. I can talk to him about business things in a very unofficial way ... I think that mentorship role, and it doesn’t have to be an official programme, because companies are always big on setting up mentorship programmes and I suppose there’s nothing wrong with it, but in my case, it has almost always been casual. I think that relationship has to be more personal, otherwise it doesn’t have the same effect. You need to be able to go to your mentor and say, look, I can't make my budget add up. What am I going to do? [laughs]”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to have an unofficial and personal mentor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who is someone who has taken an interest in his/her career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And taken the time to explain things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this allows the leader to have the opportunity to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And the space to bounce off ideas in an unofficial capacity.</td>
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</table>

Oliver shared from his experience how he is able to learn from a mentorship role. He advocates the merits of a casual and personal mentoring relationship, as according to him, this allowed him to have access and freedom to ask questions in an unofficial way. He credits his success in his career to his mentoring relationships, as these were
the people, who had taken an interest in him and taken the risk to promote him earlier in his career.

In the process of managing the self, self-awareness is important and so is learning from experience and reflecting. Learning should also influence future behaviour (Zundel, 2013).

Abi shared an experience: “The thing that really stuck in my core was that one of the women that had pursued me to sort of align myself with her, because she was a woman officer... I think that I wasn’t being guarded enough about people that can, or have an undoing, if you were appearing to have too much influence or too much empowerment to what you are doing.”

She explained that she was: “being very open with the president and some of the other men that were on the senior team and I just didn't see that she was jealous of that. So I had a hard time with that part. That, to me, was being an unguarded leader.”

Abi’s comment above and choice of words: “stuck in my core,” revealed that the experience was significant for her leadership behaviour.

She shared that it was important for a leader to be guarded, and shared her experience of being an unguarded leader that resulted in her being asked to leave and change jobs. That experience led to a change in behaviour.
Abi: “And now, I have very, most of the time, I have my antenna up, so I like to feel the pulse and generally like to be in the middle of where the pulse is, as opposed to on the side-lines.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be guarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And to listen better and more effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And to be able to feel the pulse of a situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And not be on the side-lines in an organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this enables the leader to be aware of things that are happening in his/her periphery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intuition

Intuition is another new theme that arose from the conversations with participants. It refers to the capacity to understand complexity and ambiguity, and is a useful decision-making tool. Furthermore, it is particularly important for senior executives, who have to make important decisions (Dörfler and Ackermann, 2012; Simon, 1987; Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004; Crossan, Lane and White, 1999).

Xavier: “I think intuition to be able to listen to what people are telling you, and decide whether or not that is relevant to what you are trying to decide, whether you believe it, whether you have confidence in it, whether or not you are willing to take some risks. A lot of these things are about risk mitigation.”
Xavier’s comment above details his understanding of intuition.

Xavier: “If you also have good intuition, quite often in meetings you would have, whether that is gained from experience or your background, your education.”

According to Xavier, intuition is useful in decision-making, as it enables the leader to refer to past experience. Intuition can also provide a level of confidence about the applicability of facts brought to the leader. As such, intuition is very important in decision-making, particularly in the airline industry, where decisions have to be made quickly, which might have many consequences within and outside the organization, intuition is therefore, a valid form of knowledge that can be used to mitigate risk. Intuition can be gained from experience, education or background (Dörfler and Ackermann, 2012).

Xavier expanded on his comment above with an example.

Xavier: “So, even if you are under pressure to make a speedy decision. If you decide that the risk of getting it wrong is so big, so sometime you do have to hold back and say I really do have to get some more info [information] on this. It’s very rare that the decision is life and death and has to be made immediately; it means that sometimes you do have to make very, very quick decisions. And then it comes down to the experience, the knowledge and having done enough of those other, taking the advantage of the opportunities that you have time, so that when you do have to make pressured decisions, you perhaps got enough skills in your armoury to say, look, on balance, I can do this.”
Xavier’s comment above, while acknowledging the importance of intuition, admits the fact that intuition is not enough in decision-making, particularly where the risks or consequences of the decision are great. Then the leader may choose to ask for more information. However, he reiterates that where quick decisions have to be made, intuition is a useful tool to have in decision-making. His comments echo Sadler-Smith and Shefy’s (2004), who posit that intuition is useful in decision-making, particularly, in dynamic environments, such as the airline industry.

Christian explained that for him, intuition was a distinct impression.

Christian: “When there's distinct impression, when I get an intuitive response and I ignore it, I know later. Even if someone says it doesn’t matter, but it sticks in my head and when it starts going wrong, I keep on referring back to it ... When I don’t hear it or I think I hear it, when I think I hear it and I make decisions, I feel comfortable.”

He explained the role intuition played in his decision-making, and that intuition yielded him a sense of comfort when he listened to it, and warned him when he is about to make the wrong decision. Intuition, also referred to as ‘gut feeling’, ‘feeling confident about’ and/or ‘just knowing’, can be useful in decision-making (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004).

He continued with an example.

Christian: “For example, I made two mistakes with a particular business venture. I got this guy who had a fantastic CV, we would leave him nameless. He had worked in another organization. So I got this person, who, when I saw his CV, his CV was almost 30 pages, doctor of divinity, all kinds. The sensing was ... when there's so
much stuff, there's something that's in there somewhere. This guy was recommended to me ... So I sent him to UK to meet with my uncle... So I said, please uncle, please interview this fellow. So my uncle’s comment was that ... he doesn’t know about this his fifty-page CV, it's too much. So, first whatever [first warning].”

Christian went on to share what had happened, but his comments are not included to maintain confidentiality. Although he employed the person, he acknowledged that he made a mistake in assigning him a more senior position on the basis of his CV, even though his intuition had warned him not to do so.

Christian: “Anyway, be that as it may, that was a first sign. I had that feeling, I think I'm making a mistake here, second warning. To cut a long story short, at the end of the day, he didn't achieve 50% of whatever. There were lot of issues and ... it cost us a lot of money.”

He explained that his failure to listen to his intuition cost the organization a lot of money, and he had learnt from the experience. He shared:

Christian: “So, nowadays, in selecting, I've learnt from that ... and the moment I have misgivings about anything, I don’t even want to move with it.”

Christian’s comment above explains his willingness to listen to his intuition in the decision-making process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to listen to his/her intuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because intuition enables the leader to be able to judge information in decision-making.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be sensitive to his/her intuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this allows him or her to mitigate risks in decision-making.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to realise that intuition can be gained from experience, background or education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And it can be useful in decision-making.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to listen to intuition when building a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because human resources is the biggest challenge to success in an organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And it is important that a leader heeds warning signs, where the recruit appears to be over-projecting his/her skills, overly concerned about status, position or title.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, while intuition was useful in decision-making, it was concluded by participants, that it was not enough for decision-making. Rather, intuition needed to be balanced with rationality in decision-making, due to the bias that may occur from intuition, as for example a person is more inclined to recall intuition that has resulted
in successful outcomes, than those with unsuccessful outcomes (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004).

Xavier: “It’s a balance. If you are going to make a lot of impulsive decisions and rely on your own intuition and expertise to do that, people will question why they are supporting you.”

Xavier: “There have been times where I wish I acted faster ... on personnel issues, I think those are areas as you get older and a bit more experienced, you start to see the signs, good and bad, a little earlier.”

Carlos: “You are gonna have to use your judgments. A lot of the time when you get towards the top of the organization, a lot of what is expected of you as a leader is about judgment.”

He continued:

“You are going to have facts, you are gonna have details, but you can be presented with two very compelling, opposite arguments that both have good factual backups and both are potentially the right way to go, but it will lead to different outcomes. A lot of the time it comes from experience, it comes from good judgment.”

Abi: “To make a decision, means you have to take a leap, sometimes it’s a leap of faith.”
7.4 Seeking challenges and control

This is the second category provided by the Tacit Knowledge Framework as introduced by Sternberg (2000). It refers to the tacit knowledge that relates to seeking challenges and control. New themes emerged from the conversations and were identified for this category. These are: “resilience” and “resourcefulness.”

Resilience

Resilience refers to the ability of an individual to survive in difficult situations. It involves elements of perseverance, adaptability and the ability to understand an environment, including detecting when the environment is changing or the conditions in the environment are changing (Judge, Piccolo and Kosalka, 2009).

Carlos shared the importance of resilience by giving an example from his role. He explained how he formed a coalition with other airlines and stakeholders to lobby the government for fairer taxes for the airline industry.

Carlos: “I think another leadership quality is resilience. You have to realise these things take a long time and what might look like impossible now, keep going, keep pushing. No matter how hard it looks, no matter how many people tell you, you are wasting your time.”

He gave an example.

Carlos: “On the APD [Air Passenger Duty] point as I said, the issue was always about fatigue. So, some of the members of these organizations they tried, they’ve
helped, they've got their CEOs to write letters and nothing is happening, so they get fatigued.”

Carlos: “When other people around you are saying throw in the towel, give it up, you have to say, no. We are going to keep going, we are going to keep annoying people, until they are fed up of hearing, saying not them again, coming about the same issue, but that is the only way to get them to listen.”

Carlos: “So you have to keep trying, you have to keep going, and that is the same with the bigger issues. The small wins you can get, but there's the bigger, bigger, tough rocks to push up the hill, they roll back down and you have to keep trying. If there's one thing I’ve learnt over the years in this particular job, it’s the resilience in leadership.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be resilient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By not listening to those who say s/he should give up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because change takes a long time, but it will come.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

He related the challenges he faced in his leadership position to rocks that need to be pushed up the hill, constantly rolling back down, an interesting allusion of leadership to the myth of Sisyphus; and the need for a leader to be resilient and keep persevering in order to achieve results. Resilience is important for effective leadership, particularly in dynamic environments, which are rapidly changing, requiring adaptability in leadership behaviour (Van Vugt and Kurzban, 2007).
Seth shared from his personal life how he had learnt to be resilient and to persevere:

Seth: “Well, on a personal basis, I run a marathon, so perseverance has become quite important as a factor. Courage is not something that necessarily roars. It can be little voice at the end of the day that says tomorrow I’ll try again. So there is this element of perseverance.

Seth’s comment linked perseverance with courage and also drew from his personal experience as a marathon runner. He explained that in his leadership, he had incorporated an element of perseverance, not willing to say no, but willing to try again.

Xavier: “Someone asked me in one of these conferences what do I spend most of my day doing as a CEO, and I actually said, saying no to things.”

He explained that this was, because it was important to get the model of the business right and be able to say no to things that do not fit with the business model.

Xavier: “If you are confident about the direction of the business and does it fit the model, there are lots of people that will try to convince you all the time, to try this, try that ... It’s very easy to have people try to distract you and add complexity. Yes, have you thought of this, have you thought of that?”

Xavier explained that he had learnt to say no and to take a tough stance towards the decisions he made in the organization, as this enabled him to focus, avoid distractions.
and avoid complexity. For him, the way he achieved this, was to be confident about the direction his leadership was taking the business, and the model he was using to implement this strategy.

He admitted that there was some negativity being tough and saying no, however, he restated that it was better for him to be known as someone who has to be convinced to spend money, and not as a leader with a propensity for spending money.

Xavier continued by giving an example. He shared that in his airline organization, customers boarded on a first come, first served basis. However, this led to disruptions, as families wanted to be seated together, especially in the case of people with young families.

Xavier: “Cabin crew having to say please, can you move so that this lady can sit next to her daughter or whatever. So in the end we said okay, we are not gonna get away with this, this is causing too much disruption. So we said okay, you can choose where you sit, but you have to pay $2 extra to book ahead. But if you don’t use that $2 and there’s nowhere, tough, because you had the opportunity.”

Researcher: “And what did the people do?”

He replied: “They paid the $2. And we made it a profit centre. So, have the confidence to challenge convention and see if you can make that into an additional profit stream.”
Xavier: “And generally, what you are doing is chasing revenue. Someone will say to you, if someone says to me here’s an idea and it will help you save cost. Much more likely to say yes to that. If they say, here’s the idea and if we add this cost, we can get this extra revenue, why am I adding second cost for aspirational revenue? So you know, unless I have to. If you’ve exhausted all other opportunities, you may get down to that. But in the airline business, very rarely will you have exhausted all the cost opportunities. It’s a bit flippant to say, you say no to everything, but certainly as a starting point, you wanna be convinced into spending money, not have a propensity to spend money.”

Xavier’s example above revealed a person, who was tough and confident, but also able to adapt the business model while remaining clear on the purpose of the business, which is to make profits. However, for him, challenging convention was married with the opportunity to make additional profit. In this example, he shared how he changed the business model by adding the complexity of pre-booking for seats. However, he explained that this additional complexity to the model was paid for by the customer, thus resulting in additional profit stream.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to remain focused and committed to the core objective of the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By being confident enough to say no or yes to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this ensures that the leader remains committed to the key objectives for the organization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tacit Knowledge items

it is important for a leader to be open to different sources of information
And to be resourceful and creative in reviewing information from feedback provided by customers
And to use the information to refine the organization’s product offerings

Tacit Knowledge items

It is important for the leader to always ask “how can I get rid of these complaints and also create a profit centre?”
Because if someone has taken the time to write and complain about something
Then they will probably be willing to pay a little bit to get rid of the problem.

Robert’s comment on the importance of resilience and clarity of purpose ties in with Xavier’s.

Robert: “The basic condition is to make your airline profitable, and that is what I always was telling when I had problems with governments, when I reduced the frequencies or even cut destinations. I used to say, you are head of that country; I am one of the leaders of [my airline]. My role is to make my company sustainable.”

He explained further what he meant by sustainability.

Robert: “I have a responsibility towards sixty thousand people who are working for that company. I also have the responsibility to bring the company into the future, so that is why I needed to make profit, so that I can reinvest in airplanes, that I can open new destinations, that I can increase frequencies between points, that I be able to
have a better negotiation with the aircraft manufacturers, that I have other airlines that are trusting me and which are ready to make a partnership with us, co-share agreements or alliances or even mergers.”

It is interesting that during several conversations with leaders in the airline industry, sustainability was discussed in terms of the business model, i.e. the right type of business model to solve some of the issues around lack of profitability and business growth. However, sustainability as it relates to the impact of the airline industry on the environment, was only referred to by one participant, Raoul. His comments on this are presented in chapter nine.

**Resourcefulness**

Resourcefulness is another theme that emerged from the data.

Robert: “When I joined, ... which is not centuries ago, but quite some time, I said to the Human Resources, I want to start at the lower level. I want to work into the airports, on the ramp, help to guide the airplanes and things like that. I want to write tickets, I want to see how the people, how the customers, so that’s what I did.”

Robert explained that his motivation to seek the exposure within the airline was because he wanted to fully understand the airline industry and the best way to do this was to be knowledgeable of the different parts of the complex business.

Imogen also explained that she took ownership of leading in situations without being conscious that she was doing so.
Imogen: “I kind of took ownership without knowing and without being asked.”

She explained that this demonstration of the ability to take initiative led to her promotion.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be able to take initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>And to take on challenges without being asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this is important for finding solutions to organizational issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And is important for leadership.</td>
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Carlos’s example provides a different example of resourcefulness.

Carlos: “There's always the issue of best practice. You should benchmark yourself as well as the company is being benchmarked about what is best practice in your specific profession ... I would regularly look at how we do, as how effective are we in terms of our ability to communicate and influence versus some of our peers.”

Carlos’ comment above revealed how he had taken the initiative to learn from those he considered the ‘best in class’ in different qualities that he outlined: ability to communicate and ability to influence. He also explained that he did not limit this evaluation to the airline industry alone, but across several industries.
Carlos: “Some of the companies I benchmark against or look at are not necessarily in aviation. They would be, who is best in class at being effective in lobbying?”

His explanation of the importance of benchmarking resonates with the findings from Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer and Welch’s (1998) study.

Carlos: “You know, in certain professions, you don’t have to just look at your own industry. If I want to judge how good is a trade association in Brussels, how good is our trade association, I think to myself not only how good are they versus other trade associations in the world in aviation, how good are they in influencing the commission and MEPs and others versus other trade associations, it could be the baked bean association of Europe.”

Carlos: “Because you have a certain skill set and you are bringing your skill set to that role. It could be anything you are selling; it could be any business you are working for. You need to benchmark. You need to be aware of how fast-moving everything is.”

He explained, that the reason for this was because of how dynamic the operating environment was.

Hans also shared an example of identifying an organization he thought was strong in his particular skill set and how he made decisions based on what his interpretation of their decision in a similar circumstance might be.
Hans: “Virgin very rarely gets the sense of something wrong. Because I think they’ve got a very good radar, and I think I always looked to them, as an example of where, how a company can do, broadly, not that there are no exceptions, the right thing, the right way.”

Hans’ comment presented two views, an example of the wrong way of approaching situations and an example of the right way of approaching situations, doing the right things the right way. It is key to note this, that he took the initiative to identify an organization he could benchmark to evaluate the actions of two different organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to benchmark his/herself and the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By identifying those who have best practice, in particular specialisms or roles,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it is important for the leader to be aware of what others are doing in similar roles,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And to learn how s/he can improve and be more effective.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Synthesis: Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge**

This chapter has presented themes that arose from the conversations with participants that relate to intrapersonal tacit knowledge. While some of the incidents and the discussions within the chapter were unexpected, for example, Xavier’s comment that a leader should be confident about his inadequacies, it was also very enlightening to have been privy to the lessons learnt from experiences, learnt from mistakes. Some
participants were very frank and shared some of their weaknesses. While this was part of the conversation guide, the level of frankness was unexpected. This openness ran through the thread of the conversations and some were more evident than others. In some cases, the recording device was turned off to maintain confidentiality, as participants shared quite personal incidents.

It is important to note that the participants introduced the terms “intuition”, “resilience” and “resourcefulness” into the conversations and they were deemed important; hence, their inclusion into the categories of the framework for intrapersonal tacit knowledge. “Learning from others” is an additional category that arose in the data collection phase and this has been included into the modified framework for intrapersonal tacit knowledge, referred to as the integrated framework for Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge.

This chapter has expanded the Tacit Knowledge Framework by introducing four new themes: learning from others, intuition, resilience and resourcefulness. The Tacit Knowledge Framework has also been deepened, by providing deeper insights into the categories: managing the self and seeking challenges and control. The updated framework is presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework for Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Preliminary framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing the Self</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Integrated framework for Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge

| Managing the Self | • Self-awareness  
|                  | • Learning:  
|                  |   • Learning from Own Experience  
|                  |   • Learning from Others  
|                  |   • Intuition  

| Seeking Challenges and Control | • Resilience  
|                                | • Resourcefulness  

Table 7-2: New themes added to the intrapersonal tacit knowledge category of the preliminary framework

The table below provides a summary of the number of intrapersonal tacit knowledge items obtained from the study and which were presented in chapter seven:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Self awareness                      | 5  

Table 7-3: Integrated framework for intrapersonal tacit knowledge
Table 7-4: Number of Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge Items</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning from experience</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from others</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuition</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Seeking Challenges and Control*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge Items</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above details the breakdown of the number of intrapersonal tacit knowledge items according to the sub-categories presented in the chapter. From the above table, the total number of intrapersonal tacit knowledge items obtained in the study was thirty-five. The table below presents a summary of the results for the intrapersonal tacit knowledge level and feeds into the Tacit Knowledge Framework for Airline Leaders presented and discussed in chapter ten.

Table 7-5: Tacit Knowledge Framework for Airline Leaders: Intrapersonal Level

<p>| Tacit Knowledge Framework for Airline Leaders |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <strong>Level</strong> | <strong>Sub-Category</strong> | <strong>Themes</strong> | <strong>Tacit knowledge items identified</strong> |
| Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge | Managing the Self | Self-awareness | 5 |
| | | Learning from experience | 14 |
| | | Learning from others | 7 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seeking Challenges and Control</th>
<th>Intuition</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.5 Conclusion

The chapter has presented the findings and discussion of the data collection phase that relate to intrapersonal tacit knowledge. It explored the different levels within senior leadership, although some participants who were senior executives were less experienced than others, which was evident in some of the responses they gave. The participants’ responses related to self-awareness, learning from experience and changing the self. It was interesting to observe the incidents that were shared as important by participants. New themes of intuition, resourcefulness and resilience emerged from the data with the participants. These themes are of particular relevance to the airline industry, an industry known for its fast-paced nature, and complex and multi-layered environment. It is interesting that the participants shared comments that relate to intuition, resourcefulness and resilience, as it implies that these themes, and skills are important to effective leadership behaviour in the airline industry.

The chapter also identified intrapersonal tacit knowledge items presented in boxes that feed into the Tacit Knowledge inventory presented in Appendix Seven. The next chapter, chapter eight presents the results, analyses and discussion of the data from the conversations that relate to interpersonal tacit knowledge.
Chapter Eight

Stories of Leadership: Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study and the analysis of the themes shared by the participants that were coded into the interpersonal tacit knowledge category of the Tacit Knowledge Framework. Chapters six and seven covered the themes related to the general understanding of leadership, the context of the airline industry (chapter six) and the intrapersonal level of the Tacit Knowledge Framework (chapter seven). As mentioned earlier, many of the themes are strongly linked and the categorisation has been used for efficient management of the data.

As in chapters six and seven, this chapter contains verbatim quotes from the transcripts, shown in speech marks and italicized. Where words have been removed from the quotes for confidentiality, they have been marked by “…”, or where extra words have been added to clarify meaning, or to ensure that the essence captured of the conversation was captured, these are shown in square brackets “[”.

One of the complexities of leadership behaviour, identified by the participants, was the need to be able to build, develop and support their followers, as well as being able to reward and punish as required. These issues have been presented and discussed. New themes that did not fit into the interpersonal categories of the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework emerged during the analysis of the data. These themes are
accessibility, integrating teams and building team spirit. They are discussed in this chapter, and are fed into the Tacit Knowledge Framework to provide an updated ‘Interpersonal tacit knowledge’ category. It is appropriate to state here that the participants were not prompted about their teams. The participants steered the focus onto teams during the conversations.

8.2 Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge

Interpersonal tacit knowledge refers to knowledge about influencing others, working with others, learning from others and supporting and cooperating with them. Sternberg referred to the ‘others’ at this level as followers, and this chapter has focused on the knowledge the participants shared about how they related with their subordinates. In this study, ‘followers’ is used in place of ‘subordinates’, as subordinates was used to refer to the lower-ranked officers in the military, while followers is more applicable in non-military situations. ‘Followers’ is also the term commonly used in non-military leadership studies. The data has been analysed according to the categories of the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework, under the category of Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge, with the two sub-categories “Influencing and controlling others” and “Supporting and cooperating with others” (Sternberg, 2000).

The table below shows the preliminary framework for the Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge category of the Tacit Knowledge Framework.
8.3 Influencing and Controlling Others

This category relates to the results from the conversations about influencing and controlling others. The definition of leadership used in this study refers to leadership as the process of influencing others. Thus, understanding how leaders influence and control others is important for understanding leadership behaviour (Zalzenik, 1998).

Robert: “You have to spend most of your time thinking about what you want to do with a company, and then you have to motivate your people. There is another aspect, because life is never easy, which is what I call the control of the company.”

Robert provided an example to highlight this.

Robert: “I had under my control close to ten thousand people in one hundred and eighty seven countries. That means one hundred and eighty seven regional managers... Every minute I knew that maybe two hundred aeroplanes were flying all over the world.”
Robert’s comments above provide an example of the scale at which senior executives in the airline industry operate and enable a sense of appreciation for the comments they shared about influencing and controlling others, which are presented in this chapter.

Within the category ‘Influencing and controlling others’, data was coded into other sub-categories, according to the themes that emerged from the data. These have been presented below.

**Building a team**

Building a team was one of the themes that arose from the conversations with participants. This is because leadership occurs within the process of influencing others, and the ‘others’ include followers within the organization (Hogan et al., 1994; Meindl et al., 1985; Yukl, 1989).

Xavier: “*A lot of leadership for me is about how you build the team.*”

The term ‘building’ highlights that the right team requires a deliberate effort to ensure that the team is composed of the right people.

Seth’s comment below provides some insight into the dynamic nature of the airline industry.

Seth: “*If you had more of a harmonized market with different players, as I said, operating according to the same rules of the game, you can standardize processes,*
you can have everyone looking at the same issues, and you need experts that can deal with the same issues for everyone.”

Seth continued: “But now we have basically confusion galore... it is more differentiated, it is more targeted, it is more specialised than it was before.”

Seth: “What I am now looking for are people who can really focus.”

Seth’s comments above echoes Crossan, et al.’s (2008) comment in their work on transcendent leadership on the requirement of team members who are able to focus. Seth’s comments also highlight the changes in the airline industry and provide an insight into some of the qualities required from his/her team by a leader.

This term of ‘building the team’ requires the leader to be able to identify the strengths of others within the team, to ensure that people are placed in the positions that harness their potential (Yukl, 1989).

Ibrahim: “The right sort of managers that will get us in the right direction is something that consumes me probably more than any one specific thing. I really believe that with the right management team and the right leaders, we can execute and achieve a C-rated business plan, versus, if we have an A-rated business plan and a C-rated executive. Leadership for me is getting the right people in there.”
Building a team is one of the roles of a leader. Within this role, team members who enable the leader to actualise his/her vision are important. Ibrahim’s comment acknowledges the role of the right team in enabling the leader’s visions to be realised, and highlights the importance of implementation to any business vision (Hogan et al., 1994).

Imogen explained that passion was one of the qualities she looked for in her team members.

Imogen: “You look for people who have some passion and you will always have some dead wood that you’ve got to pull along and hope that those with passion are more than or more passionate than those dead wood, and hopefully they will be able to light the dead wood to life.”

She explained that having passionate people in a team can be a positive influence on other less passionate members of the team. However, where there are more dispassionate than passionate members in a team, the dispassionate members might sap energy from the more passionate team members, affecting team morale negatively. Therefore, it is important that a leader balances the members of his/her
teams to maintain commitment levels (Hogan et al., 1994; Souba, 2007; Goodall and Pogrebna, 2012).

Thus, the leader has a role in identifying, nurturing and developing this potential to ensure that the organization achieves its objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important when a leader is selecting a team</td>
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<tr>
<td>That s/he selects people that are passionate about the job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because passionate people will help to ignite the less passionate team members.</td>
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</table>

Oliver advised that it was better for a leader to “hire for attitude and train for aptitude”.

He explained what he meant by this.

Oliver: “We are so always focused on do they know how to do tickets, or do they have sales experience or do they know how to load an airplane already?"

Oliver: “I would say particularly commercially speaking, inevitably, if we put out a job announcement vacancy for a sales rep [sales representative], inevitably, we get tons of other airlines’ sales reps and tons of travel agents who want to do it, and their argument always is, but I know how to do ticketing, I know how to do all that, and I essentially stopped hiring people that –for sales reps, very specific example, sales rep, not ticket agents.”
He provided his reason for this:

Oliver: “I’ve gone more to that person that makes me laugh, makes me want to talk to them, are they at ease, do they have a good handshake, these kind of things, because I cannot teach that, I can teach you what you need to know about the airline business, I can tell you, you make a fare this way and you add this and you do this and if they’re going here, you can add this tax. I can teach you that, the machine will do half of that anyway. I can teach you that. I can't teach you how to walk in and make the person want to do business with you. I can't.”

Oliver’s comment above on the preference for attitude over aptitude echoes Hogan, Curphy et al. (1994) on disposition and personality.

Oliver’s comment “I can teach”, reveals the willingness of a leader to develop others. He explained that he could teach a person what to do, the functional skills required for their role, but that a person’s attitude to their work environment, how a person relates to other people, was something that could not be taught. However, an additional point to note is the challenge to leadership, when someone has the attitude to learn and work hard, but no aptitude for learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to carefully hire for attitude rather than for aptitude</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because a person can be trained for aptitude</td>
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<tr>
<td>But one can't easily teach a person to have the right attitude</td>
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<tr>
<td>And the right attitude is very important in a service industry like the airline industry.</td>
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</table>
Oliver provided further information on how he selected people to his team:

Oliver: “I like to hire people who have had non-easy sales jobs.”

This was an interesting comment, and Oliver expanded it with an example.

Oliver: “An example I’ll give, was a young woman who was out of school... out of college, she had a college degree, whatever it was and she got a job... basically selling cigarettes to the gas stations and stuff, it wasn’t corporate, that’s not a great job, right? And she had been doing nine months, and you didn't really have a whole lot of results, because they didn't have time to go measure it... and I thought, if she’s willing to go do that and pound that kind of pavement, and she obviously had some success, you know selling a nice product like first class seats to Europe, she’s going to want to go do this.”

Oliver’s example is resonant with the industrious and hard-working attitude he required from his team members. He explained how the past experience of applicants was a signal to him on their potential to work hard (Hogan et al., 1994).

Oliver: “If they worked hard to get there, then I am very interested.”

Oliver also provided an example of the type of people he did not hire.

Oliver: “In the African context, I don’t hire the sons and daughters of Ministers. To me, those people feel entitled, they have no real concept of work... They don’t take
direction well, they can be difficult internally, because they think they are superior to all kinds of people.”

Hans provided some insight into the challenges of building a team.

Hans: “Building a team is an important thing and you don’t always get it right.”

Oliver corroborated Hans’ comment above:

Oliver: “Your limiting factor is oftentimes the people you work with. And that can be your own fault. Sometimes you inherit people and sometimes you choose them.”

His explanation echoes that of Hogan, et al.’s (1994) on the requirement for a leader to build the right team, and where the team is not having the right composition, it could be the leader’s fault. However, he also noted that a leader is not always in the position to build the entire team from scratch.

Hans also shared the qualities he looked for in team members.

Hans: “But effectively, what you want with someone working for you, is broadly two things, someone who is able to think for themselves, but also somebody who, if you say I want it done exactly like this, is going to broadly do it exactly like that, because you’ve probably asked for it to be done like that for a particular reason.”
Hans continued: “But someone who is also prepared to say ‘I tell you what, we’ve done it like that once, why don’t we change it around the next time, or I’ve had a new way of looking at this.’”

Hans’ comment above explained that while it was important to have team members who could follow instructions correctly, it was also important to have team members that would be able to use their initiative to contribute to the effectiveness of the team and the organization (Van Vugt et al., 2008).

Hans: “The great thing about working with people is that they come with new ideas, new ways of looking at things, and nobody should be arrogant enough to assume that they can’t be taught anything.”

Researcher: “So in your experience, leadership is like a two-way thing, that you are giving them direction and you are telling them things, but you are also open to receiving what they are able to give you?”

To which he replied: “For sure.”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important when building a team</td>
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<tr>
<td>For a leader to choose people who are able to follow instructions</td>
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<tr>
<td>And also able to use their own initiative to suggest alternatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because leadership is a two-way relationship</td>
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</table>
And the leader should be able to give directions, yet also learn from team members.

This observation revealed leadership as a two-way relationship, between the leader and his/her followers, and not solely from the leader to followers alone (Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien, 2012; Van Vugt et al., 2008; Meindl et al., 1985).

The interactive relationship between the leader and followers is also captured in Xavier’s comment:

Xavier: “Don’t be ashamed of asking people and don’t be hesitant about surrounding yourself with smart people.”

The notion that the leader will be ashamed or hesitant of surrounding his or herself with smart people is an interesting one, and Xavier went on to say:

Xavier: “Good leaders are people that are confident about their own inadequacies. So people who are good leaders will know and often reflect this in their hiring.”

Imran: “It’s so important to build a team around you that can compensate for your weak areas.”

Imran provided an example: “If for example you are not good with finance, then you need a really strong finance director alongside you to make sure that they are running the numbers correctly, the accounts, the cash flow and all those kind of
things. If you are not a good marketer, then you need a really hot marketer who is going to be doing that side.”

Additionally, Hans’s statement also underlines the two-way relationship by saying: “It is only by working with new people that you learn new stuff.”

This introduces themes of the confidence required for effective leadership, which was discussed in chapter seven.

Imran explained that he sought to build his team to compensate for his weak areas. His comment relates to the senior position and possibly to the composition of the top management team of leaders in the airline industry. Imran’s comment relate to his level within the organization, building a team of experts, as directors to compensate for the weakness of the Chief Executive Officer. He further provides some key points to be considered in the composition of the teams within an organization. His comment acknowledges the importance of having the right team, comprised of confident and capable people, and also reveals the need for self-awareness of a leader, who is able to identify his/her weaknesses and build a team that is able to compensate for that weakness (Avolio, 2007).

Xavier: “They can’t be different on everything, otherwise you are not going to get along, but having people who say ‘have you thought of this’, ‘have you thought of that’, and making sure your risk mitigation is lowered.”
Xavier’s comment above explained that the team should not challenge every decision, as then this would reduce the effectiveness of the leader in making decisions, but agreeing with Hans, Xavier explained that having the right team mitigates some of the risks of decision-making. This echoes Van Vugt et al.’s (2008) comments on the importance of group decision-making to effective leadership and the attainments of an organization’s goals.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be confident about his/her inadequacies And be open to hiring people that are able to compensate for them Because this ensures that the team helps and protects the leader And it shows the leader is confident and assured enough to work with strong people.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to have people in a team that are able to provide a different perspective in decision making And that can also challenge him/her To ensure that risk is effectively minimized in decision-making.</td>
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</table>

The section has presented some of the challenges of building a team and some of the types of skills that leaders look for when building their teams, qualities of good followers: individuals who are hardworking, able to use their initiative, interact well with others and communicate effectively.
Delegating

The above section presented results on the importance of building the right team and for a leader to have the right type and mix of people working within the organization. Following on from this, is the need to be able to get the team members to work towards attaining set goals, which concerns delegation, presented in this section.

Oliver: “One of the things as a leader, it’s not what I do, it’s what I can get others to do.”

Echoing Oliver’s comment, Robert shared: “It is impossible for one man to do it, so you have to delegate…because the machine of leadership is also a matter of delegation.”

Xavier: “You can't do everything yourself. You can say where you think the company should be going but you can’t make it happen, you can’t fly the planes, change the engines. It’s about cascading that vision through the organization and the way you do that is by your direct reports.”

Xavier’s comment highlights the importance of delegation as a means of cascading the leader’s vision throughout the organization, and this relates to effective communication, as delegation requires clarity in communication (Hogan, et al., 1994).

Hans also commented on the importance of clarity in delegation.
Hans: “I like to give very clear directions upfront... Very clear directions of what I want to be done, and would measure people against those, and assess people against whether they’ve achieved them or not; and always wanting to be available for people who say ‘can you clarify for what you want? I’ve done this, is that the right direction?’”

Hans: “Because the very last thing that you want is to brief somebody badly and then they go off and do something in the wrong direction, which is doubly bad, and they’ve just wasted their time. That is incredibly demoralising for people.”

**Tacit Knowledge items**

| It is important for a leader to give very clear directions of what needs to be done |
| And clear explanations of how followers will be assessed |
| Because this enables followers to know what is expected of them. |

Raoul: “It is probably articulating the expectation up-front, but then enabling people to actually do the work themselves.”

Raoul’s comment above explained that clear communication was important, but was not enough. Delegation also required the leader to create an enabling environment for people to perform the tasks that they had been delegated to (Avolio, et al., 2009).

Raoul shared that people were sometimes hesitant to delegate.

Raoul: “There is always an element of risk in that people like to retain control, because they think they can do it themselves.”
Yet, he explained that “but you don’t get as much done and you don’t necessarily use the full weight of the skills that exist across the group, if you do it that way.”

This view was also shared by Oliver.

Oliver: “But I think you have to let your people do the work. If you micromanage, you don’t get good results. You need to be available, you need to help, but they need to do it in the end, and I’ve seen some managers who were really good people and knew the business and got the results, but not as good as they could, because their people got tired of being micromanaged.”

Micromanagement is a form of over-control and is argued to be a sign of ineffective leadership, as the leader has not been able to build the right team who s/he feels s/he can delegate to (Hogan et al., 1994).

Raoul: “I guess it is just giving people the confidence to do the work as best they can. I think that the more you undermine somebody’s confidence to do their thing, and they just start second-guessing themselves and they don’t do their best work.”

Oliver provided an example from his experience.

Oliver: “I think one manager was particularly good and I enjoyed working with her, but it didn't matter what you did, she was going to re-do it, not a couple little things, it was going to be substantially redone to look like it was hers, not that she was trying to take credit, but she likes it in her style, in her way.”
Oliver: “So people just sort of stop or say I’m just going to do the minimum, because they are going to redo it anyway.”

Oliver’s comment above provided an example of his experiences with a micromanager and the implications that micromanaging had on the morale of the team.

**Tacit Knowledge items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is important that a leader does not micromanage his/her followers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because micromanaging undermines the confidence of staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>And limits the ability of staff to display initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>And then they don’t do their best work</td>
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<tr>
<td>And the leader doesn’t get the best from staff.</td>
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Robert explained some of the challenges of delegation:

Robert: “*With delegation comes to whom you delegate and you have to choose very carefully the people you can trust.*”

Robert’s comment highlights the need for trust in delegation, and the importance of building the right team in the first place.

Carlos shared Robert’s observation on the need for trust in delegation.

Carlos: “*In our market, we were starting new routes to new destinations, which was a big deal, and I had a team of people with me who I had to trust in very specialist*...
areas to get on and make analyses and make things happen, and I trusted them to do big projects, I always oversaw, but not too much, and there was a great sense of achievement when they delivered for themselves. “

Carlos’ comment above resonates with Avolio, et al.’s (2009) argument that the role of leader should evolve towards trusting others to deliver and oversee them. In this way, Carlos linked delegation with developing others.

Robert explained: “A leader has to explain his vision, has to explain to the people he delegates to where he wants to bring the company, what he wants to accomplish, give them a couple of very simple messages, which will allow them to act and act confidently.”

Robert’s comment above provides a succinct summary of the section, which presented the Tacit Knowledge items that relate to delegation.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to agree milestones and clear objectives with the team</td>
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<tr>
<td>And to dialogue with them as to whether they are achievable</td>
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<tr>
<td>And to give guidance to the team, but trust them enough to give them space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it demonstrates that you trust your people and are confident and comfortable with what they are doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And they in turn will trust you.</td>
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</table>
Rewarding and punishing followers

The linking of reward and punishment with performance was another theme that emerged from the conversations. The participants shared interesting insights regarding their opinion of what forms of rewards were necessary for staff.

Jerome explained the importance of rewarding good behaviour. Interestingly, he did not mention a financial reward, but a reward that contributed to the employee’s sense of self worth.

Jerome: “Everyone needs to hear that they have done a good job. It’s part of what motivates people and helps them maintain their own self-respect and motivation. By understanding what the employees want from their jobs, what their aims are, and how they want to develop, leaders can heighten their employees’ sense of self-worth. And the power behind healthy self-esteem generates the self-confidence and creativity needed to tackle the new challenges that are constantly around the corner.”

Robert provided an unexpected comment: “You know, companies are wrong in always promoting people.”

Researcher: “Explain that to me.”

He replied: “I’ll explain. I’m always for promoting people, because you have to have the best people in the right place.”

Robert continued with a detailed example.
Robert: “Now, very often, you promote people who are good, say yeah let’s take station manager, fantastic person, handling the planes, on time, good commercial, good public relations, good leader, motivating his people, working hard, having his people working extra hours, because the plane is late. You know that type of thing, living the life of the company. All of a sudden you promote him, the person, him or her.”

Robert: “What makes a good station manager? But where to promote him? You find out, would he be good in becoming a commercial manager for a country, or would it be better to promote him within the aircraft operation, so he takes a bigger role?”

Robert shared that a leader should evaluate the difference between the responsibilities of the former role and the new role, before promoting a well-performing team member.

Robert: “And sometimes, you have people, good with a group of hundred or five, which have difficulties to manage thousand, two thousand. So in other words, what I say is promotion is fantastic and you have to always promote people, train people, make them understand new technologies and things like that, but be careful.”

Researcher: “This is true, and going back to the role of experience, someone can be a good station manager or a good supervisor, but it doesn’t mean that they are a good regional manager or a good country manager.”
Robert: “Exactly. You have to handle that very carefully and you have to make the station manager feel that he is recognised, for what he did for the company.”

Robert’s comments highlight a central finding in Hogan et al.’s (1994) research on promoting others, with the key focus being to reward staff and recognize their hard work. They argue that organizations need to be able to find ways to appropriately recognize and reward staff for their work, but that this reward or recognition does not always need to be in the form of a promotion (Avolio et al., 2009).

Oliver: “Management is people skills. So you are not going to pick anybody who is incompetent at what they do. If you are going to pick amongst the sale reps, you are not going to pick the one who is under target and all... so you might look amongst the basically competent people.”

He explained the qualities to be identified when choosing a leader.

Oliver: “So when you are choosing a leader, then you are choosing for some different skills sets amongst, and I also say you don’t have to choose from the people that are of that skill set. In other words, you don’t have to choose a sales person to be a sales manager. You could take someone from the airport, who’s been a supervisor at the airport, and if they are very well organised or whatever, make them a sales manager or vice versa.”

For some followers, good performance does not need to come in the form of a promotion, but is linked to being strongly motivated and aligned with the objectives of the organization. These people display traits of allocentrics, those with a collective social orientation.
orientation, and thus, have the ability to work well with others and prefer transformational leadership forms to transactional ones. Allocentrics are different from idiocentrics. Idiocentrics prefer to work alone and focus on tasks. They can be very productive members of a team, but because they like to work alone, they are not good team players or team managers. Idiocentrics prefer a transactional form of leadership, where reward is directly linked to the performance of individuals (Avolio et al., 2009).

Oliver provided a compelling example of why companies should be very careful with promotion.

Oliver: “When I first came to Africa, I had a boss... he was a very smart guy, but he had no management skills, so he was denigrating, he flip-flopped, said this, so you go did that, and then you came back and he had changed it, he could not share credit. Everything had to appear as if it was him. I mean he was a particularly egregious case”.

He explained the effect this had on the organization:

Oliver: “I saw lots of people leave and I knew their feeling. It really was a very prominent case of someone who was exceptionally smart, had the right instincts in terms of business in terms of knowing where things might go, but simply could not get people to do it, because they hated him. Because he demoralised them, because he made them scared, because he just made them angry.”
Oliver’s comment, while explaining the things that leadership is not, also made a very important link between unwise promotion and the effect it had on staff turnover. This behaviour led to the departure of the manager.

Oliver: “And he eventually had to leave early from here, and has since had the same problem in other places. And I think that is his fault, but also the company’s fault.”

Oliver continued: “When you are picking managers, you got to pick people who not just please you, but who can also work with the people who are going to work for him. It’s always easy, for instance, if you want to choose a sales manager, it’s always easiest to take your best performing sales rep [representative]. You have five sales reps in your office - who sold the most? Who had the most increase? Whatever your matrix is ... well, so and so did, so let’s make her the boss. That is almost always the wrong way to do it.”

Oliver explained the role the company has in promoting people and providing high performing staff with additional responsibilities. His comments also reflect Avolio et al.’s (2009) findings on the qualities that promoted staff had, which included ability to work well with others, industriousness and someone who had a passion for that work and for people. These comments are also similar to the qualities that participants stated they looked for when building their teams and leads perhaps to the fact that the teams should comprise individuals with some form of leadership potential, so that they in turn are able to become leaders themselves.
Tacit Knowledge items

It is important for a leader to understand that the key thing about promotion is to make people feel recognized and valued.

But a leader has to be careful about promoting people into new roles.

As it is important to have the best people in the right place.

And the fact that someone is a good station manager does not mean that they will be a good country manager.

Imogen shared that she promoted people based on the leadership traits they exhibited; she explained that these included initiative, drive, ethics, passion and discipline. She also commented:

Imogen: “People who have a sense of balance, who are comfortable in their own skin.”

Imogen’s comment explains the characteristics she based her promotion of people on. It is interesting that she stated that she looked for “a sense of balance” and being comfortable in one’s own skin. These are very distinctive qualities, not mentioned by
the other participants. Her comments are resonant with Sims’ (2010) findings on the contemplative aspect of leadership, resulting from self-awareness and a sense of strengths and weaknesses, and a balanced perspective of a leader’s role in the organization.

The participants also gave insights on leadership behaviour when staff made mistakes or were underperforming.

Xavier: “You often have people who are working very hard and very diligently, but on the wrong things, because they’ve decided it’s important... have to make sure people stay focused and don’t get too distracted into what they like doing or they feel like doing.”

He shared how to manage this: “It’s a different matrix for doing that, you can do that with appraisals, KPIs and things like that. Even on a day-to-day basis, making sure people stay focused on the business.”

Xavier’s comment above explained the importance of ensuring that people were focused on the requirement of the organization, to ensure that resources were not expended on the wrong objectives.

Jerome: “If front line employees are actually to make decisions that entail some risk, they must have a sense of security. Having knowledge and information is not enough if they believe that a wrong decision may cause them problems or even the loss of
their job. They must know that they are allowed to make mistakes. Only then will they
dare to use fully their new authority.”

Robert’s comments corroborate Jerome’s above. He explained the need for a leader to
give others chances to make mistakes.

Robert: “You have to give them chances, because nobody is perfect. People make
mistakes also, but once you can know that it is against the good of the company, you
have to get rid of the person, because you expect from that person to be a leader also
of his own area.”

Robert’s comment echoes some aspects of transformational leadership and servant
leadership theories, where one of the roles of a leader was that of a teacher, who
sought to train and develop others (Avolio et al., 2009).

Robert: “When you don’t have the right people, you have to try to train them.”

His comment highlights an important aspect of leading, having the willingness to
train and develop others. This is discussed in the next section, titled “developing
others”. It is presented here to explain how the leader can mitigate against the event
that his/her team members do not have the required skills. Then the leader, as a
developer, trains people.

Jeremy’s approach suggested a developing role for the leader.
Jeremy: “The important thing is how you resolve issues. How you resolve issues? When an issue happens, how do we resolve it and learn from it, not to make that mistake, that is what is important to me, not to say, not a blame-game, and that is what I entrenched in all of them.”

Hans: “Always giving your full credit to your team… so if anybody in the team does something good, that’s up to them, if anyone does something bad, then that is down to me. I think that way the people who work for you are much more inclined to respect you and don’t think that you are either going to be stealing all of their good ideas as yours, or blaming them for everything which goes wrong in the team.”

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<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tr>
<td>It is important that a leader trains people</td>
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<td>And when they make mistakes, it is important to resolve these well</td>
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<td>And give them second chances</td>
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<td>Because this is how people learn.</td>
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<td>It is important for a leader to do the right things in the right way</td>
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<td>By giving full credit where it is due</td>
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<td>And not dishing out blame in difficult situations</td>
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<td>Because it makes people more inclined to respect you and trust you</td>
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<td>And be confident that you will not blame them for things that go wrong in the team.</td>
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Xavier commented on the need for leadership decisiveness with poor performing staff.

Xavier: “I think people generally are slow to react to poor performance. So asking people to move on or replacing them is often a difficult thing to do.”

Xavier acknowledged that personnel management was time consuming and disciplining staff was difficult.

Xavier: “There’s been times where I wish I acted faster, there’s times I was glad I acted when I did on personnel issues.”

He explained the role of experience in personnel management.

Xavier: “I think those are areas where, as you get older and a bit more experienced, you start to see the signs, good and bad, a little earlier, and I think your ability to make decisive decisions around the senior team are very good.”

Xavier: “I don’t know if it is 60%, but certainly a big chunk of your time should be on personnel management and generally they are quite tricky and often people push things to the side, because it is so difficult. It means trying to confront things you don’t really want to confront and you overlook and then it comes back and haunts you.”

However, he reiterated his point that a leader should be decisive to reduce the overall impact on the organization of poor performance. His comments are important, as the
ability to be decisive in disciplining staff is a key requirement of effective leadership (Hogan et al., 1994).

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<td>It is important for a leader to react quickly to staff underperformance</td>
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<td>And to either replace them or ask them to leave the organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because these issues, if not dealt with promptly, can have severe consequences for the organization.</td>
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Hans’ comment below presents an appreciation of the delicate nature of managing underperformance, but also the requirement to act decisively.

Hans: “*No matter what it is, you do the right thing the right way, and that is the way you deal with people, the way you deal with difficult situations.*”

Khalid’s comment provided additional insight in this section. He explained that rewarding or punishing others required the leader to communicate in advance the performance expectations from staff, together with setting parameters for performance evaluation. This importance of clear communication of expectations from followers is also referred to by Van Vugt et al. (2008).

Khalid: “*A lot of people – certainly most people – they look for some sort of comfort zone, and some sort of parameters that they know the behavioural consequential parameters. They know if they do certain things in a certain range, that this will be the outcome, the consequences, the reward; the recognition. They understand that.*”
His comment explained the importance of sharing expectations of staff with the staff, so that they are aware of the consequences of their actions, whether it is reward, recognition or punishment. However, he also shared the need for the leader to be reliable and consistent with regards to the parameters that are set for staff.

He shared from his experiences:

Khalid: “What is the expected level of performance? And you have got to stick to that and you have to lead by example within that performance model.”

Robert: “It starts with creating and communicating this vision, and below that of course you have to agree accountabilities, you have to have milestones, you have to give people objectives and your team needs to be clear on what their objectives are, are they achievable.”

Robert’s comment above supported Khalid’s point on the importance of setting milestones and agreeing on objectives with team members. Khalid provided an example:

Khalid: “So you come to an organization and the accepted performance is that at one o’ clock, every Friday afternoon, the office empties out. You try and change that ... you need to go substantially harder than just working a four and a half day week ... And if you set the example and you got the right vision and the right framework for performance, if you’ve got the right people, you can tell them to follow you, the ones that can't keep up, tend to fall away.”
Xavier: “But there’s got to be some consequence management around that, so if you don’t perform, what are the consequences.”

Khalid: “You have got to link recognition and reward to performance.”

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to communicate the expected level of performance</td>
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<td>To their staff and to stick to it</td>
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<td>And lead by example within the right performance framework</td>
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<td>Where the people that perform are rewarded</td>
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<td>And those that do not perform have consequences for that</td>
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<td>Because it is important for staff to be clear about what is expected from them.</td>
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This section has presented the themes for the sub-category ‘Influencing and controlling others’: building a team, delegation, rewarding and punishing others. The next sub-category of the Tacit Knowledge Framework is presented below.

8.4 Supporting and Cooperating with Others

Supporting and cooperating with others refers to how the leader is able to support and work well with others in the process of leadership. The results and analysis from the conversations are presented below.
Supporting and encouraging followers

This theme is similar to themes presented by the transformational theory of leadership, where the leader identifies with, supports and motivates followers to give their best for the organization (Bass, 1985; Bass, 1990; Bass, 2008).

Oliver explained the importance of getting to know one’s team as a means to ensuring that the leader gets the best out of his staff.

Oliver: “If you don’t take the time to know your staff personally, then you should not be a manager. You don’t have to be their best friend, you don’t have to overly socialise with them, but you need to know them. Because people have different needs and people respond to different stimuli.”

His comment acknowledges the personal investment required of a leader to spend time getting to know his/her team members (Avolio et al., 2009).

However, a leader cannot get to know each of his/her staff personally and Oliver explained his strategy was to get to know the managers that directly work for him, as this was more feasible.

Christian also shared his point of view on the importance of knowing staff.

Christian: “So you have to learn about their strengths and weaknesses. What are your strengths? I’ll focus on your strengths. What are your weaknesses? I’ll protect myself from them.”
Christian’s comment was unexpected in the sense of the leader choosing to focus on strengths, which was also touched on by Xavier and Oliver. However, he also presented an important viewpoint of a leader protecting him/herself from the weaknesses of the team. So, while it is important that the leader is aware of the strengths of the team members, it is also important to be aware of their weaknesses, so as to protect him/herself from them.

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<td>It is important for a leader to know the strengths and weaknesses of team members</td>
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<td>And to focus on these strengths and protect him/herself from their weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>As this enables the leader to be aware of team members’ capabilities</td>
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<td>And enables him/her to know the type of stimuli they respond to.</td>
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This knowledge of the team also extends to cultural awareness of the environment within which the team members operate.

Oliver: “In, say the US or Europe or parts of Asia, the commercial training is fairly formal within the industry in the sense that you get hired, we get you your laptop, you go through this training, you go through that training and we have a specific format of how we want you to schedule your sales calls and report back on them and analyse and start again. So it’s all fairly well laid out.”

Comparing the West to Africa, he continued:
Oliver: “Here, if I apply those same sorts of corporate scripts, if I apply it 100% we are destined to fail.”

He provided an example.

Oliver: “Let’s take laptops for example. It’s very simple. If I give all my sales staff here a laptop, three things will happen. One is half of them will get stolen. Because they are on danfos [public buses] or they are home in less than secure environments. Two, why do you give someone a laptop? So, when they are at home or when they are travelling, they can stay connected and do, but if you don’t have internet and electricity at home, it really defeats the purpose of it. Three, the analysis and reporting that you would do with it, really is often times if it’s not beyond the level of our staff, it is certainly beyond the level of the company’s client.”

He provided a reason for the difference in clientele across borders, and his explanation reveals an awareness of the importance of understanding the socio-cultural context within which leadership is enacted (Hunter et al., 2007).

Oliver: “So, the touch factor is much more important here. So, do we have laptops here? Of course we do. But will I have, say, a laptop for every commercial staff or will I say we need to have computers in the office they can work it or a couple of laptops. But instead of buying each one a laptop, I’d rather give each one $500 more of entertainment money to take clients to a golf course or to lunch or whatever, because the touch concept here is much more important.”
Tacit Knowledge items

It is important that a leader takes time to understand local culture
And understand how company policy should be tailored to the country location of the organization
Because staff’s and clients’ needs might be different from those at the head-office location.

Oliver’s comment is an interesting one, and was also referred to by Xavier, Imran, Raoul, Abi and Robert in their experiences of leading others when working in a culture different from the leader’s own culture. Oliver’s comment is included here, because of the robustness of the example he gave to reinforce his point. The participants referred to the importance of adaptability and the leader taking the time to understand the cultural forces at play in the environment, and this was also important for ensuring that the leader got the best out of the staff.

Motivating followers
The participants shared their insights into how to motivate their followers in order to get the most out of employees (Yukl, 1990).

Ibrahim: “People should come first. And your customers should come second.”

Ibrahim provided an explanation for this: “When you've got happy employees... it becomes a natural thing for them to give good customer service without having to think about it.”
Xavier echoed Ibrahim’s comment above.

Xavier: “Your people are your most important asset and you need to be nurturing and developing those people and making sure you get the support and commitment that you need from them.”

Xavier: “I think as a CEO or as a senior manager, your necessity to have that strong team who are supporting you and the business is critical and therefore, most people when you talk to them, senior people think that their main job is strategy or managing an area or whatever else. Their main job is to manage their people.”

Ibrahim: “I think it is important when your people also see that you are not the type of leader that will sit in his ivory tower or sit in his golden office and bark orders, it just gives a whole different sense of respect and sense of loyalty.”

Alexander echoed Ibrahim’s comment above.

Alexander: “I drive buses at the airport, check in passengers, load bags...the only thing I will not do is fly aircraft.”

Their comments reveal that it was important for a leader to not be seen as a person who merely told people what to do, but one who also participated, this engendered respect and loyalty from team members. His comment is similar to those of Den Hartog and Dickson’s (2004) on the importance of participative leadership.
Carlos: “If you want your team to do something, you have to be prepared to do it as well.”

Carlos explained that this form of participative leadership also developed trust in followers.

Carlos: “You need to be able to engender trust, you need to be able to give people space to develop and be creative and you need to support them in that.”

Oliver: “For the managers who work for me, I consider it to be an encouragement role, a teaching role. How do I do this? I get to know them personally.”

Robert: “The leader should be almost like a teacher, able to explain clearly, but with that comes also motivation, because the modern world is very tough and it is becoming tougher and tougher.”

Providing more detailed explanation, Robert shared that:

“You have to give them guidance in that regard.”

Xavier: “You have to remember that your employees are always your strongest asset. And if you’re not motivating and providing direction to your employees, then there’s a danger that even if you have good ideas or strategy, you cannot execute them.”

Xavier’s comment is an important one and echoes Souba’s (2007) and Goodall and Pogrebna’s (2012) comments on the importance of recognising the value of
employees, while also considering the role a leader has to motivate and provide direction, to ensure that goals are implemented.

Seth: “So it is identifying what is in these people that make them so fascinating and how these people can together develop initiatives, activities that will lead them to fulfil both their own personal aspirations as well as improving the company’s performance that they work or the industry’s performance that they work for.”

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<td>It is important for the leader to realise that staff needs guidance</td>
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<td>And motivation and direction</td>
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<td>Because this enables them to execute the strategies set for the organization.</td>
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Seth’s comment above identifies the importance of having the right people, but then involving them in the organization, to align the team’s personal aspirations with the company’s objectives. Seth’s comment on the importance of finding a common ground between the personal goals of employees and that of the organization, is important, as it is one of the core characteristics of transformational leadership behaviour (Bass, 2008).

Robert explained the change in the work environment as a need to align and carry team members along with the company’s goals.
Robert: “Because people don’t accept anymore, just “you have to do that”, you have to explain why, and that is leadership. That is really leadership. Because you have to make that decision, but also you have to explain why you had to make that decision.”

Khalid introduced the notion of trust into leadership.

Khalid: “I think I learnt a long time ago, that you really got to demonstrate long-term stability, performance predictability for people to get comfortable with you. So they trust you and value you as a leader. Because if you are erratic and inconsistent and unreliable, then you set a poor example when people cannot come with you and you can just see that.”

Robert: “What you need to do is, you need to feel what your team is like, trust your people so they trust you and give them that space to be able to communicate that vision that you’ve outlined and feel comfortable that when they are in the outside world … you are confident and comfortable that they are doing that efficiently and proficiently and professionally.”

**Tacit Knowledge items**

| It is important for a leader to be reliable and not be inconsistent |
| And act within a fairly reliable sort of band of parameters for the team |
| Because reliability provides assurance for team members. |

Robert and Khalid’s comments above highlight the importance of two-way trust. Firstly, the followers have to trust that the leader has their best interests at heart and...
also to trust the leader to be consistent. It is also important that the leader trusts the followers to do the work that has been delegated to them. Their comments introduce good followership as a key ingredient of effective leadership. In this regard, leadership is created by the co-engagement of the leader and followers, where both sides have their parts to play in the leadership process (Souba, 2007; Goodall and Pogrebna, 2012; Hogan et al., 1994).

Fitz: “Unless a leader reflects someone else’s core values, you will have difficulty reflecting on how they will respond to you, how they follow you.”

Fitz continued: “Because you know people follow you when you are not necessarily watching. So you need to empower people to think and do the right things on their own, not because someone is watching them.”

Fitz introduced the notion of the moment of truth:

Fitz: “The airline industry and other industries, the real moment of truth is when your employees engage with the customers without any managers or CEOs watching. That interaction is critical for how your business does.”

Fitz’s comment on the interaction between the leader and followers, as well as extending the leadership relationship to customers and the public is an important and insightful one for two main reasons. Firstly, he was able to explain the values required to motivate employees, what the motivation was for: to get to a ‘moment of truth’, where the employee is able to take ownership of their role, even when no
monitoring is done by the leader. Secondly, it extends the process of influencing beyond followers alone to other stakeholders in the airline industry. The leadership behaviour as related to other stakeholders is discussed in the next chapter, the organizational Tacit Knowledge Framework.

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<td>It is important for a leader to communicate and reflect core values of the organization</td>
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<td>As this enables team members to identify with the leader and the organization</td>
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<td>Because there can be no effective leadership if core values are not communicated.</td>
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<td>It is important for a leader to motivate team members</td>
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<td>To be consistent in their service delivery with customers, when no manager is watching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because this interaction is critical for how well the organization performs</td>
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<td>And signals how the team members have understood their training.</td>
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**Providing opportunity for development:**

The participants also shared that in addition to motivating the team, it was important for a leader to provide followers with opportunities for development (Hogan, et al., 1994).
Carlos: “They were a very young team, so there were a lot of really young guys in sales who wanted direction, they wanted to learn from you, they wanted you to teach them, and they were very willing.”

Carlos shared an example of his team members who were young, willing and eager to learn. He linked this to the team members being creative and explained the importance of a leader providing team members with a sense of self-worth within the organization.

Carlos: “This creativity is not displayed if employees do not have a sense of self-esteem that leads to the confidence to be creative...[and] self-esteem is generated when employees have a sense of self-worth in the business organization.”

Oliver shared a unique experience he had with one of his staff who he wanted to give more responsibility to.

Oliver: “I want you to handle this energy sector, but what are we going to do, what are your plans going to be, how would you do it? And she came back and I thought she was going to give me a nice sales plan ... and in fact what she said is I wanna play golf. I said huh? I play golf, too, I play on Saturdays. She said I know you play and that’s where you doing your business. I want to do that.”

Oliver explained the desire of one of the members of his sales team to learn how to play golf, after she had observed that a significant portion of his business activities took place on the golf course.
Oliver: “I said, well you don’t play golf. She said, I want to.”

Surprisingly, he gave her the go-ahead to learn to play golf.

Oliver: “So we made the decision. I took what I guess is a non-standard decision, which is I’m going to sponsor this woman to play golf. We got her club membership, we got her the kit, we got her lessons.”

However, he explained that he put some targets around the non-standard decision.

Oliver: “And at the same time, I put some targets around it, in other words, she had to play a certain amount, she had to get to a certain handicap, she had to play with the right people, and now, two to three years into this, she’s an energy maven around here ... she has a feel for the energy business, she knows what companies are coming on, what their needs are, so she’s become a one-woman energy centre.”

He explained that the decision had been a success and his reflections on the reason for this.

Oliver: “And that was because I didn't say to her, no, I want a sales plan. It would’ve been easier to say I want a sales plan, and she says I wanna play golf. I’m not saying some other things didn't go around with it, but that was a fundamental example of how you have to work with people in perhaps an atypical way.”
It is important for a leader to be open to developing others in his/her team. Even when this requires a departure from the typical format of development, because some followers might have key insight into what is required to develop a strategy, that might not be obvious to management. And this enables staff to use their initiative to contribute to the success of the organization.

Robert shared the importance of a leader providing team members with the opportunity to use their initiative and exemplified how a leader was able to demonstrate that s/he cared about the development of followers (Avolio et al., 2009).

Robert: “I’ll say to people, listen, that’s great, how would you handle that? So letting them use their own initiative. Exactly. Or say, okay good, we test that. I give you a region in Azerbaijan or whatever, and you test that. You see, you have to be very proactive with things and that is experience, and for me, experience is very important.”

Robert provided some examples of important experiences necessary for the development as a leader in the airline industry.

Robert: “So experience is very important, experience in technology changes, in market changes, experience in market approach changes. And crisis experience, because you learn a lot of things about your company in a crisis, what goes wrong, what didn’t work well and after a crisis you have to get your people together and say,
okay guys, why did we screw up. Excuse me for that. And you discuss that, and you say, what can we do to improve the future?”

Robert’s comment above introduced the notion of feedback in developing others. It is interesting that Robert touched on the importance of training as a form of development, as well as providing followers with an opportunity to have experiences, gained from tackling real-life situations.

Jeremy also provided an example about how he developed his team by sharing and coaching them. He explained that after a major decision,

“I call them back and say, do you see what I've done? And I keep telling them. I share my experience with them, every time we are in a meeting, because knowledge is light.”

Robert: “You know the whole market is becoming a vibrant network, which is interacting with each other. So, in other words, the experience I went through, and every time you go to another technical level, you have to train your people, you have to explain to your people.”

Robert explained that the technological changes in the world and the airline industry meant that a leader had to ensure that staff were constantly trained and updated as to how best to perform their roles, and he shared the consequences of failing to train staff adequately.
Robert: “You have to be careful that you don’t have a glitch. You know when there’s one and all of a sudden, everything falls apart.”

He provided an example.

Robert: “Just to give an example ... we switched from one IT reservation system to another.”

He explained the effect of this change on team members in the organization.

Robert: “Everybody was nervous.”

A leader’s role involves guiding others, even as the organization seeks to improve itself to enable it to better meet its objectives (Sims, 2010).

Robert explained what he did to assuage their uncertainty about the new IT (Information Technology) system.

Robert: “So I said, okay guys, let’s do it step by step, and let’s do it carefully. So, in other words, I started with the ticket offices, and next to each ticket office agent, I had a specialist, so if that agent would have had a problem with the new system, immediately, you had a teacher next to her, which made them more confident to move to a new world.”
Revealing an awareness of the effect of management behaviour on other stakeholders, Robert shared how this decision to train staff in this way contributed positively to the organization’s image.

Robert: “And don’t forget, makes the customer, which is facing that person ... that created a certain type of trust, that company is changing, but they do it properly, they do it humanly.”

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to take the time to explain things to others And to give them a debrief following major incidents in the organization Because this enables them to learn from the experience of the leader and other team members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to ensure that the organization is seen to take time to carefully train staff When implementing a change programme And to equip them with the right information and skills Because this assuages nervousness and enables staff to be confident about what is required from them following the change.</td>
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**Building team spirit**

Another new theme that arose from the conversations with the participants was the importance of building team spirit.
Abi: “If you bond, if you create the bonds, then you have an allegiance of a different sort, not to be the leader that has the followers behind them, it’s then you are bonded and bound together.”

Abi referred to this as creating bonds with team members, increasing the cohesion between the team members, who then are able to yield a strong allegiance to the leader, because they respect him/her. The strength of the allegiance refers to the depth of the bonds created with team members (Hogan, et al., 1994; Van Vugt et al., 2008).

Ibrahim conceptualized it as treating staff like “they are part of a family. There is a sense of belonging, there is a sense of, they are human beings as being of the day, and so you treat them with kindness and if you've got issues, you've got problems, you come to me, let us talk about it ... For me it's one of the very obvious things in life that if you treat people kindly, treat them with respect, you would get the best out of them any day of the week and 10 times on Sunday.”

This notion of the team(s) as a family unit was also shared by Carlos.

Carlos: “The team, even though it was quite big, was like a family unit. Where people were very close and support each other and did a lot of activity together outside of work.”

He provided a detailed example of how he had tried to build team spirit.
Carlos: “I organised once a year, we had an away weekend with our team, whereby every single person was invited whether it was the driver or whether it was the senior manager, everyone got invited to a weekend away, and they brought their spouses and some families.”

Carlos: “There was a purpose, we had a half-day session just with the team about looking at what our goals were and our objectives for the following year... We had a whole range of sporting activities where we teamed up together ... And we formed a very strong bond, and I think part of it is people trusting you, and believing in you, that you are credible and you are leading from the front.”

Carlos continued: “And it was fantastic.”

These terms, creating bonds and family units are notable words and used by the participants to share their understanding that team spirit created bonds, identification and a sense of community that also related to trust and credibility.

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<td>It is important for a leader to create team spirit among staff</td>
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<td>Because this enables them to form strong bonds</td>
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<td>And a strong allegiance to the organization.</td>
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</table>

Fitz: “But your mind must also be engaged in the right way, in terms of the team spirit, in terms of the commitment to the team. And all these combined, then again, eventually work, just bringing the labour is not enough unless your mind and your
heart are also involved, and that critical to get yourself engaged, and also critical to get others engaged. “

Fitz’s comment above echoes Hunter, Bedell-Avers et al.’s (2007) on the importance of team spirit and building strong bonds where members of the team identify as a part of a larger whole, viewing their successes as the successes of the team, as well as their goals as goals of the team. That is to move from an individualistic to that of a team perspective. Fitz likened his experiences of leadership to teamwork in sports.

Fitz: “You will never win the game, unless the five other players in the team work with you, and very often, it is not so much who actually scored, it is the team that wins.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to realise and appreciate team work</td>
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<tr>
<td>And to encourage staff to see themselves as part of a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All working together to achieve a common objective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He went on to share that the leader had an active role to be engaged with and committed to the team.

Fitz’s choice of words, that the leader’s mind and heart should also be engaged, was interesting. During the conversation, he appeared to have spent some time reflecting on his experiences of leadership and there was a lot of emphasis on mind-set, engagement, value-system and the leader’s mind.
Abi shared how she was able to create team spirit with others by introducing a ‘fun’ factor. To Abi, fun was important in her leadership behaviour. Her comments echo Avolio et al.’s (1999) research on the usefulness of humour in leadership and its ability to effect change in others by motivating them to take a different perspective, promoting cohesion between team members and distilling tensions in difficult situations. However, the use of humour is dependent on the relationship the leader has with team members, and also on the situation, together with the appropriateness of the type of humour used according to the situation at hand.

Abi: “There was a lot of change that was going on in the organization that I joined ... so you kind of had to come of the ruffle and say, well I got to still do something here and lead this, and I was sort of always being the Pollyanna, so I've always figured that you've just got to cheer them on. I think that cheerleader factor helps a lot to keep the team going. I think you just try to work very hard on gaining a sense of do-all spirit and allegiance out of that comes.”

Abi’s comment was a unique one and she was asked to explain further. She explained that she had learnt about the importance of fun as a young mother, coaching a sports team when she was younger and that making it fun also meant people felt that they were an important part of what they were doing. This enabled the team to develop a team spirit where they got “to protect each others’ backs and see the value in what little steps of accomplishments you could do.”
Tacit Knowledge items

It is important for a leader to realise the role that fun can play in building team spirit
And to ensure that some aspect of fun is incorporated into leadership
Because this can help to keep the team going in difficult times.

Integrating teams

Dynamic organizations, such as the airline industry, have several teams that work in different locations at different times. This presents a real challenge of integrating teams to ensure cohesion, that team members identify as part of the wider organization and as such work together towards achieving the goals of the organization. This theme was a new theme that emerged from the data (Hogan et al., 1994).

Raoul’s comment below provides some insight into this challenge.

Raoul: “We certainly have … a real challenge for diversity of workforce that occurs within the airlines in that regards. I know they apply to big corporates in general, but they are office based, whilst the vast majority of your staff, they come in, they are not attached to a work computer, so they come in, hang their bags, the ground crew, checking people in, they come for their shift, they do their shift at the terminals or they do it on the plane or hand bags and are out again.”

Raoul’s comment highlighted a unique characteristic of airline staff, who are not located in one office, but are constantly travelling, working with different teams, in different parts of the world.
Robert explained the importance of people working together, because that was how the organization was able to get the most out of its people (Hogan et al., 1994).

Robert: “Leadership is getting people to work together, is getting people to get the utmost out of themselves, out of the team, that they're working so that as a company, whatever size I insist on and get the most out of the situation.”

However, Jeremy shared that while teams could work well within themselves, situations with friction between two teams could impact negatively on the organization.

Jeremy: “They have their own vision, what they do and what they are looking at. The airports have their own visions, although there are some similarities, at the end of the day, it is customer satisfaction we are looking at. But at the airport, they are more concerned about security, going on time etc. The sales team just wants to sell tickets, they don’t want to care whether things are and you have sometimes conflicts come among them, and that is why I come in as a leader to break the barriers.”

It was interesting that Jeremy used the phrase “break the barriers” to explain the friction in the situation he had experienced. However, the use of this phrase perhaps highlights the severity of the disintegration that existed between the sales team and the airport team. According to Jeremy, the friction arose due to the different focuses each team had, although they both had the same goal, which was to maximise customer satisfaction and customer experience. However, because the teams had
different incentives, these different objectives sometimes led to conflict. He shared that he had resolved this conflict by encouraging members of the teams to spend time with the other team to understand the work they do.

Jeremy: “I said the sales people should go to the airports every Saturday, and see what they do in there. And I also organise a monthly meeting where we all sit down together and iron out our differences. Then the sales people get to understand the perspective of the airport, and the airport will get to understand what the sales people want.”

Thus, Jeremy’s example echoes Avolio, Walumbwa et al.’s (2009) comment that the leader should build a community within the organization and facilitate knowledge sharing between teams, to ensure that the organization is able to meet its objectives.

It is important to appreciate the need for communication within an airline organization. Airlines are complex organizations with a wide array of staff, air stewards and stewardesses, pilots, engineers, customer service agents and ticketing agents. The staff are not located in one office or offices, and in many cases, the staff constantly change to regroup as a team with others.

Robert shared: “You have an international company, which is flying all over the world. It creates physical issues, it creates communication issues.”

Robert: “How do I communicate the feeling so that the stewardess or steward understands that whatever she does, she is representing the company? That each
glass of water she gives to the passenger, that the smile she gives to the little baby, boy or girl, you know that kind of empathy, you need to create and that is very difficult, because it is a very tough job and you don’t have the feeling that you are important, and that is you have to make each member of the staff, is it your big boss, the humble person in an office or in an airport, feel that they are important for the company.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to work hard to ensure team members see themselves as different parts of the same whole and to enable them to understand how the goals of the other teams relate to theirs so they know they are working together towards achieving the same goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Robert’s comment explained the unique challenge of communication within the group, between teams, in an airline, especially where the staff is dispersed globally, travelling around the world. Effective communication is an important part of leadership and will be discussed in depth in chapter nine (Yukl, 1989; Hogan et al., 1994; Tracey and Hinkin, 1996).

Carlos: “Airlines are quite complicated businesses and there's a lot of different parts to an airline ... so you have this conversation about silos. We have 13,000 cabin crew who turn for work, get on the plane, go and then go home again.”

He expanded on why this was challenging.
Carlos: “Sometimes the crew might never see each other again, because there are so many different shifts and leave patterns and we fly all over the world in different aircrafts that you may be working with different colleagues on a regular basis. Those are the challenges.”

Robert: “They also have to be able to interact with themselves, on a group basis, on a company basis, so that if you always intercommunicate, that you always are sure that you have everybody informed about the most important things.”

Robert: “You know all time you were the boss and companies were pyramidal, you had silos. You have the technical, the commercial, the finance and so on. Nowadays, all that has to be interconnected and that is the challenge, and in order to do that you need some leadership.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to ensure team members do not work in silos</td>
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<tr>
<td>But work together and interact regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this ensures that everyone is kept informed about what is happening in the organization.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

However, building team spirit in the airline industry and integrating teams is a challenging task for those in senior executive positions. This is because in some departments the team members change frequently, for example, crewmembers who work different shifts with different team members, which intensifies the challenge of
building and integrating different teams, especially where the team members are from different cultures (Den Hartog and Dickson, 2004).

**Accessibility**

This was a new theme that emerged from the data. Leadership occurs in the process where the leader influences others, including followers. However, leadership is socially constructed in organizations by the interaction between the leader and his/her followers. In this way, the flow of communication includes information flow from the leader to the followers, but also from followers to the leader. As such, the leader is also able to learn from followers (Meindl, et al., 1985).

Robert: “You have to be able to make the people confident enough that if something goes wrong, either because they made a mistake … and second, if something goes wrong and can potentially be bad for a company, that they raise their hand immediately to their boss or to yourself, in other words, to be proactive.”

Jeremy: “The confidence to come and tell me if you’ve goofed, to say this is what I’ve done and I look at how to solve the problem. We solve the problem.”

Thus, for Robert, it is important for the leader to be accessible for providing ideas, but also for people to be confident enough that when they have made mistakes, they are able to communicate it immediately, so that it is rectified.

Christian: “Businesses operate in silos, but you need people who have helicopter vision who then are keen to maintain. At times, it gets lonely in that helicopter, so you have to
ensure the documentation that comes to you at times does not reflect what’s on the ground. So you have to, in some fashion or the other, design ways and means.”

Christian’s comment above presents the importance on the need for a leader to be able to be aware of what is happening throughout the organization and the leader’s role in creating mediums that enable this. Some of these ‘ways and means’ include working with technology to have virtual meetings, surveys for staff to fill in and regular communication with staff. In addition, the leader also needed to leverage the resources in the organization by expanding responsibilities to other members of the organization, who then become responsible for sharing information with the leader (Hogan et al., 1994; Avolio et al., 2009).

Imran: “The boss is not the sole source of all ideas. Most of the ideas will come from within the organization and often not by the people who are actually working directly for you. So in any company, so you’ve got to have some mechanism for soaking up ideas from the rest of the organization.”

Robert: “You have to have the right people who are watching that on a minute by minute basis almost and are able to react, or are able to draw your attention when something goes really badly wrong. And that is another thing, which I call internal communication.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to know that s/he is not the sole source of ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
And to create communication channels with staff
Because this enables staff to be able to share ideas, challenges with the leader.

Robert: "It is very simple. I used to travel a lot. I used to meet a lot of people, and I used to gather people. I used to listen to people. I used to make brainstorming meetings, to understand what their issues are."

Robert provided a reason for travelling to meet his team members, which was to understand what their issue was, and to open up communication channels between himself and the rest of his followers, echoing Hogan et al.’s (1994) comment that the leader should communicate regularly with followers and try to meet them regularly.

Robert: “I was always very concerned that the link between the top managers and their staff, their team, is very close. Not that they have to be buddies and go out and drink and God knows what. They have to be a team, who are performing football, rugby, basketball team. You have a trainer and you have top players and everybody has to be a top player. So that is the type of thing I used to do very often.”

Robert’s comment above reveals how he tried to combat the communication challenge by travelling and meet a lot of people across the spectrum of the organization, holding brainstorming meetings in person or through video conferencing and Skype, to understand what the issues are and keep team members abreast of what the company’s plans are. It is an interesting comment to make, especially in an age where information technology has created many opportunities to have virtual meetings. However, Balthazard et al. (2007) argue that face-to-face
meetings are able to generate more team cohesion and more synergies than virtual teams. Thus, meeting other team members face-to-face is important for effective leadership.

As Raoul put it, face-to-face meetings allowed him “to get a better sense for what their challenges are, what their vibe is, what are the types of things they are constantly discussing, and you can't really get that without spending few days or a week around the guys. And I think that really helps to empathize with their situation and being able to deal with it.”

Raoul explained that his biggest learning in the sense of communication was to make sure that he was listening and to try and understand what people are going through, their situation, so that you don’t lose people. Furthermore, he had done this by travelling, meeting people, working with them in their environment, listening to them and he mentioned a key word, ‘empathize’, which echoes Avolio, et al.’s (2009) comment on leadership requiring empathy to be able to see things from another’s point of view. However, his comment is included here, because it relates to communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to take the time to have meetings with staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>And this might involve travelling to several locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because this allows the leader to get to know staff, see their challenges from their perspectives and also communicate that their views are important.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Imogen provided an example of how she ensured she was accessible to team members. She explained it arose from what she had learnt from her boss when she was a junior manager and her boss would say:

Imogen: “Sit down, let’s dialogue. Why did you do that? Simple. That stuck with me.”

Imogen: “And so, for me, when I need you to do something, let’s dialogue. If you need me to do something, you need to dialogue with me. Give me the reasons. Let me understand where you are coming from, then you understand where I am coming from, such that when we take a decision, you know why I’m taking that decision and it’s that attitude I’ve used here a lot.”

Yet while he tried to be collaborative and participatory with his staff, Jeremy said “sometimes you’ve got to be autocratic”, although within this, most of the time, the leader exhibits a participatory leadership style. However, there are also times when he has had to state his position.

Xavier, however, commented on the autocratic leadership style: “I don’t think people admire autocrats. I think they are fearful, I think they may admire their results, but they certainly don’t admire the process. And generally, strong people, competent people, intelligent people don’t like working for autocrats, because you question your own worth, because you are not being allowed to contribute to the decisions. So what you sometimes find is that people who are very, very autocratic can’t have strong teams around them, because people who are strong and can make those decisions
Tacit Knowledge items

| It is important for the leader to encourage participation from staff in decision-making. |
| And not to be autocratic. |
| As this enables both parties to understand where the other is coming from. |
| However, the leader has to be the final decision-maker, as the responsibility for decision-making lies with him/her. |

Developing followers to be leaders

This section presents the results of the theme ‘developing followers to be leaders’. The theme relates to how leaders share their vision with followers, empower them and enable them to be leaders as well (Van Vugt et al., 2008; Hogan et al., 1994; Bass, 1990).

Carlos explained the role of a leader in creating an opportunity for others to become leaders as well.

Carlos: “It is beholden of you to make sure that you create that environment for people, to give them a chance, so people can take the chances and it’s important for business as well. It’s not just a personal thing.”

Robert captured this lesson, of leading people to become leaders, in his comment.
Robert: “They all have to exacerbate leadership on their team.”

Robert puts this succinctly.

Robert: “You have a pyramid of leaders.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to provide an opportunity for others to be leaders, too,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because it is good for the organization to have several people with leadership ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who are able to take on leadership positions should the opportunity arise.</td>
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</table>

This section has presented comments that were shared by the participants on the importance of a leader enabling others to develop and to become leaders themselves. These comments are similar to those shared by proponents of transcendental leadership, transformational leadership and servant leadership theories (Yukl, 1989; Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien, 2012; Van Vugt et al., 2008; Meindl et al., 1985; Crossan et al., 2008).

**Synthesis: Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge**

This chapter has presented themes that arose from the conversations with participants that relate to interpersonal tacit knowledge. It is important to note that the participants introduced the terms “accessibility”, “integrating teams” and “building team spirit” into the conversations and they were deemed important; hence, their inclusion into the categories of the framework for intrapersonal tacit knowledge. The new themes
have been included into the modified framework for interpersonal tacit knowledge, referred to as the integrated framework for Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge.

This chapter has expanded the Tacit Knowledge Framework by introducing three new themes: accessibility, integrating teams and building team spirit. The Tacit Knowledge Framework has also been deepened, by providing deeper insights into the categories: influencing and controlling others and supporting and cooperating with others. The updated framework is presented below.

Table 8-2: New themes added to the Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework for Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Preliminary framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infl uencing and Controlling Others</td>
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<td>Supporting and Cooperating with Others</td>
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The table below shows the integrated framework for the Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge category with the themes of the preliminary framework and new themes
of accessibility, integrating teams and building team spirit that arose from the analysis of the data. Integrating teams was an especially important theme as it provided insight into the challenges airline leaders face of ensuring that teams within the organisation, that are in many instances geographically dispersed, were integrated to ensure that they understood their roles and the importance of their roles to the success of the airline organization.

Table 8-3: Integrated framework for Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influencing and Controlling Others</th>
<th>Building a team</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivating followers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Providing direction for followers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delegating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rewarding and punishing followers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting and Cooperating with Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting and encouraging followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building team spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing followers to be leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating teams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table below provides a summary of the number of interpersonal tacit knowledge items obtained from the study and which were presented in the chapter.
The table above details the breakdown of the number of interpersonal tacit knowledge items according to the sub-categories presented in the chapter. From the above table, the total number of interpersonal tacit knowledge items obtained in the study was thirty-three. The table overleaf presents a summary of the results for the interpersonal tacit knowledge level and feeds into the Tacit Knowledge Framework for Airline Leaders presented and discussed in chapter ten.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge Framework for Airline Leaders</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Levels</strong></td>
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<td>----------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge</td>
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8.5 Conclusion

Chapter eight has presented the results from the study that fit into the interpersonal tacit knowledge category of the Tacit Knowledge Framework, together with Tacit Knowledge items extracted from the data. As mentioned in the introduction, the participants were not prompted during the conversations to talk about their teams, and it is interesting that they had a lot to share regarding the importance of teams to effective leadership, as identified in the themes above: building the team, delegating, integrating the teams, rewarding and punishing followers, motivating followers and developing followers. This focus highlights the importance of followers to effective leadership and that leadership does not occur in a vacuum, but in interaction with others.

The participants provided insights and examples into how they tried to relate with their followers and some key observations were made from the conversations. Leaders face the arduous challenge of managing the balance between what is ideal and what is feasible. For example, it is impossible for leaders to know all their colleagues personally and they might have to limit this to senior members of the organization, as stated by Oliver. Another point, as revealed by Carlos, related to the development of leaders. He conceded that leadership development programmes could be an expensive commitment for airlines and for airlines battling with profitability, investing in leadership development, while important, might not be feasible.

While this chapter has focused on the interaction between leaders and their followers, leadership involves also other components, namely interaction with a wider audience
than their followers alone. These are presented in the results and findings in chapter nine.

Chapter Nine

Stories of Leadership: Organizational Tacit Knowledge

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study and the analysis of the themes shared by the participants that relate to themes identified in the organizational tacit knowledge category of the Tacit Knowledge Framework. Chapters six, seven and eight previously covered the themes related to the general understanding of leadership, the context of the airline industry (chapter six), the intrapersonal level of the Tacit Knowledge Framework (chapter seven) and the interpersonal level of the Tacit Knowledge Framework (chapter eight). As mentioned earlier, many of the themes are strongly linked and the categorisation was necessary for efficient management of the data. For example, in this chapter, ‘communication’ is discussed. However, it is also a component of leadership behaviour regarding the management of employees that was presented in chapter eight.

From the data collection, one of the complexities of leadership behaviour identified by the participants was the need to be able to communicate effectively with different audiences within the organization. Sternberg’s Tacit Knowledge Framework alludes
to this meaning of organizational tacit knowledge. However, the conversation with participants in addition to this, also introduced the need for effective communication with other stakeholders who are outside of the organization, thus, necessitating the expansion of the organizational tacit knowledge category beyond leadership within the organization to leadership of the organization within the industry and the wider society.

In this chapter, the data was coded into themes guided by the organizational categories of the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework. New themes that did not fit into the organizational categories of the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework emerged during the analysis of the data. They are discussed in this chapter, and are fed into the Tacit Knowledge Framework to provide an updated ‘organizational tacit knowledge’ category.

9.2 Organizational Tacit Knowledge

This category relates to ‘knowledge about solving organizational problems’ (Sternberg 2000). The table below shows the preliminary framework for the Organizational Tacit Knowledge category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONAL TACIT KNOWLEDGE</th>
<th>Solving Organizational Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Set direction for the organization: strategy formation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

|                                | Implementation of Strategy |
|                                | • Coordinate the organization’s systems and procedures |
The practical intelligence framework for understanding leadership behaviour presents the organizational tacit knowledge category as the boundary for understanding leadership behaviour. However, this boundary is insufficient, as organizations operate within an industry and the wider society, necessitating an understanding of leadership behaviour beyond the boundaries of the organization alone, as detailed by the figure below (Amaeshi 2014, Crossan et al., 2008).

![Diagram of organizational levels](image)

Figure 9-1: The organization is not the final boundary in leadership behaviour (adapted from Amaeshi 2014)

While the categories in the initial framework were useful for the initial coding of the data, the themes that emerged from the data did not appear to fit well with the existing categories. The themes that emerged from the conversations were found to be different from the subcategories in the preliminary framework for organizational
tacit knowledge, necessitating the modification of the organizational category of the preliminary framework into two main subcategories: communicating with a diverse audience and solving organizational and industry challenge. This was necessary to capture leadership behaviour beyond the boundaries of the organization. The modified preliminary framework is presented in Table 9-2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONAL TACIT KNOWLEDGE</th>
<th>Communicating with a Diverse Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solving Organizational and Industry Challenges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9-2: Modified Tacit Knowledge Framework for Organizational Tacit Knowledge

Therefore, the presentation of the results from the study in this chapter is different from those in previous chapters, which discussed the themes in the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework before discussing new themes. As such, the preliminary framework was modified to incorporate the themes that emerged from the conversations, which are presented in the table below. The results from the study are thus presented according to the sub-categories of the modified Tacit Knowledge Framework for organizational tacit knowledge.

9.3 Communicating with a diverse audience

The ability to communicate effectively with others is important for effective leadership. This importance is embedded in the definition of leadership, as the process of influencing others towards achieving a set goal(s), used in this study.
While communication occurs within the organization, it also occurs with other stakeholders, who may be external to the organization, as for example, government, customers and members of the public. In this regard, it is important that a leader is aware of the different audiences s/he might be required to communicate with (Hunter et al., 2007; Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien, 2012; Van Vugt et al., 2008; Meindl et al., 1985).

The study showed that effective leadership is participative and collaborative, and while a leader should be able to communicate effectively with others, the leader should also be accessible to enable others to communicate effectively with him/her. Results from the conversations that relate to internal communication (leader to followers) were presented in chapter eight: accessibility, integrating teams and delegation. This section extends communication beyond ‘leader to follower’ and vice versa, to include communication with peers, shareholders, customers, government and other stakeholders of the airline companies (Den Hartog and Dickson, 2004).

Xavier explained that the expectation of a leader to have this awareness of the diverse audience, could be challenging.

Xavier: “The other bits of leadership, which are not perhaps as clear-cut, you have to be mindful of who your audience is, who your stakeholders are.”

Xavier: “There’s always this thing, as you go up the tree of management, your perspectives as to who you are talking to change ... In terms of how you prioritise
and how you give direction to those different groups. Quite often, you need different skills.”

His comments echo Avolio, Walumbwa et al. ‘s (2009) on the importance of the ability to communicate with diverse audience, as a requisite skill for leadership effectiveness.

Robert: “You have communication issues, where you have to communicate to the outside, but first to the inside, which goes with the human resource, motivation and so on.”

Robert’s comment above placed emphasis on the priority that effective internal communication has, above external communication. His comment is echoed by Seth’s experience below.

Seth: “I proposed a radical change to the way in which the organization should be run ... but my own staff found it bewildering and it was too much in too short a time ... all the CEOs [“Chief Executive Officers”] understood, because they were doing this on a day-to-day basis in their own organizations and their executives understood, because again, for the same reason. But my own people didn't.”

Seth’s comment above revealed how he was able to communicate effectively with those outside his organization, but failed to communicate with his own staff. This is an interesting scenario, where the external communication was more effective than the internal.
Jerome: “The same principles apply to communicating outside the company through advertising, public relations, and general “image making.”. Unless you can communicate your business strategy clearly to your customers, you might as well not have developed it at all.”

Jerome’s comment above shared the importance of effective communication. Robert also echoed this:

Robert: “And also for the outside, because nowadays, companies are very fragile.”

However, Robert emphasised the importance of external communication as well, which he attributed to the fragile nature of companies. He explained:

Robert: “If you take your public company, if a journalist, if somebody on Facebook comes out with an information, which is damaging for a company, it can be very bad. So in other words, you have to dimension your communication policy according to that.”

Robert explained that an airline was also faced with the mounting challenges of communication, because of the increase in the scope and speed of information. Robert’s comment above highlighted the importance of the leader to understand the environmental context, in which leadership is enacted (Hunter et al., 2007).
Tacit Knowledge items

| It is important for a leader to be mindful of who his/her audience is |
| And to tailor and adapt communication according to the audience |
| Because it is essential that people understand what the leader is trying to say. |

Carlos: “Communication needs to be compelling and needs to be tailored to the audience.”

Carlos’ comment above highlighted the role of communication as a tool for persuasion, to compel others to see the leader’s point of view. He also shared the importance of tailoring the communication to the audience. His view was extended by Seth who explained how playing chess impacted on his communication skills and how he sought to tailor his speech to his audience.

Seth: “I play chess with passion, so the notion of anticipating what the reaction will be, and in anticipating that reaction, be able to present something, so I am understood when I speak is also important.”

It is interesting that Seth used chess to make his point about strategy of communication, anticipating the reaction and to ensure that communication is tailored to the audience, so that the audience understood what he wanted them to understand. That indicates the importance of clarity to effective communication (Van Vugt, Hogan et al., 2008).
Tacit Knowledge items

It is important for a leader to anticipate the reaction of others to his/her messages
Because this will influence how s/he presents information
And it ensures that the leader is better understood when the message is delivered.

Seth’s comment above, on ensuring that the other party understood what the leader intended, is echoed by Christian, who explained how he always asked the other party to write a short summary of what had been discussed.

Christian: “If we have a conversation, because every conversation is a contract of sorts ... When I have a meeting with you, and we discuss proposals, I tell them to go back and write the minutes of that meeting for me to sign, or the instructions I gave you, go and write them for me from your understanding.”

Christian: “If it doesn’t reflect my own, then you will do it until you get it right.”

Christian: “If I don’t sign off on it, I’m not really thinking about it, I've not looked at the implications ... my signature is going on it, I’m committing myself irrevocably ... because every conversation is a contract of sorts.”

Christian’s comment revealed the strategy he used to obtain the other party’s understanding of the conversation, which enabled him to know whether or not he was fully understood, and when in future, staff had claimed he said something, he would ask:

Christian: “Where is it in writing?”
Christian’s strategy is interesting. It extends the notion of communication that one is understood, and the way to do it is to check that the audience extracted from the conversation, what the leader intended. However, it is perhaps easier to have such management of communication in writing, when the audience is a small, manageable number, but this form of review can be time-consuming and ineffective, where the audience consists of a large number of people. In addition, this form of review is suitable for followers and may not be applicable when working with peers and people who are higher up in the hierarchy. In the case of peers and superiors, the leader might have to be the person to document and share the notes from the discussions, requesting agreement or modification to the points in the notes.

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to ask for a written summary of proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>And for him/her to review this and sign it off</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because the review enables the leader to ensure that his/her message has been understood</td>
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<tr>
<td>And signing off means the leader has considered the implications of the decision.</td>
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**Communicating with customers**

Customers are a part of the audience that a leader should be able to effectively communicate with (Hunter et al., 2007).

Imran explained that external communication should include communication with customers.
Imran: “External communication should be in place, to research what customers are saying about the organization’s products and services.”

This view was shared by Xavier who commented on the importance of having access to customers, and having a system where the leader is able to read feedback from customers. Xavier shared an incident he had faced in his organization, which related to not giving customers the option to have pre-booked seats on aircraft. The reasons for this were to save costs and the administrative time that can be incurred when issuing pre-booked seats. He explained that the situation caused disruption and led to complaints from customers.

Xavier: “Cabin crew having to say ‘please, can you move so that this lady can seat next to her daughter’ or whatever. So in the end we said okay, we are not gonna get away with this, this is causing too much disruption.”

He explained how he used communication with customers to improve customer service, and conceded to change the business model of the organization.

Xavier: “So we said okay, you can choose where you sit, but you have to pay $2 extra to book ahead.”

Researcher: “And what did the people do?”

Xavier: “They paid the $2 and made it a profit centre.”
Xavier: “I always used to say to people, the best innovation for the airline comes from the complaint letter. Because you can look at the complaints and say how can I get rid of these complaints by creating a profit centre? So I always read the complaints. Because they tell you the answers.”

Xavier: “If they’ve taken the time to write to you, they are probably going to pay the $1 or $2 that you charge them to get rid of the problem.”

It was clearly important to him, as he reiterated:
Xavier: “If people feel that strongly to put something to paper, they are probably willing to pay a little bit.”

However, he shared an important fact, that although the new option to pay for pre-booked seats allowed the airline to meet customer expectations, it also increased administrative costs. Nonetheless, the focus on profitability meant that the change to the business model was a profitable strategy for the airline.

Reflecting on his experience, he shared the questions he asked when reviewing customer complaints:

Xavier: “What do the people want? What are we not providing to them and how can we make money?”

It is interesting that Xavier mentioned customer complaints as an important source for innovation. His comment echoes Crossan et al.’s (2008) on the importance of
learning from different sources. His explanation revealed how he sought to balance resourcefulness and creative thinking with ensuring that the changes the customers requested were profitable to the organization.

Xavier: “A lot of innovation isn’t being insightful. It is using the data that is in front of you.”

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to use the data from complaints from customers</td>
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<td>As opportunities for innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>And to be mindful of how the refined service offerings can be additional profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because if the customer has taken the effort to complain</td>
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<tr>
<td>They will be willing to pay for the additional service offering.</td>
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Communicating with shareholders
Shareholders are the owners of the organization and leaders have a responsibility to operate the organization within the interests of the shareholders. Thus, leaders have to communicate effectively with shareholders (Boatright, 1994).

Xavier: “At the end of the day, the shareholders own the business. So you should not have a CEO who effectively is going to ignore the shareholders as that would be very dangerous.”

Xavier: “I think what you have to do is make sure you are respectful and understanding of their requirements, and that you convince them of why you believe
your priorities are also important, and you end you trying to compromise where both
sides feel their objectives are being met, maybe not the same extent that they would
have liked, but with an understanding that there is a balance.”

Xavier’s comment above explains why communicating with shareholders is an
important part of a senior executive’s audience. While leaders have many
responsibilities to different stakeholders, shareholders are the primary stakeholders of
the organization, and the leader has to ensure there is a balance between the interests
of the shareholders and other stakeholders (Boatright, 1994; Hillman and Keim,
2001).

He also explained the importance of communication to ensure that shareholders’
expectations are aligned with those of the leader. Xavier explained that shareholders
might be after short-term returns, where the leader is planning a long-term growth,
and even if the leader is effective in his/her journey on the growth programme, the
shareholders will view his/her performance as ineffective. In this regard, it was
important that the leader was clear on expectations of shareholders and his
expectations from shareholders. Thus, an effective leader should be able to adapt,
according to the roles s/he is in; in this case, as an employee of the shareholders (Van
Vugt et al., 2008; Van Vugt and Kurzban, 2007).

Xavier: “Ensuring that goals and performance measurements are aligned, because
how shareholders measure success might be completely different from how the leader
is measuring success. So, it is important to align the two.”
Xavier: “In the case of your shareholders, I guess you have to communicate to them, feedback on what your strategy or vision is, and what you want to achieve … how you measure success, and how they measure your success, so they are not measuring you against something that you are not expecting.”

Xavier: “People might be just looking for short-term returns, and you are planning a long-term, twenty year growth. Guess what, they’re going to think you are useless. Even if you are doing a great job towards a twenty year growth programme. So making sure you are aligned on expectations is critical, up and down. “

Xavier: “So that clarity.”

Clarity of communication was a key observation shared by all participants and echoes Van Vugt et al.’s (2008) findings on its importance in effective leadership.

Xavier’s comment is similar to a comment, made by Khalid in chapter eight, on relating performance to reward. However, this is included in this chapter, as it relates to communication with shareholders who are not employees of the organization and a stakeholder group that was not considered by Sternberg in his conceptualization of the Tacit Knowledge Framework.

Xavier explained the following.

Xavier: “It involved communicating with shareholders and ensuring that one is respectful and understanding of their requirements, and then taking time to convince them of the chosen strategy, which results in the need for a compromise, but then
both sides feel their objectives are being met, and there is an alignment and there is a balance.”

For Xavier this was critical, to ensure that he was not being measured against something that he was not expecting. So for Xavier, it was important for expectations to be aligned by the leader with shareholders, and also with the rest of the organization. He referred to this as being aligned on expectations “up and down”.

Andre shared how he communicated with members of the board:

Andre: “I initiated a firm policy of composing a letter to the members of the board each month and mailing it to them along with the previous month’s internal financial and operation statements… I would comment on important happenings of the past month and try to prepare them for future events that they would either need to know about or approve.”

Thus, similar to the comment made by Khalid, presented in chapter eight, on the need for leaders to communicate their expectations with their subordinates (leader to subordinate communication, that is downward), it appears that it is also important for leaders to ensure that the shareholders’ and board members’ expectations of them were aligned (leader to shareholder communication, that is upward).

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to ensure that s/he is clear on the expectations from shareholders</td>
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And to clarify as to how leadership performance will be evaluated
So that the expectations of the leader and shareholders are aligned.

Cultural intelligence
Cultural intelligence refers to the ability to be aware of the culture of others. It also involves the ability to adapt behaviour as a result of this awareness when interacting with other individuals. Cultural intelligence is a subset of social intelligence and was another theme that emerged from the conversations. Cultural intelligence can refer to sensitivity about the national culture, organizational culture and the complexity that can arise from individuals from different cultures working together in an organization (Den Hartog and Dickson, 2004).

Allegra alluded to the importance of cultural sensitivity, and explained that the leader has to be aware of the cultural code and the language used to communicate to others.

Allegra: “When I get up and speak, or in any government situation, I will go through the full line of protocols. Why? Because I naturally respect where I am, but also, I know if I don’t, I’ve lost the audience, because they feel disrespected.”

Allegra: “Because words are like magnets, they either attract or repel, and a leader has to choose their words carefully. And sometimes they have to be more sharp words; sometimes they need to be warmer.”
Allegra’s comment above presented the importance of cultural intelligence to effective leadership. This is important, as the cultural aspect of leadership behaviour contributes to the complexity in the leadership construct. It is interesting that she extended cultural intelligence to professional sensitivity as regards to communication with others; in this case, communication, using words.

Allegra: “But effective leadership is being able to read a climate and a culture and a code and respond accordingly ... and those codes dramatically affect our effectiveness or inefficiency when it comes to working.”

Allegra’s comment above reveals the importance of other forms of communication and why a leader should be able to observe the unspoken parts of a situation and react accordingly.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to understand the cultural codes and ways of thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>And to respond appropriately when speaking with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because the leader’s awareness of cultural codes shows respect to the audience.</td>
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Seth also mentioned cultural intelligence during the conversation.

Seth: “The personal background of the individual people that I talk to, they use the same language, but their perception is different, because how they are expressing things comes across differently; and I can empathize with that.”
He explained the reason for his ability to empathize.

Seth: “My personal background of having lived in several countries has enabled me to understand the different cultural approaches to exactly the same issue.”

For Seth, being a senior executive in an airline organization exposes leaders to different people and this exposure requires an appreciation of the different backgrounds that people come from. His explanation, that even if they speak the same language, their perception might be different, revealed the diversity in cultures, even of those that speak the same language, and thus increases the requirement that a leader needs to be adaptable in how s/he understands other people.

Seth’s comment above is similar to that presented by Den Hartog and Dickson (2004) on how the same words, can have different meanings in different cultures. Den Hartog and Dickson (2004) presented an example of how the word ‘cunning’ in Columbia means a person who is contributing to outstanding leadership, whereas in Switzerland, it is a person whose activities inhibit outstanding leadership. Seth expressed that his personal circumstances of growing up and living in different countries contributed to this awareness of the different meanings that the same words in the same language can have in different cultures.

Seth’s comment also contributes to the understanding of the importance of adaptability of communication as a form of cultural intelligence in leadership behaviour.
Tacit Knowledge items

It is important for a leader to be aware
That people come from different backgrounds
And the same words can have different meanings in different environments
Because this awareness is important for effective communication.

Abi provided an example of how she managed an external situation with representatives from other cultures.

Abi: “If you sit with a large group of Asian individuals and are trying to get a yay or a nay, there’s none. well, do you all agree with this, and then you hear nothing.”

Abi’s comment above reveals her perception of Asian individuals, and also her generalisation of Asians to fit into one stereotype. She later provided more explanation, indicating that the individuals were from ASEAN³ countries.

Abi: “So we were really needing to have interaction here … in this particular one, literally just decided that I will go around the table and I moved around the table and called on each of the people. Now, I had been leading this group for about a year so. They were used to me being a little bit assertive.”

³ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The member states are Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei Darussalam, Lao, Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines and Singapore.
She explained the role of her past relationship with the group of Asians in enabling her work through this incident. It is of particular note to mention her awareness of the fact that she had been with this group for a while and the role this familiarity had played in her relationship with those from different national cultures.

*Abi:* “*But it was marvellous, because they all really got engaged, and we came back around to the next issue to address, and I particularly remember I had a very strong negative reaction from one of the members.***”

She explained the reason for this reaction and how she managed the negative reaction.

*Abi:* “*It was something that we were trying to get done that was an add-on to the strategy. We managed to get through the strategy. We had a good style. Everybody was feeling accomplished and they were being vocal and we were laughing a lot.***”

Abi’s comment above explained the importance of relationship and having buy-in from everyone in the particular group. She also touched on an interesting fact: that they were laughing a lot, resonant with Avolio et al.’s (1999) findings on the role that humour can play in effective leadership.

Laughter and fun were two things Abi referred to throughout our conversation. Hers was a unique view, which sheds some insight into her attitude to leadership, which is that leadership is inherently dependent on how one person is able to communicate with others to achieve a goal. Her comment also presented the role that laughter and fun can play in ensuring that leadership is a seamless process.
Tacit Knowledge items

| It is important for the leader to interact personally with stakeholders |
| When trying to get a group of stakeholders to make a decision |
| And create bonds with them |
| So that they are able to engage better with the matter at hand. |

Political intelligence

Political intelligence was a theme that came out of the conversations with participants. It is an under-researched topic in management literature, similar to social intelligence, as it includes the ability to work and interact well with others. However, Kramer (2006) argues that political intelligence is different from social intelligence, as political intelligence is used to exploit weaknesses of others and intimidate them. However, this definition of political intelligence is incomplete. Political intelligence can also refer to the ability to be aware of the policies of government and political movements, together with the ability to understand the political landscape of an environment and the impact of government decisions on the activities of an organization. This is the definition of political intelligence used in this study (US GAO, 2013; Military, 2005).

Fitz shared an incident when he had to work with the government as the CEO of an airline.
Fitz: “One of the issues ... at the time was the multiplicity of forms, a passenger actually had to, on arrival in immigration, had to fill the immigration form, the health form, the customs form, the agriculture form, four forms ... Very elaborate exercise.”

He explained how his airline worked with the various ministries of the government.
Fitz: “We were able to sit down together and work out what exactly was the information of each of those forms, the value and the questions on each of those forms.”

Fitz: “And we realised there were some questions, which had been there forever and people had even forgotten why the questions had even been put in the first place. So by the process of elimination, working with everybody, we were able to migrate everything into one simple form.”

Fitz: “I think the time to patiently and effectively work with others ... that worked.”

Fitz: “The trick therefore, is to get them to help you, see what you are trying to achieve. So that is an example of leadership through exercising humility and cooperation at work. It is the recognition of the importance of teamwork.”

Fitz shared in his comment above, on the importance of political intelligence to working effectively with government officials, by getting them to help, to also understand where the leader is coming from. This highlights a positive aspect of political intelligence, beyond the negative, manipulative to include a collaborative aspect of political intelligence.
He also identified the key political intelligence required:

Fitz: “Rather than trying to go and tell them we didn’t want the form, which would have probably not worked ... Even the government recognised that after all, it was possible to take the time to really work with people, understand what they were trying to do, respect that, and work with them, so that they could be in charge of the changes to their own processes.”

Fitz: “That also probably demonstrated that if we want to be about change, it is not so much the notion of the feeling of being right, because sometimes if you are feeling right, it could actually be the worst thing. It is also doing things right.”

Fitz’s example above detailed his experience of working with ministries, and the challenges that can be resolved by taking the time to ensure that all relevant parties understood the reason for change, by working together with them to create the solutions required. His comments echo Crossan et al.’s (2008) findings on the importance of encouraging stakeholders to work together towards achieving an identified goal; in this case, an easier immigration process for visitors to the country (Van Vugt et al., 2008).

**Tacit Knowledge items**

| It is important for a leader to get together with the relevant stakeholders |
| When deciding to implement change |
| And to work out what exactly the situation at hand is |
And why it needs to change
Because this demonstrates the leader is willing to find the right way of
communicating with others, to get them to understand, instead of imposing
his/her views on them.

Carlos shared an example of a lobbying incident and the importance of engaging with
other airlines to lobby the government, another form of political intelligence;
knowing how to work with others to convince the government.

Carlos: “So we have to sit and decide how do we convince the government.”

Carlos explained the strategies he had used to convince the government.

Carlos: “We needed to broaden the group ... it’s about having a coalition of
supporters, because you are always going to be a vested interest.”

Carlos: “The point of that coalition was to explain why it was important for the UK to
make a decision and not to dither endlessly. And we had to form that organization.”

Carlos: “We had to lead it, so we had to set it up, we had to look at how we were
going to fund it, who was going to do the work, the administration, who was going to
chair it, find somebody to chair it who was a grandee, and set up a whole structure
where it would work and have regular meetings and all of the stakeholders will have
an opportunity to have a voice and to give their views. We set that up and we did that
and it was very, very successful.”
Carlos’ comments above presented the strategies he used to effectively lobby the government. They included broadening the group, by working with other members in the industry, and having a clear plan of action, which are important for effective leadership (Van Vugt et al., 2008; Sims, 2010).

He provided an explanation for the success of the coalition group.

Carlos: “What it did was it let everyone coalesce around a simple idea.”

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to have a coalition of supporters when lobbying the government</td>
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<tr>
<td>By forming a lobby group with a simple task, and a clear end date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because the group increases the support for the cause, the simple task enables members of the group to coalesce around a simple idea</td>
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<tr>
<td>And the clear end date ensures that people do not endlessly dither.</td>
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Allegra: “… the single most important answer there is political tenure.”

Allegra pointed out the importance of being aware of the political tenure of government officials when making business decisions. Her comments echo Sims’ (2010) findings on the importance of political intelligence in decision-making.

Allegra: “When you are dealing particularly with the government entities and government leaders, it’s always being conscious of where are they in their political
career. Because they are in office coming in, with one hopes a certain amount of skill. But they only have a certain amount of time.”

She expanded on her comment.

Allegra: “Having to work with ministers of tourism and regulations, and the person they’ve built the relationship with changes, and someone comes in and naturally wants to do everything differently. That’s a really important part of managing leadership of whether it is concepts, ideas, initiatives, organizations, it is being very clear on especially political tenure.”

She explained that while working with politicians could be very frustrating and challenging, building and maintaining these relationships was important for leaders in the airline industry.

Allegra: “Because even when you develop relationships with fantastic honourable ministers of tourism and they love you and are secure, there can be a coup. You have no idea of what’s going to happen. That is a really important part of the challenge of leadership, but as a result, the opportunity to fine-tune leadership skills.”

Allegra’s comments are interesting as the challenges of political tenure apply to countries with political stability, where tenures are specified and the challenges become intensified, especially in areas with political instability. Yet, effective leadership requires political intelligence and the ability to navigate challenges given the socio-cultural and political context in which the organization may find itself. It is also noteworthy to highlight her final sentence in the comment presented above, the
opportunity that the challenges of building new relationships provides to fine-tune leadership skills. This comment reveals an attitude that seeks to learn from challenges and situations, and use these situations to improve leadership skills (Hannah et al., 2008).

Allegra provided some comments as to how political intelligence could help a leader in the airline industry navigate some of the challenges.

Allegra: “Firstly, how does it fine-tune, for the person, for the leader - it makes them much more sensitive to those variables, the variable of tenure, the variable of tension, and essentially acumen.”

Allegra: “What is also really important for any leader when working especially with government or even other CEOs, understand their objectives and their priorities. If you can provide a solution to a leader that directly meets their goals, they are going to go alongside with it.”

Allegra: “Working with hypothetically the Honourable Minister of Tourism of Azerbaijan, I’m just picking that out here – he comes in new into office ... I need to understand what his priorities are, what was it that got him elected into office.”

She provided her rationale for this.

Allegra: “If you can then shape your objectives around enabling that, to help them achieve their promises, you are that much further down the line.”
Allegra: “The other element in terms of sharpening the opportunities and the learning is helping them understand. So many people come into office terrified, because they’ve been given a political position and yet no idea about it.”

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<td>It is important for a leader when working with government and other leaders</td>
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<td>To understand their objectives and priorities</td>
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<td>And work out a solution that can directly meet their goals</td>
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<td>As this enables the other party to be willing to listen and work with the leader.</td>
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Allegra’s final comment revealed the vulnerability that some political leaders may have, especially those appointed to political positions in industries in which they have no experience of working in.

Allegra: “And just being clear that the relationship you develop with the leader, they...
might leave office, but they can always come back, and people don't forget loyalty.’”

Allegra: “And this is where, airlines because of the global nature of their work, have to stay relatively immune to politics. They have to work with politics, but stay immune to political timelines. That is difficult.”

Her comments above explained that it was important for airline leaders to be politically neutral and the challenge of ensuring this. Whereas on one hand, the leader is seeking to develop good relationships with politicians, yet on the other hand, the leader has to ensure that such a relationship remains politically neutral. Her comment reveals the delicate balance airline leaders have to maintain, and the ability to apply political intelligence appropriately (Sims, 2010).

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<td>It is important for leaders in the airline industry to be immune to politics</td>
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<td>Although they have to be able to work with political intelligence</td>
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<td>But strive to remain immune to political timelines</td>
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<td>Because of the global nature of the work of airlines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to not dismiss government officials when they are no longer in a position of power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because building relationships with others should go beyond the position they are in</td>
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And a leader should remember that people can resume their senior positions in the future.

Robert also commented on the need for political intelligence in creating or cancelling airline destinations. He explained:

Robert: “Sometimes I had to cancel destinations, which then created another issue, a political issue.”

Robert: “And it is very important that you foresee that. That you try to correct the cause, that you make the people your local partners, travel agents, because the airline business is bringing passengers to countries ... you have political or social connections in what you do in an airline industry. So when you are a leader, you have to be aware of all these things.”

Robert’s comment above corroborated Allegra’s on some of the political challenges that airline leaders have to be conversant with. He shared the need to have political relationships in the countries that the airline operates in. He also shared the need for an airline leader to be aware of the diverse and sometimes conflicting nature of the interests of the airline and the country, as well as the need to be able to manage these effectively and ensure that the interests of the airline remain the main objective of the leader (Hunter et al., 2007).
Tacit Knowledge items

It is important for a leader to be aware of the political and social connections of business decisions
And to be informed by the likely interests of all the stakeholders in decision-making
Because this empowers the leader and enables him/her to explain the rationale behind the decisions.

Fitz shared an example of how the operation of an airline can be interwoven with government, where some leaders were taking a share of funds from the airline. He shared what the funds were used for and how he dealt with the situation.

Fitz: “For me, it is linear, A plus B equals the best interest of the airline, but you are told something else ... or that option that affects your very clean way of trying to focus on the corporate interest.”

He explained his challenges and how he tried to deal with trying to work with those who were not working in the best interest of the airline.

Fitz: “Keep for party funds and use in general elections. So when that came to my knowledge, I went to the PM [prime minister] and he promised to do something and nothing was then. I realised also it was not his problem.”

He explained his concerns.

Fitz: “I was dealing with potentially very powerful people.”
Fitz: “So I resigned from the airline, and from that immediately very soon afterwards, rumours were spreading and eventually one of the key players confessed to what was going on, and enquiries came about and all the people who were involved were actually taken to justice.”

Fitz: “Therefore, that way of thinking is very foreign to you.”

Fitz: “That is frustrating, because you have to make compromises which if you don’t do, then you are out. And then you focus on the big picture and make compromises.”

Fitz: “It does involve making compromises in doing business, so that was quite frustrating and at times discouraging.”

However, Fitz explained that he found the form of thinking, which is political intelligence, to be a foreign way of thinking. His statement pointed out the challenge of leadership of using different forms of intelligence. However, he also shared that it was essential for him to be able to understand the political dimensions of business decisions, even though it was ‘foreign’ to him.

He explained how he made decisions in which to compromise.

Fitz:” So long as the ethical line is not overstepped.”
Tacit Knowledge items

It is important for a leader to be politically intelligent
And be able to assess difficult situations
And make tough decisions, including when to leave the organization
Because politics can be a challenging arena, especially when dealing with powerful people.

Carlos also shared some comments on the need for compromise, and more importantly, the ability to know when to compromise, as a form of political intelligence.

Carlos: “You need to be aware that in politics, it’s not a simple matter of saying two and two equals four. There are so many other issues reeling around that you may have no control over that will always impact and affect and end up in having trade-offs that you just have to try and manage as best you can.”

And he explained that knowing when and how to compromise required resilience.
Carlos: “So you need resilience and things take a long time.”

He explained further on how he related with politicians by ensuring that whatever he asked them was time-limited and not open-ended. This links with Allegra’s comment on the need to be aware of political tenure when dealing with government officials.

Carlos: “You need to be time limited.”
He shared an example from his experience.

Carlos: “The beauty just to finish off on that example again was, it had a clear vision of what we wanted, a very simple task, it wasn’t complicated ... and we had an end date and the end date was working towards the government issuing a white paper at the end of 03.”

Carlos: “I reiterate that if you are going to have a serious conversation with policy makers, you must have credible empirical data. It’s not enough to go in with anecdotes.”

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<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be resilient</td>
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<tr>
<td>Especially when trying to influence external environments</td>
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<tr>
<td>And the leader has to be flexible enough to make trade-offs</td>
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<td>As there are other issues that the leader may not have control over</td>
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<tr>
<td>That will impact and effect the leader’s objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>And industry-level change takes a long time.</td>
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It is interesting that Carlos explained the importance of empirical data to support lobbying claims, as this revealed the importance of research to support business decisions.

The section above has provided an appreciation of the diverse audience in the external environment of airline organizations. Given the senior level of participants, their roles also had responsibility that related to the external environment, and the
leaders shared some of their experiences, which relate to how they navigate the organizational and societal environment within which their organizations have to operate.

9.4 Solving Organizational and Industry Problems

The themes analysed in this category relate to those shared by the participants that related to organizational and industry-level problems. The themes are managing crises, managing conflicts, sustainability and succession planning.

It is interesting that managing is used to define the themes. This is because of the blurred lines between who a manager is and who a leader is. However, given that managers have leadership roles in how they influence others to achieve set goals, then the leadership refers to how management activity is enacted, that is, in this category, the process of influencing others to manage crises and to manage conflicts (Zalzeznik, 1998).

Managing Conflict

Conflict arises in organizations when there is a misunderstanding, incompatibility or dissonance between individuals. The participants shared from their experience of conflict, how they sought to manage it; confirming Hogan et al.’s (1994) argument that managing conflicts is one of the tasks of leaders (Rahim, 2002).

Allegra shared an interesting observation.
Allegra: “Ultimately, adults are grown-up children.”

Allegra’s comment above provided a rationale for why conflicts emerge. It is remarkable that she linked conflicts with childish behaviour; a comment that set the scene for conflicts that can arise.

Allegra: “We all have our inner child and the only reason in my mind, that conflict occurs, is when someone feels that their worth has been challenged. It can be professionally, it can be personally.”

Allegra argued that conflict arises only when an individual feels that their worth has been challenged professionally or personally. However, while conflict may arise for that reason, Rahim (2002) posits that there are also other reasons for conflict that include incompatibility.

She made some strong comments as she continued.

Allegra: “People only fight back when they feel their worth is being threatened, and that can be in an alley or in a boardroom. Ultimately, it’s the core of the psyche. People need to feel a sense of worth. So if there’s a conflict, if someone has a problem with me, the fact is we are like children.”

It is interesting that Allegra understood conflict to arise only when people felt that their worth was being threatened, and her comment echoes the findings by Jehn et al. (1997) on the causes of relational conflict. However, they extend the causes of
relational conflict to include differing opinions, interpersonal dislike and differing values.

She explained the importance of communication as a form of conflict management, a strategy referred to by Ting-Toomey et al. (1991) as important for conflict management.

Allegra: “A child is not going to listen until they’ve had a chance to have their tantrum. So until they’ve yelled and screamed and cried, and get their breathing back down and their cheeks have dried from all the tears, only then are they receptive to the messages. Because if they haven’t felt heard, they haven’t felt validated.”

Allegra’s comment above expanded on her earlier comment that adults are grown-up children.

Amason and Schweiger (1994) present an interesting argument on the paradox of conflict, where although conflict arises, as a result of disagreement, when managed effectively, conflict can lead to greater cohesion between people, as the parties have had the opportunity to express their perspectives and thus, come to understand one another’s perspectives. In this way, conflict between two parties, when managed appropriately, is able to result in stronger commitment to decisions made following the conflict.
It is important for a leader to understand that the parties will not be prepared to listen until they have had a chance to get their message across. When it comes to conflict resolution, because that is when the conflicting parties will feel validated and be receptive to the other party’s messages.

Hans’ comments below provide an instance of conflict within the organization; in this case, the organization’s board of directors.

Hans: “Horrible board dispute which almost overnight ... it got incredibly nasty very quickly and very personal to a lot of people.”

Hans explained that his diagnosis of the situation had been as a result of earlier observation.

Hans: “Most of my colleagues had no context for how to deal with this particular dispute. But I had seen him acting this way in a number of his other businesses, so I was able to lead a very, very measured response on behalf of the board.”

Hans: “It wasn’t very easy, because there were a number of very, very direct personal attacks on me, and every other member of both the management board and the plc. board.”

Hans provided some more information as to what had happened.
Hans: “There were various members of the ... board that wanted to adopt a much more aggressive stance, much more aggressive, but I have seen his behaviour in the airline and also in the way other companies responded to us.”

Hans: “The leadership there was effectively to tell other colleagues, some of whom were much more hot-headed than I was, ‘if you do this, then this is going to happen, so don’t do it, because it will just make it worse’. That was the message that was very, very difficult to get over to the colleagues. You have to say this is the only way to deal with this.”

Hans: “It reflected the right thing to do, rather than the instinctive, emotional thing to do.”

Hans’ comments provided an explanation of how he led his peers within the conflict situation and how he managed the conflict. His analysis echoes Yukl’s (1989) comments on the role of leaders to manage conflicts effectively.

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<th>Tacit Knowledge items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to apply lessons from experience when dealing with conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>And to contextualize behaviour based on previous experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>And present a measured, unemotional and non-instinctive response</td>
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<td>Because this ensures that conflict is managed effectively</td>
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<td>As emotional responses will worsen the situation.</td>
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Conflict management is different from conflict resolution. Conflict resolution refers to the reduction or termination of conflict, while conflict management refers to the minimisation of the effects of conflict and focus on enhancing the constructive functions of conflict, such as the opportunity for a deeper understanding of different perspectives of the conflicting parties. The section has presented the theme on managing conflict, the reasons for conflict within organizations and some examples of how conflict can be managed effectively (Rahim, 2002).

Managing crisis

An organizational crisis can arise as a result of an unexpected event, which has a great impact on the activities of the organization. The airline industry is prone to crises, and has experienced severe crises over the past decade, including the September 11, 2001 attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre (9/11), the volcanic ash cloud, terrorism, security threats and natural disasters. The key characteristic of many of these crises is their unexpected nature, and therefore, the ability of crisis to disrupt the normal activities of the organization. Thus, a crisis precipitates the need to be able to react swiftly to unexpected events, in order to manage their effects on the organization.

In this way, crisis management refers to the approach taken to reduce the impact of the crisis on the activities of the organization. Due to the high-impact effect that a crisis can have on an organization, managing crises is an important aspect of leadership behaviour (Pearson and Clair, 1998; Linnenluecke and Griffiths, 2010).

Robert shared an incident he had experienced.
Robert: “I was in the office on Saturday, working and I got a call from my cargo station in New York. I was in charge of the USA at that time ... we have the FBI in our office ... they have found a bomb. And we have the TV in front of the office and we have people wanting to have an interview with you.”

Robert: “So, the first thing is to know what happened. And that is why it is important that you have people who are not shy in communicating with you.”

Robert: “So my thing was, how do you get the truth of the whole thing? It took me two days to get that and for two days, I had all the TV boss, talking about [the airline] and so on. And I refused to communicate with the press, and I got pressure from my chairman, you have to say something, you have to say something. Until I got the real story, then I went online. And that helped us.”

Robert: “The lesson is to find out the truth before you communicate. Better to say ‘I don’t know, I’m looking for’ because in a crises, the first thing you say sets the tune for the whole crisis.”

Robert’s comments above presented a difficult situation, and how he sought to gather all the relevant information before making a public announcement. He shared an important fact in crisis management, that in a moment of crises, the first thing that is said, sets the tune for the whole crisis, and the need to predicate all facts before making any announcements. He also revealed how he thought through the situation to ensure that his response was effective in alleviating the crisis, an important aspect of crisis management (Ulmer, 2012).
Robert shared another example.

Robert: “Now, another crisis, we had a plane hijacked.”

Researcher: “Oh goodness.”

Robert: “But that is life ... I was in charge of the crisis committee at the company and we knew that if they [troops] would attack, try to liberate, it would be a bloodbath, because the terrorists, there were five, are still in good shape ... So what do you do then?”

He shared how he attempted to manage the crisis.

Robert: “The only thing you can do is to find somebody who can talk to the president of that country to convince him that it is not the right thing to do. So we talked to the French prime minister, and he called the president and he convinced him. But if you don’t have the relationship, that access, you cannot do it, and you are stuck.”

Interestingly, Robert’s comment highlighted the importance of maintaining relationships with those in political positions, relevant to the airline industry; linking political intelligence with crisis management.

Robert: “With the ... secret police and everything, we knew that we had to wait two days to get those guys tired, and the secret police put mics [microphones] all over the plane so we knew where they are, we could listen, and then they went into the plane and they killed them.”
Robert: “So, that’s one thing, when you are in an airline. Things like that can happen. You see what I mean, it can happen. You know, you are living, open your TV and look what’s happening around.”

Demonstrating an acceptance of the realities of working in the industry, Robert shared how he had worked with politicians and the secret police during a time when one of the aircraft in his organization was hijacked.

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to take time to obtain all the relevant information</td>
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<td>About what happened at the time of a crisis</td>
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<td>Especially when it involves the media and external environment</td>
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<td>Even if the leader is under pressure to make a decision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because in a crisis, the first thing that is said, sets the tune for the whole crisis.</td>
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Seth provided an example of how he tried to manage the incident of the 2010 volcanic ash cloud that impacted on the European airspace. This was an in-depth example and is presented here as it encapsulates the crisis management process recommended by Pearson and Clair (1998).

Seth: “I was at the heart of not the ash, but the way of resolving it, because when all aircraft were grounded, I went to the air traffic control ... in Brussels. I took the commissioner with me, whom I know personally, and the three of us, with the air traffic control guy, we sat down and said ‘how do we get out all the mess?’”
Seth explained the scale of the crisis.

Seth: “So, it was a nightmare in terms of dimensions, to the passengers, there were ten million passengers that were stranded and who could not get back to their final destinations, but it was a commercial nightmare for the airlines, and an economic nightmare for Europe.”

He provided an example:

Seth: “Car manufacturers, for example, in the absence of aircraft couldn't get spare parts flown to them, because no one was flying.”

Seth: “This was the crisis management that was required.”

Seth’s explanation above rightly defined the volcanic ash as a crisis. It also revealed how he tried to make sense of the situation. It is remarkable that he explained that crisis management was required, evidence of a leader possessing a suite of skills or a toolbox that s/he can refer to during situations to be able to better understand the situation and what form of leadership behaviour or action was required.

Seth: “The idea of leadership is to first of all identify what the common denominator is, which means that I needed to talk to the CEOs, and talking to CEOs, attracting their attention, means that I needed to describe to them what kind of key factors were driving this industry based on my analysis.”

He explained how he tried to find a common ground for all the actors, who in this case were the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of European airlines. He also
explained the steps he took as a key participant in the dialogue on the resolution of the volcanic ash cloud crisis in Europe.

Seth: “Secondly, what kind of direction I believe would be best for all of them to pursue as an industry, and thirdly the steps that were required to move forward.”

Seth: “The way of doing this was to present in such a way that we can encourage them to be involved in discussion, to see that this has relevance to them and that is, if you wish, the discussion at CEO level.”

Seth shared how having a process during the crisis was helpful in dealing with the pressures of the crisis.

Seth: “I would talk to the experts, to the organizational structure below those CEOs, and then the issue was more on what needs to be done.”

Seth: “It was also based on an overview of the challenges, but the focus was on the activities that needed to be generated to progress.”

His process included obtaining information regularly, analysing and presenting these clearly to others, to facilitate decision-making. His comments echoed that of Hogan et al. (1994) on the importance of clear communication to crisis management.

Seth: “With respect to them, the message there was: it is in your interest to do this. I am not presenting you with another problem. I am actually suggesting how we could
jointly develop a solution. So it was absolutely essential that these people understood that the discussion we were having was in their interest and the solutions where, if you wish, solutions to their problems.”

Seth explained that it was necessary for the CEOs of airlines in Europe to view his message as a solution to their issues as opposed to additional problems, and why this was important in gaining support from them. It is interesting that he mentioned this, as one can assume that CEOs were faced with pressures from members of the public, the government and other stakeholders during the volcanic ash cloud, and they had to make timely decisions that ensured safety with continuation of business, requiring accurate and regular information.

Seth shared how he provided the CEOs with regular updates.

Seth: “I gave them an update on basically every three to six hours, where we stand, what is being done, what the actual problem is, and also identifying what went wrong.”

His comment above confirms the importance of regular channels of communication to effective crisis management and echoes Pearson and Clair’s (1998) findings.

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to understand the cause of the crisis when dealing with a crisis</td>
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<tr>
<td>And to have access to information from the relevant parties</td>
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By communicating regularly with them to get and provide information so as to jointly develop a solution. Because it is important that a leader is perceived to be aware of the aspects of the problem and to be in control/full command of the solutions.

Tacit Knowledge items

- It is important when trying to solve organizational or industry-level crises for the leader to ensure that focus is kept on developing a solution and to present relevant information clearly to all relevant parties.

Seth explained what had caused the response to the volcanic ash cloud in Europe.

Seth: “There was insufficient data provided to some meteorological volcano-logical institute who then had the data processed in a forecast machine, and the forecast was, there would be ash everywhere, whereupon the decision was taken that we must ground the aircraft.”

Seth: “But there was no threshold in the system as and when the volcanic ash dust will actually impact on the functionality of the aircraft. So it was unprofessional, it is as if you had a cloud and all of a sudden, the aircraft grounded, because there’s a cloud.”

Seth: “And it is interesting, because in one country they decided to ground it and thereupon, in the other countries, they also decided to ground them. It was a not-on-
Seth: “So understanding [what the problem was] this was crucially important.”

Seth’s comments above explained how his actions were based on an understanding of the challenges at hand, but with a focus on what was required to progress, and how available information can be used to proffer solution to the crisis.

Seth: “I was the centre of all information both from the scientists as well as from the regulators, as well as from the politicians, and the CEOs of the airlines knew that through me, I was in control, so to speak of every single step of the process.”

This was important in making a sense of the situation and also in his attempt to propose a solution to the issue.

Seth: “And then developing for the regulators a way out by creating a zone of doubt so to speak, within which the airlines could decide for themselves whether or not they wanted to fly. That was also important.”

He continued: “So within three days we had the aircraft back in the sky, despite the fact that the system would have, if the system hadn’t been changed, would’ve had those aircraft grounded for two weeks at least.”

Seth’s explanation of the incident, and the different parties he communicated constantly with to ensure he was aware of the issues, echo Pearson and Clair’s (1998)
findings on the importance of constant information and working with external stakeholders. The fact that he understood the problem and was also able to work with key stakeholders, including the regulators who required ‘a way out’, revealed another example of political intelligence, which related to knowing how to manage regulators and government officials who might have sensitive political implications to their actions.

Seth summarised his leadership behaviour during this incident.

Seth: “So the leadership style is analysis, it’s explaining, discussing and getting them involved in promoting the solutions themselves.”

Seth explained that his crisis management had been effective, because the aircraft were able to fly again, and his evaluation of his role and process of crisis management correlate with that provided by Pearson and Clair (1998), on the importance of having information, being able to coordinate stakeholders and having industry-wide visibility. His example also highlighted the importance of cohesiveness in decision-making, considering the several parties to the decision.

He shared some of his reflections on his behaviour.

Seth: “And it proved to be very successful ... and as I said this was through good process management, it was possible to get out of that mess relatively quickly.”

Seth: “So this meant that they saved hundreds of millions of Euros, because they got the aircraft back in the sky again.”
Seth explained the impact the volcanic ash had on the European economy. His comment is corroborated by the BBC’s (2010) analysis of the costs the volcanic ash cloud had on the European economy. The volcanic ash cost the airline industry an estimated £130 million a day, and impacted other major industries, given that the airline industry is a conduit for global trade and movement of people and goods.

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to present information based on analysis</td>
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<td>And for the information to explain the direction that is required for all to pursue</td>
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<td>Including the steps that are required to move forward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because this encourages all relevant parties to be involved in the discussion</td>
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<td>As they can understand the relevance it has to them.</td>
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Seth’s comment above provides an understanding of the complex nature of the industry and the presence of diverse stakeholders, beyond airlines, to include government officials and car manufacturers, together with passengers of airlines, who are viewed traditionally as the customers of airlines. It also revealed another dimension of the airline industry as part of a dynamic supply chain, for much of trade and movement of goods, as well as people.

**Managing business continuity**

Sustainability refers to the capability to endure, to last and to be maintained at a certain level. Sustainability can refer to the ability of a business to remain profitable, while minimising its negative impact on the environment in which it operates. In this
way, sustainability may refer to environmental, economic and social aspects of society (Chouinard et al., 2011; Mebratu, 1998).

Surprisingly, only one participant in the study of airline leaders spoke about environmental sustainability. This observation was alarming. Given the importance of environmental sustainability to the current global climate debate and the reported contribution of the airline industry to the pollution of the environment, it was surprising that environmental sustainability did not emerge as a theme from the conversations (Morrell 2011, Upham 2003).

Raoul: “Aviation from a sustainability perspective is interesting, because it seems to be one of those huge parts where we haven’t really seen any sense for, or any kind of consumer demand really for change, in that regard.”

Raoul shared his observations further.

Raoul: “It’s kind of odd ... we haven’t seen the demand from consumers. There’s been no reduction [in demand from customers], even though it is pretty much the most impactful thing you can do [aviation travel], so it’s quite an interesting one there.”

Raoul: “The airlines are probably doing more than the consumers are demanding to be honest, probably [because of] the sustainability campaigns, not a huge consumer demand for increased sustainability practice from airlines.”

Raoul’s comment above provided a plausible explanation for the extremely low
occurrence of sustainability in the conversations. Another reason for the low demand from consumers may be the absence of suitable alternatives to aviation transport for fast and relatively cost effective transportation (Graham and Vowles, 2006; Hailey, 1998; Grübler, 1990; Morrell, 2011).

However, sustainability is beyond the environment alone. Sustainability as a concept can also be applied to sustainability of business models and the sustainability of business decisions. Interestingly, the participants volunteered comments on the need for the sustainability of the airline’s business model, and not environmental sustainability (Amaeshi, 2014; Mebratu, 1998).

Robert: “The basic condition is to make your airline profitable ... my role is to make my company sustainable. I have a responsibility towards 60,000 people who are working for that company. I also have the responsibility to bring the company into the future.”

Robert’s comment above echoes Crossan et al.’s (2008) and Sims’ (2010) on the findings on the importance of ensuring the continuity of an organization’s business.

Robert: “That is why I needed to make profit so that I can reinvest in airplanes, that I can open new destinations, that I can increase frequencies between points, that I be able to have a better negotiation with the aircraft manufacturers, that I have other airlines that are trusting me and which are ready to make a partnership with us, co-share agreements or alliances or even mergers. So that is something which is very
delicate, and that is a leader’s decision, because nobody else can really make a
decision like that in your company.”

Robert’s comment above revealed his thoughts on the role of a leader as the key
factor in the sustainability of the company, that is making the company profitable, a
key challenge faced by the airline industry (Morrell, 2011).

Xavier: “A lot of airline managers have become apologetic about profits and have an
enormous quantity of excuses for why they didn’t make money. It’s oil, political
unrest, the economy; everything, except their ability as a manager.”

The equity is generally private money, it’s much more entrepreneurial in terms of its
performance and therefore, all of these excuses are not justifications for why you
didn’t make money.

Xavier: “There will always be something that the airline business is susceptible to.
When volcanic ash closes the airspace for a week, whether you are Ryanair or BA
[British Airways], it’s gonna affect you.”

Xavier: “I think treating these things as challenges that need to be overcome, as
opposed to excuses to explain that your poor performance is a mind-set difference
and part of that is that the low-cost carriers generally target a much higher ROC
[return on capital], a much higher margin, so even in a bad year they still make
profit, and in a good year, they make fantastic profits. The airline business is a cash
flow/turnover business. We make generally modest margins on a very big turnover,
so growth is important.”

However, he explained that growth had to be earned.

Xavier: “We use this phrase about ‘you have to earn the right to grow’. You don’t just grow, because the market is there, you grow, because you are making money and you earn the right to spend more money on airplanes, because you are making money, not because you can articulate an opportunity ... Yeah. So how do you earn the right to grow? You earn the right to grow by making money.”

Xavier: “That is how most other industries work. It is just we’ve convinced ourselves in the airline business it doesn’t apply to us. It’s not just about making money. It’s about having a presence, being a land-grab. You need to protect that route from competition, it doesn’t matter how much you lose, as long as you stand your ground.”

Xavier: “And the low-cost carriers don’t have the safety.”

Oliver also shared from his experience, which corroborated Xavier’s comment above.

Oliver worked for a full-service carrier and Xavier for a low-cost airline.

Oliver: “You know, one of the flaws in the airline business is that ... we tend to think that we do not exist if we don’t have planes. Which we do, as a point and as in existential, yes, but do you have to have them all over, all the time?"

He explained his experience of being asked to open new routes, one of which he had to close two and a half years after opening.
Oliver: “I think it’s a common vice in the airline business. We never say no to a plane. You want more, yes fine, we’ll take them and that leads to a lot of things that probably shunt happen and it leads to a lot of places that open and probably should not and a lot of places that get more service, and sometimes you make a good thing go bad by overwatering it.”

Oliver: “A lot of the times, you see airlines that go crazy, expanding, and then don’t do the cutbacks, and then you are in trouble.”

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<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to understand that sustainability is beyond the environment</td>
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<td>And this sustainability depends on multiple relationships with various stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is important for an airline leader to realize expansion for expansion’s sake is not a measure of success</td>
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<tr>
<td>By proving that the growth region will be profitable.</td>
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Succession planning

Succession planning was another theme that arose from the conversations. Succession planning refers to the conscious choice and cultivation of future leaders in an organization (Conger and Fulmer, 2003).

Imogen: “It’s a relay. As some point in time ... he [the CEO] will pass the baton. At some point in time, I need to pass the baton. That is the relay we are running. In life, in business, and so, you can't lord it.”

It is interesting that Imogen used the analogy of a marathon, passing the baton, to explain what she understood succession planning to mean, revealing an awareness of the temporal nature of a leadership position, and the need to have someone else to pass the baton to, that is, an element of continuity. Her comment echoes Conger and Fulmer’s (2003) argument that succession planning is important to business continuity.

Christian: “I needed to have a legacy; I needed to remind myself that we are on this earth life for only a period. So it is what we do within that period, is the legacy that we leave behind. And the legacy that I want to leave behind is ... Because a part of what we are doing now is succession planning.”

Jeremy: “I believe my legacy when I leave, speaks more for me.”

It is interesting that both Christian and Jeremy used the word ‘legacy’ to refer to succession planning. Their comments echo Freeman’s (2004) argument that a
leader’s real legacy was the ability to ensure the long-term survival of the organization, even after s/he had left the organization.

Carlos: “They’ve left and got really good jobs in other businesses, either outside or inside aviation, so that’s a nice legacy to think that you had a role.”

Carlos: “It is beholden of you to make sure that you create that environment for people, to give them a chance, so people can take the chances, and it’s important for business as well. It’s not just a personal thing.”

Carlos also referred to his legacy as identifying and developing others to become leaders. His comment revealed a generosity of spirit to develop others, a key factor in succession planning, where the incumbent leader prepares for future leaders to take the same position, because such planning is in the interests of the organization, and require the leader to think beyond his/her own interests alone. Carlos’ comments echo Conger and Fulmer’s (2003) who argued that it was imperative for current leaders to develop a pipeline of future leaders. Carlos extended this to creating opportunity for others to be able to take on leadership positions as well, and explained that this was good for the survival of the business (Sims, 2010).

The fact that senior leadership positions are occupied for a time, before requiring other people to take the role, highlight the importance of succession planning (Crossan et al., 2008; Sims, 2010).
Tacit Knowledge items

It is important for a leader to understand that leadership is a relay
And the position of leadership is temporal
As this enables the leader to have the right perspective to his/her position
And his/her duty to empower others
So they can lead effectively when the baton of leadership is passed on to them.

Tacit Knowledge items

It is important for a leader to development opportunities for others
And create an environment for people to be given a chance
And support them in doing so
As this gives your people space to develop and be creative
Because it is important for the organization to develop others
And the leader also leaves a good legacy by developing others.

Synthesis: Organizational Tacit Knowledge

This chapter has presented themes that arose from the conversations with participants that relate to organizational tacit knowledge. New themes identified from the conversations have been included into the modified framework for organizational tacit knowledge, referred to as the integrated framework for Organizational Tacit Knowledge.

This chapter has expanded the Tacit Knowledge Framework by introducing three new categories: communicating with a diverse audience and solving organizational and
industry challenges. The Tacit Knowledge Framework has also been deepened, by providing deeper insights into the categories. The updated framework is presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework for Organizational Tacit Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modified framework sub-categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with a diverse audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with shareholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solving organizational and industry challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9-3: New themes added to the organizational tacit knowledge category

The table below presents the Integrated Framework for the Organizational Tacit Knowledge category, extended to include the new themes of political intelligence and managing business continuity. The name for the category remains Organizational tacit knowledge as it relates to the tacit knowledge required by the leader to lead within the organization, and lead the organization within the industry and its society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONAL TACIT KNOWLEDGE</th>
<th>Communicating with a diverse audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cultural intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Political Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solving organizational and industry challenges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

379
• Managing conflict
• Managing crisis
• Managing business continuity

Table 9-4: Integrated framework for Organizational tacit knowledge

The table below provides a summary of the number of organizational tacit knowledge items obtained from the study and which were presented in the chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Tacit Knowledge items</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with a diverse audience</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Intelligence</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political intelligence</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Conflict</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing crisis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing business continuity</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9-5: Number of Organizational Tacit Knowledge items

The table above details the breakdown of the number of organizational tacit knowledge items according to the sub-categories presented in the chapter. From the above table, the total number of organizational tacit knowledge items obtained in the study was twenty-seven. The table overleaf presents a summary of the results for the organizational tacit knowledge level and feeds into the Tacit Knowledge Framework for Airline Leaders presented and discussed in chapter ten.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge Framework for Airline Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Levels</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Category</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Themes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No of Tacit knowledge items identified</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Tacit Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with a Diverse Audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with a diverse audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with shareholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solving Organizational and Industry Challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing business continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.5 Conclusion

The chapter has presented results that relate to the organizational tacit knowledge and also extended this category to include industry tacit knowledge, as leaders have to operate beyond the organization. This means, leadership behaviour extends beyond leadership in organizations to leadership of organizations within the industry and the wider society that the organization operates in. From the chapter, leadership
behaviour is understood to entail several roles, which a leader has to enact, to include interacting with diverse audiences. This interaction with a diverse audience necessitates a leader to have the ability to communicate effectively with others. Interestingly, political intelligence also emerged as a key theme, which is resonant with the many roles a leader in an airline organization has to fulfil, and also provides an appreciation for the multiple responsibilities of an airline leader.

This chapter concludes the presentation of the results from the data collected from twenty-one leaders in the global airline industry. The study has provided a deeper insight into understanding leadership behaviour at a specific level in the specific context of the airline industry, using the Tacit Knowledge Framework to understand practically intelligent leadership as a way of understanding leadership behaviour. The next chapter presents the key findings from the study, together with an evaluation of the Tacit Knowledge Framework and the Practical Intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour.
Chapter Ten

Conclusions to the Research Study

The main aim of this study was to contribute to the understanding of leadership behaviour in the global airline industry. This is the first study of its kind that has aimed to understand leadership behaviour in the global airline industry. The study was focused on understanding leadership and identifying an approach to undertake research on leadership behaviour in the airline industry. It builds upon Sternberg’s prior research into practical intelligence and tacit knowledge, and applies it to a new context. There appears to be no evidence of attempts to understand leadership behaviour in the airline industry using the practical intelligence approach. In this way, the study has also contributed to the body of academic literature in leadership studies and tourism studies.

The qualitative nature of the study provided rich insight into elite leadership behaviour within the context of the airline industry. This chapter discusses some of the key findings, implications of the research and suggestions for future research. The study yielded some new insights, which are presented together with key findings from the research.

10.1 Key findings and contribution to knowledge

This study has attempted to identify and capture effectively the tacit knowledge of airline leaders; a form of knowledge that is not readily articulated in organizations. By presenting and identifying the tacit knowledge items, the study has converted the
participants’ knowledge about leading effectively in the airline industry from its tacit form into an explicit form for future leaders, revealing knowledge that may not have been otherwise shared. The tacit knowledge inventory presented in the Appendix Seven is a major contribution, as it details the tacit knowledge items obtained from the stories shared by senior executives in the airline industry, and by so doing, provides insight on the behaviours and characteristics of effective airline leaders. It is therefore a useful contribution to knowledge about what can be done in given situations (Sternberg, 2000).

This research study was an empirical investigation of leadership behaviour within its real life context of the airline industry. The research has achieved its aims and objectives which are represented below.

The main research aim was to “Understand the role of tacit knowledge in the leadership behaviour of senior executives in the airline industry.”

The initial objectives of this study were:

- To gain an understanding of leadership;
- To identify an approach to be used for understanding the leadership behaviour of senior executives in the airline industry in this study.

The research objectives were:

- To understand the meaning of leadership in the airline industry;
- To identify the tacit knowledge of senior executives in the airline industry;
• To understand the uses of tacit knowledge of senior executives in the airline industry;
• To capture the tacit knowledge of senior executives in the airline industry;
• To critically evaluate the Tacit Knowledge Framework;
• To develop a Plain Language Tacit Knowledge Inventory for airline leadership.

The study involved engagement with existing theory and exploration of deeper issues that emerged from the data collection and data analysis stages. Data from research provided a very complex web that required unravelling together with accurate, intelligent and informed representation. The social constructivist nature of the study revealed the meanings ascribed to social behaviour, in this case leadership, and in some instances revealed how the personal interacts with others in organizations and the public. The key contributions of the study are the plain language Tacit Knowledge Inventory, thick, rich description of the leadership behaviour of senior executives in the airline industry, and the critique and extension of the Tacit Knowledge Framework (Oakley, 2010).

The Plain Language Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Airline Leaders

The tacit knowledge items identified in the conversations and those presented as tacit knowledge items within the chapters were collated together to present the tacit knowledge inventory for airline leaders. The tacit knowledge items were used as a form of member check, which was positively received by the participants, as it acted as a form of identification and summary of the tacit knowledge identified from the
conversations with the airline leaders. An example of the infographics sent as a form of member check is presented in Appendix Six and the Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Airline Leaders is presented in Appendix Seven. The purpose of the tacit knowledge inventory for airline leaders is to present the items that represent knowledge about leading in the global airline industry from the experience of senior executives in the industry. Tacit knowledge is not expressly articulated. However, by analysing the stories shared by the participants, the tacit knowledge content was extracted. The participants that responded to the member check commented on its succinctness and usefulness of presenting information on leadership behaviour in the airline industry.

Analysis of the Tacit Knowledge Items from the Study

A total of ninety-two tacit knowledge items were collected from the data. The tacit knowledge items form the basis of the preparation of the Tacit Knowledge Inventory. The inventory was constructed by collating the tacit knowledge items, where similar tacit knowledge items were identified and presented as a tacit knowledge item. A summary of all the tacit knowledge items obtained from the study is below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge items from the study</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge items</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge items</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Tacit Knowledge items</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10-4: Total Number of Tacit Knowledge items
The intrapersonal tacit knowledge category with thirty-five tacit knowledge items had the highest number of tacit knowledge items, followed by the interpersonal tacit knowledge category with thirty-three tacit knowledge items. The organizational tacit knowledge category had the lowest of the three categories with twenty-seven tacit knowledge items. This can be understood to mean that the most tacit knowledge was extracted from the intrapersonal tacit knowledge category that relates to managing the self and how those in leadership positions seek challenges and control. This result was surprising, as it was initially assumed that most of the tacit knowledge items would arise from the interpersonal tacit knowledge category, which related to influencing subordinates, as leadership is defined as the process of influencing others to achieve set goals (Hogan et al., 1994).

However, further analysis revealed that leadership arises from the individual, as the individual is the starting point of effective leadership. To this end, it can be expected that intrapersonal tacit knowledge can reveal more to provide an understanding of leadership behaviour, as relates to the individual’s self-leadership, self-awareness and ability to seek challenges and leadership roles. The organizational tacit knowledge category comprised the least tacit knowledge items. This result was surprising as it would have been expected that the leaders in the airline industry, a global industry, affected and susceptible to multiple and wide-ranging factors would have more tacit knowledge items about how to lead within their organization, how to lead their organization, and how to lead the airline industry within the environment in which it operates.
Overview of the Tacit Knowledge Framework for Airline Leaders

The table below presents an overview of the Tacit Knowledge Framework for Airline Leaders, detailing the main levels of the framework: Intrapersonal, Interpersonal and Organizational tacit knowledge, together with the sub-categories and the themes within the sub-categories. The table also identifies the number of tacit knowledge items identified in Chapters seven to nine. This framework is the format with which the Tacit Knowledge Inventory (presented in Appendix Seven) was prepared (Gioia et al., 2013).

Table 10-5: Tacit Knowledge Framework for Airline Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Sub-Category</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>No of Tacit knowledge items identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge</td>
<td>Managing the Self</td>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning from experience</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning from others</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge</td>
<td>Seeking Challenges and Control</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influencing and</td>
<td>Building a team</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

388
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tacit Knowledge</th>
<th>Controlling Others</th>
<th>Delegating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rewarding and punishing followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting and Cooperating with Others</td>
<td>Supporting and encouraging followers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Motivating followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Providing opportunity for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Building team spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrating teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Developing followers to be leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Tacit Knowledge</td>
<td>Communicating with a Diverse Audience</td>
<td>Communicating with a diverse audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communicating with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communicating with shareholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Political intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solving Organizational and Industry Challenges</td>
<td>Managing conflict</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Managing crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Managing business continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 10-1 below provides a diagrammatical representation of Table 10-5.

- **Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge**
  - Managing the Self
    - Self-awareness
    - Learning from experience
    - Learning from others
    - Intuition
  - Seeking Challenges and Control
    - Resilience
    - Resourcefulness

- **Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge**
  - Influencing and Controlling Others
    - Building a team
    - Delegating
    - Rewarding and punishing followers
  - Supporting and Cooperating with Others
    - Supporting and encouraging followers
    - Motivating followers
    - Providing opportunity for development
    - Integrating teams
    - Building team spirit
    - Accessibility
    - Developing followers to be leaders
Figure 10.1: Diagrammatic Representation of Tacit Knowledge Framework for Airline Leaders
Rationale for the Tacit Knowledge Inventory and the Plain Language Approach

The tacit knowledge inventory is similar to that used by Sternberg (2000) to present the tacit knowledge items obtained from interviews with military leaders. The inventory was constructed by collating the tacit knowledge items, where similar tacit knowledge items were identified and presented as a tacit knowledge item. This approach condensed the tacit knowledge items obtained from the study and reduced repetitiveness in the tacit knowledge items presented. As discussed in chapter four, forms of interpretation are subjective and therefore revisable. However, the important factor in the communication of a research study is the justification by practical reasoning of the particular interpretation. This explains the choice to communicate the interpretation of the results of the study in plain language, in a way that might be accessible and useful to practitioners. The presentation of the results of the study in this way also provides a distinct break to the way results are normally presented. This form of rhetoric also provides a challenge to researchers to innovatively present results from their research.

The plain language approach relates to the rhetoric used in this study. Plain language refers to the clear, direct and simple presentation of the findings from the study, using logical and short sentences. The use of the tacit knowledge items boxes is an example of the plain language approach. The plain language approach is useful to communicate clearly with practitioners from the airline industry, and also to enable readers to understand the results from the study and use these results to meet their needs. Whilst plain language has been criticized for meaning the shortening of text and presenting communication in a simplistic manner, simple does not mean simplistic but rather means that information is presented in as clear and accurate a
manner as possible. In this way, plain language improves accuracy, precision and clarity of the writer. While this is different to how reporting of results is done in academia, the boxes have been used in addition to, and not instead of, the normal academic presentation of the findings and results from the study (Garner, 2013; Mazur, 2002; Balmford, 2002).

The tacit knowledge inventory reveals the varied tacit knowledge obtained from the stories shared by airline leaders. This variety is also an indication of the “personal relevance of tacit knowledge” (Sternberg, 2000:201). It is a useful summary of the findings from the study, as the inventory reveals some of the complexities inherent in and challenges of leading in the airline industry. This is because of the multi-faceted nature of the industry and the requirement for those in leadership positions to be able to possess a suite of skills that enable them to lead effectively. These suites of skills include the ability to be a self-leader, the ability to effectively lead subordinates and the ability to communicate with a diverse audience, which comprises different stakeholders with differing needs. It also reveals the need for airline leaders to be able to manage shareholders, who in effect are the owners of the organization.

Further, leaders have to effectively develop subordinates to be leaders and guide the organization to perform exceptionally. In some cases, airline leaders also have to be able to lead the industry to make changes in the operating environment that affect organizations in the industry. Thus, the role of senior executives in the industry includes the leadership of the self, leadership of subordinates, leadership of other stakeholders and leadership of the organization, as well as the leadership of the industry. The plain language format and the categorisation and themes in the Tacit
Knowledge Inventory present the results from the study in a useful and accessible way; and in this way is an innovative way to communicate the research findings with practitioners.

**Tacit knowledge varied according to the level of leadership**

Although the research was focused on senior management in the airline industry, some participants were more experienced senior executives than others. While all the participants in the study had been involved in the senior level strategic level decision-making of the organization, their levels of experience affected the issues they considered as pertinent and also the composition of the tacit knowledge items identified in the conversations. More experienced leaders shared their experiences about formulating and implementing the vision for the organization and managing organizational change, as well as working with other leaders in the airline industry to actualise change in the industry.

The focus of the experiences shared by less experienced leaders tended to relate to subordinates. They shared their experiences of communicating the strategic goals of the organization with subordinates, directing and supervising subordinates and monitoring their performance. The observation confirms Sternberg’s (2000) and DeChurch et al.’s (2010) findings on leadership behaviour according to the level of a leader's experience and position in the organization. The findings also reveal some insights into the changing nature of responsibilities as individuals moved from middle to senior management. Furthermore, they perhaps revealed the need for an adjustment phase or transition phase for new senior executives, as they come to grips with their changing responsibilities.
Tacit knowledge varied according to the geographical location of the airline organizations

Leaders in airline industries in developing economies, such as Africa, shared more about their experiences in managing their employees, customers and politicians, and the importance of building relationships and working with others. This perhaps reflected the nature of the environment in which the leaders operated. In emerging markets, such as Asia and Latin America, the focus of the conversations included employees, but also extended to the business model required for the industry in the Middle East. In Europe and the United States, with more mature airline operating environments, it appeared that the focus was more on the working with the right business model, lobbying the government and aviation organizations to influence legislation, for example on the expansion of runways and on taxation.

Tacit knowledge items shared varied according to the size of the airlines

In addition, as expected, the leaders of smaller, regional airlines appeared to have a lower power distance to employees. Additionally, they shared from their experience of interactions with staff.

Rich, thick description

The study contributed to the deeper understanding of leadership behaviour of senior executives in the airline industry. This research has spanned across cultural contexts to present an understanding of leadership behaviour of senior executives in the global airline industry. In this way, the study contributes to the extension of leadership studies beyond a Western context, and thus, presents a holistic view of leadership
behaviour. In addition, the traditional focus of leadership studies has been as a relationship between leaders and followers, but this research extends this to include an understanding of leadership behaviour in the relationships of leaders with other stakeholders. The study has not provided a new theory on leadership behaviour, but this was not one of the aims of the study. Rather, it sought to identify an approach to understanding leadership behaviour in a dynamic and complex environment, such as the airline industry, and identified the practical intelligence approach for this study. In this way, it extended the application of the practical intelligence approach and tested its suitability to understanding leadership behaviour (Avolio et al., 2009).

Using the Tacit Knowledge Framework, the study has presented rich data and insight into elite leadership behaviour within the airline industry. The rich data was possible to be gathered due to the rare level of access for this study, the context of the airline industry and the nature of the interviews, in a conversational format, which the participants commented on positively. The study is situated within an under-researched context in leadership studies, and will contribute to the academic debate environment on context-based leadership research. It also provides opportunities for other researchers to investigate future research opportunities regarding the leadership of airlines and the wider aviation industry. The following key findings are presented to elucidate this point.

**Importance of political intelligence to effective airline leadership**

Political intelligence is a part of social intelligence, and is associated with the ability to relate with government, understand political environment and the effects of
political decisions on the airline industry. Political intelligence also refers to the ability to use relationships to influence political decisions. The decisions of governments and states have a significant impact on the airline industry, as for example, the imposition of airline passenger duty, carbon tax, etc. Thus, political intelligence is important for leaders, particularly in the airline industry, who have to deal with destinations, as sensitive political situations may affect the destinations and business of the airline organization.

The second highest number of tacit knowledge items was in the ‘political intelligence’ sub-category, with nine tacit knowledge items. The ‘political intelligence’ subcategory was not in the preliminary Tacit Knowledge Framework, but arose from the results of the study and contributed to the expansion of the framework.

**Lack of philosophic intelligence**

Many of the participants referred to themselves and appeared to view the airline industry solely from the perspective of their organization, without consideration for the other organizations in the industry and the global challenges the airline industry faces, as for example, environmental and business sustainability. The focus of airline leaders appeared to be on profitability and the performance of employees, but did not extend to other issues that the industry has to deal with, such as environmental sustainability and security threats, as well as the relationship of the airline industry with other industries in the global economy.
This absence of a comprehensive world-view about the airline industry and a holistic view of the position of the airline organization as part of an industry, as well as a part of a bigger, wider global socio-economic environment is revealing; and is a key finding from the study. Most of the participants appeared to speak about their organization and what they had done in the organization. Very little was discussed about the industry and how the industry affects and is affected by other industries.

A theme that did not emerge from the study was the leader’s relationships with their competitors, or how they led their organizations to effectively understand competitors and the competitors’ strategies, as well as negotiate their role in the industry. The leadership style appeared to be very reactive, that is, reacting to events and instances, instead of shaping the environment. In this way, it appears that many airline leaders are able to modify their behaviour and adapt to their environment, but do not shape the environment.

In addition, another theme that was expected, but not collected from the data was on leadership behaviour to enable airlines to become learning organizations. Especially where the nature of the environment is dynamic, it appeared that there was little to no recognition of formal leadership training and development. Rather, learning appeared to be more informal, from mentors and other individuals in the organization. Oliver pointed this out in his comment on airline leaders as old boys grown through an organization, reflecting the male nature of leadership in the industry and the type of individuals that rose to be airline leaders, namely those that had been grown through the organization and had spent significant amounts, if not all of their working careers, in the airline industry. This observation was also shared by Carlos, who commented...
on the nature of airline leaders to come from people that had worked within the organization and therefore reflected the insular nature of the industry. Carlos further mentioned that this was slowly changing as some airline organizations recognise the value of external specialists to shape the vision and improve the performance of an organization.

There was some sense of evolution of the industry towards the need for alternative business models that are adapted to suit the regional operating environment of the airline organizations. It was expected that airline leaders would proffer solutions to the lack of profitability, as opposed to merely stating the lack of profitability as a challenge of leading in the airline industry. This was in part to attempt to resolve the inherent lack of profit making of airline organizations. However, comments on the future of the industry with regards to the right type of business model to ensure profitability of the industry and future leadership of the industry were very scant. Future research will look into the effects of philosophic intelligence on leadership behaviour.

The reactive nature of airline leadership

There did not appear to be evidence of forward planning from the participants. It appeared that the leadership behaviour of airline leaders was reactive to the changes in the environment. This may be due to the fast-paced nature of the industry, where rigid forward planning may limit the ability of the airline organization to respond to rapid change. Yet, this places the industry in reactive mode, rather than a proactive
mode and may have implications for the effectiveness of leadership to shape the airline industry (Den Hartog and Dickson, 2004).

**The importance of communication**

Another key finding was on the importance of communication. Leadership refers to influencing other people to achieve set goals and objectives. The process of influencing requires for the goals, objectives and implementation strategies to be transferred to other individuals. This requires effective communication. Closely related to the ability to adapt to the environment, communication also has to be adapted to suit the audience at hand, as the same message might have to be shared with different stakeholders in different ways, to ensure that they understand and that they are able to identify with the reason for the communication. In addition, the findings revealed the shift in view from a leader as an individual with leadership ability, to leadership as a process shared with others through collaboration. It also confirmed the recursive nature of leadership behaviour (Hunter et al., 2007; Avolio, 2007; Sims, 2010; Souba, 2007).

**Significant representation of men**

Eighty-five per cent of the participants in this study were male. This reflects the general ratio of male to female senior leaders in the Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) 100 and FTSE 250 companies. In addition, the language used in the study also related to terms attributed to men for example, Oliver’s comment about the sexy nature of planes, and the use of words such as toolkit and toolbox. The comments made by women were also different from those from men. The responses provided by
the women in the study (Abi, Allegra and Imogen) tended to focus more on their relationships, working with others and how they dealt with their passions, emotions and other cultures, displaying typical female characteristics of leadership. Interestingly, the women in this study also tended to display typical male characteristics of dominance, resilience, ambition and assertiveness; and some evidence of contemplating the ramifications of leadership decisions, as it affects a broader audience. In some ways, this is linked to how men view problems and issues, through a narrow focus, whereas women are typically able to assess situations and approach a decision from a more germane perspective (Eagly and Carli, 2004).

The Practical Intelligence approach revisited

Practical intelligence refers to the ability to solve everyday problems by using knowledge gained from experience to select, adapt to and shape environments (Sternberg, 2008; Sternberg, 2000). It “requires the leader to employ a high level of cognitive, behavioural and moral complexity; it focuses on changing the self as paramount to changing others and the system.” (Crossan et al., 2008: 575). The Tacit Knowledge Framework enabled the past behaviour of leaders to be analysed according to whether it led to their modification of the environment, through the themes in the Tacit Knowledge Framework that include self-awareness, reflection, learning from experience, political intelligence, interacting with shareholders, changing and managing business continuity.

The three key aspects of the practical intelligence framework are connected. Firstly, selecting the environment refers to an individual’s ability to choose the type of
environment s/he decides to be in. The individual’s self-knowledge of interests, passions and motivations contribute towards this decision to select a particular environment, and not another one. Once within the environment, the individual can seek to ensure a better sense of fit with the environment by adapting to the environment. Where the environment is a dynamic and complex one like the airline industry, the ability to understand the changes to the environment through gathering important information, working with others to ensure that communication is not only top-down, but also multi-way; down-up: to include accessing information from subordinates, sideways: communicating effectively with other colleagues, and down-up, from the leader to shareholders who are key decision makers regarding the leader’s performance. The ability of a leader to modify behaviour to adapt to the environment becomes an important leadership quality. In addition, by motivating, training and mentoring employees the leader can also prepare them to adapt to the changing environment.

Further, a practically intelligent leader may be able to shape the environment, which in this case can refer to shaping the organization, where the organization adapts together with the leader to fit the changing environment, as for example adopting new technologies. Extending this, the leader may also be able to lead within the industry to shape the environment of the airline industry, as Carlos shared regarding his lobbying of the United Kingdom government together with other senior executives in the airline industry. Also Seth shared information about his role in the management of the volcanic ash crisis in Europe.

However, the practical intelligence approach does not posit that the leaders should be
able to select, adapt to and shape their environment, but rather it is the ability they have to decide which of the three actions are necessary and the ability to lead, themselves and perhaps others, towards achieving the objectives of selecting, adapting to, shaping or even leaving the environment. Contrary to selecting to work in an environment, an individual may select *not* to work in an environment and leave it when it no longer fits, as shared by Imran, Seth and Fitz, with their decisions to leave the organizations when the environment did not fit. Where a leader chooses to leave, it raises another question. Is it a sense of failure or is it pragmatically, a sign of strength, knowing when to leave, where the individual is no longer able to adapt to or shape the particular environment and decides to select another environment? This can be the subject of future studies, i.e. what guides the selection and de-selection of an environment of airline leaders, particularly as there are different types of airline organizations with different business models.

**Selecting the environment**

Interestingly, every participant in this study referred to his or her love and passion for working in the organization, and it appeared that they actively selected to work in the airline industry as it suited their interests. They shared that they enjoyed its uniqueness, dynamism and that it remained fast-paced, was fun, and provided them with the opportunity to meet people from all over the world.

They also shared the challenge of profitability, as the airline industry was inherently unprofitable and highlighted this as a need for a new form of leadership that is able to lead the airline industry to be profit making. Two participants, Oliver and Xavier shared the need for the traditional priority of airline leaders on increasing
destinations, which they stated should be changed towards a focus on increasing profits, as the airline industry is not as Xavier said “apologetic about making profits”. Closely linked to this need for a new form of leadership was the identification of the fact that the industry tended to recruit senior executives from within the organization, and in this way was insular regarding some of the challenges of working in the industry.

Modifying or shaping the environment

Some individuals are able to modify, shape or adapt to their inner environment that is within the self, through self-awareness, reflection and learning from mistakes or the environment. However, the important point is how the knowledge is translated into behaviour that affects the outer environment, which the practical intelligence approach referred to as the organization. However, that conceptualisation of the environment is insufficient, as just as leadership does not occur in a vacuum, organizations do not exist in a vacuum, but exist within the context of an industry. Thus, practical intelligence should also refer to leadership within the organization and leadership of organizations within the industry, that is, how leaders are able to modify, adapt to and shape their environment, where environment in this case also refers to the industry.

Adapting to the environment

The global nature of the industry presented some challenges for leaders, given that many factors impact on the airline industry, which is succinctly captured in Allegra’s comment presented below:
Allegra: “... sometimes you have the best intentions, the best people that are able to do it, but you look back and think how come I didn't achieve or meet what I wanted, or the goals I wanted to meet. And then you realise that perhaps it's because of other things in the environment, but then that's also what I want to understand. Like what you've said now, what kind of environment are you operating in, and how does that limit or reflect on your ability to meet the goals you have.”

This study has considered the environment to comprise the organization and the industry, and the final category of the Tacit Knowledge Framework was amended to incorporate the environment to include the industry and the stakeholders that exist in the industry, an important consideration for an industry such as the airline industry, which has multiple stakeholders with sometimes conflicting interests.

The practical intelligence approach provides insights into tacit knowledge that has been applied to solve practical problems within the organization. However, the Tacit Knowledge Framework does not capture all the practical intelligence of leaders, as the framework only consists of the ability of leaders to learn from experience and to apply their learning to solve problems. Thus, it can be concluded that the Tacit Knowledge Framework provides some understanding of Practical Intelligence and the Practical Intelligence approach provides a way to understand leadership behaviour. However, the Tacit Knowledge Framework does not reveal all of the practical intelligence, as practical intelligence comprises tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge that is knowledge gained from others. In addition, the practical intelligence approach is a way to understand leadership, but does not provide all of the information on leadership behaviour.
Knowledge is important for effective leadership. However, knowledge is not enough. It is in the understanding of the knowledge and the appropriate application of such knowledge to the context that is important. In this way, the appropriate application of knowledge is dependent on tacit knowledge, which may be acquired through an individual’s experience or observation. Tacit knowledge is not static, but is modified based on experience. It also is dependent on the context within which it is acquired, and also how it is to be applied to leadership (Spaeth Jr, 1999; Marchant and Robinson, 1999).

Critique and Extension of the Tacit Knowledge Framework

A detailed literature review of leadership theories and approaches to understanding leadership revealed Sternberg’s practical intelligence approach to understanding leadership behaviour, which posits that tacit knowledge is a core component of practical intelligence, and as such, identifying the tacit knowledge of leaders signals the practical intelligence of leaders. The use of the Tacit Knowledge Framework to analyse leadership behaviour allows the research questions to be answered, as it sought to identify the tacit knowledge that influenced the intra-personal, inter-personal and organizational levels of leadership behaviour. The Tacit Knowledge Framework has been used in previous context-based studies of leadership behaviour and is useful in dynamic environments (Crossan et al., 2008; Sternberg, 2000).

Sternberg’s approach was chosen, as it has been applied in other contexts, such as the military and sales management. It was decided that it will prove useful to apply it to
the context of the airline industry. In addition, the literature review revealed an increasing work in research on the use of tacit knowledge to understand leadership behaviour, and so this research appeared to be a timely contribution to the debate environment. For this study, the Tacit Knowledge Framework guided the research design and was a useful instrument in the formulation of the conversation guide for the collection of data. It was further useful in managing the large amount of data collected.

The Tacit Knowledge Framework enabled the data to be organised according to the categories of the Tacit Knowledge Framework. However, while the general categories of the Tacit Knowledge Framework were useful in the initial organization of the data, the existing themes in the framework were insufficient to organise the data collected in the study. As such, new themes had to be introduced to the categories, to ensure that the data was not forced to fit pre-existing themes, and to provide accurate representation of the data collected. In this way, the Tacit Knowledge Framework proved to be flexible, as while the categories are fixed, the composition of the themes within the categories was allowed to be tailored to the context of the study. This is an advantage of the Tacit Knowledge Framework. Therefore, this research has contributed to the extension and deepening of Sternberg’s Tacit Knowledge Framework.

A question that arose was the extent to which identifying tacit knowledge and using the Tacit Knowledge Framework provided an understanding of the practical intelligence of leaders, and contributed to the understanding of leadership behaviour. The tacit knowledge of airline leaders did contribute to an understanding of the
reasons behind the actions of leaders. It provided insight into the self, as a starting point to understand the inner minds of leaders and to understand their self-leadership. Identifying the tacit knowledge of airline leaders also revealed a rationale behind some past leadership decisions and elucidated what was learnt from these experiences. In this way, it was revealed whether new tacit knowledge was acquired or existing tacit knowledge was confirmed or modified through the experience. The participants appeared to be open and provided rich examples of their leadership behaviour in the airline industry, which contributed to a deeper understanding. In this way, the Tacit Knowledge Framework was useful in understanding leadership behaviour.

Tacit knowledge guides leadership behaviour. The Tacit Knowledge Framework has enabled the presentation of a holistic perspective of leadership, as it distils the data into three main categories. These include intrapersonal tacit knowledge, that is, the self, interpersonal tacit knowledge, relationship with subordinates, and organizational tacit knowledge, where the relationship with other stakeholders such as shareholders, competitors and customers were presented, together with the tacit knowledge on how to lead the organization, within the environment in which it operates. Thus, the Tacit Knowledge Framework enabled a multi-level perspective of leadership to be appreciated, top-down, down-up, sideways, and inward looking (Sternberg and Horvath, 1999; Wagner et al., 1999).

Tacit knowledge may be inadequate to understand leadership behaviour, because tacit knowledge is formed by the association of events, and correlation may be confused with causation, where an association may be erroneously understood. In addition,
tacit knowledge may be insufficient in leadership behaviour, because past application may be recalled incorrectly, or without the deeper and full understanding of all the factors that may have influenced the outcome of a past decision. The same criticism may be applied to explicit knowledge, where the knowledge may be incorrectly utilised to solve problems, or insufficient for the problem at hand. In this regard, tacit knowledge may be a useful way to plough through the dark.

The Tacit Knowledge Framework, presented by Sternberg in his academic research into tacit knowledge in the work place, contributed to the increase in tacit knowledge research and its transition into applied social science (Sternberg et al., 1995). However, studies of tacit knowledge are not robust in the literature on leadership studies. Yet, tacit knowledge is embedded in organizations, in the routines within which work is enacted, and is also applied in business strategy for organizations’ competitiveness in the workplace. However, this embedded knowledge requires deeper understanding; how are we able to identify tacit knowledge, and understand its contributions to effective leadership? The Tacit Knowledge Framework also provides a structure for managing the data from the conversations and for presenting the tacit knowledge of airline leaders. In this way, the framework was useful as an overview of the different levels of knowledge that a leader should have, and from the stories shared, detailed examples of how such knowledge is enacted in practice. In addition, because tacit knowledge is acquired and modified through trial and error, experienced executives in the airline industry will have had to acquire different kinds of tacit knowledge, including tacit knowledge about how to lead others (Argyris, 1999; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Kogut and Zander, 1992; Sternberg et al. 2000; Horvath et al., 1994).
The Tacit Knowledge Framework is useful to understanding the behaviour of airline leaders, because in rapidly changing environments, there is an increased tendency for leaders to use “implicit modes of learning and informal means of acquiring knowledge”. Therefore, the Tacit Knowledge Framework is important as a tool for developing future airline leaders (Hedlund et al., 1998:12).

Marchant and Robinson (2009) suggest that rare situations provide better opportunities for acquiring tacit knowledge than common situations. However, while the acquisition of tacit knowledge in unusual situations are more memorable; the usual and more common situations provide opportunity for the leader to test and evaluate their tacit knowledge, and revise their tacit knowledge; whereas unusual situations may not provide the same amount of opportunities to test and revise tacit knowledge.

Agyris (2009) argues that tacit knowledge is fundamental to a leader’s ability to enable an organization to achieve its objectives through the implementation, from vision to action, where actions are guided by tacit knowledge. That is, the actions that become routine are based on the tacit knowledge of the leaders, and identifying this tacit knowledge reveals a lot about leadership behaviour, because this is what is used in the organization, as opposed to what is merely stated. This research has utilised the Tacit Knowledge Framework to identify the tacit knowledge of airline leaders. However, while it has contributed to deeper understandings of leadership behaviour and also provided rich data of examples of how tacit knowledge is acquired and may be applied, the framework is not without its criticisms.
The findings presented by the Tacit Knowledge Framework were similar to other research on the behaviours and characteristics of leaders. This confirms the validity of the framework in understanding leadership behaviour. However, tacit knowledge is only useful when it is correctly applied, so that it can contribute to leadership effectiveness. Where wrongly applied, it can lead to the failure of leadership. In this way, practical intelligence means knowing when and how to apply tacit knowledge to suit the situation and context at hand, which this research, through the detailed examples and tacit knowledge items, has sought to identify in the case of airline leaders and make this knowledge explicit. It is hoped that this will contribute in some way to effective leadership behaviour in the airline industry.

This work has extended the practical intelligence approach to the field of airline leadership. It has also extended and deepened the Tacit Knowledge Framework. It has also contributed the Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Airline Leaders as a tool for improving organizational learning and leader development.

10.2 Suggestions for future research

The airline industry provides a fascinating research environment to interrogate different facets of the industry, for leadership selection and leadership development. The Tacit Knowledge Framework focuses on the behaviour of airline leaders and not on their effectiveness. The senior position of the participants may be some indication of their effectiveness. However, the research was not concerned about measuring leadership effectiveness, but about understanding leadership behaviour given that
leadership effectiveness is a subjective term that might be appraised differently by different stakeholders. Yet, leadership effectiveness means that the leader is able to lead the organization to achieve its objectives. Future research can contribute to appraising the effectiveness of airline leaders.

Further work can also attempt to understand the leadership behaviour amongst a larger sample of airline leaders. It will be interesting to conduct a long-term research into tacit knowledge acquisition and management in the airline industry by engaging with new joiners into the industry, identifying their tacit knowledge and tracing how this changes, evolves, over the course of their career in the airline industry. It will also be interesting to understand the tacit knowledge of those in charge of selecting and promoting airline leaders, to better understand how airline leaders are selected.

It would be interesting to extend the focus on leaders to the context of the aviation industry, and to better understand the leadership behaviour of leaders of other players in the industry, including airline leaders, policy makers, leaders in aircraft manufacturing organizations and other aviation bodies. While the focus is to be broadened to include others from the aviation industry, the focus will also be narrowed to the African aviation industry. The African aviation industry presents many opportunities for research, and future research can seek to understand how the leaders of the aviation industry in Africa seek to position aviation in a developing continent, such as Africa. Research can also draw lessons from the experiences of aviation leaders in emerging economies, such as India and Latin America that may be valuable to aviation leaders in Africa.
Several questions also emerged from the study: what type of person chooses to work in the airline industry? What type of person decides to stay? How is the top management team of airline organizations comprised? Who do airline leaders have in their inner circle of advisers? How do technical airline staff, for example pilots and engineers who are senior executives in the airline industry, differ from management staff? Surprisingly, and although this was not reported as one of the findings from this study, none of the participants in this study had been a technical staff with an airline. Most had started their careers in the industry as trainees and ticket sellers. It will be interesting to compare the tacit knowledge of technical staff in senior management positions with those of non-technical staff, who have more managerial training. Importantly, it will be useful to research how tacit knowledge influences the performance of airline leaders.

Limitations of the research

While the thesis has attempted to address some of the gaps identified in leadership studies and tourism studies, by researching the leadership behaviour of senior executives in the context of the global airline industry, several limitations have been identified. One of this is the sample size of the research study. Access to senior executives in the airline industry was dependent upon the snowballing effect and the use of personal networks. All the individuals who were suggested and introduced to the researcher were participants in this study. Thus, the study was limited in the number of individuals that were accessible to the researcher. Another limitation of the research was the decision to fuse the results from the autobiographical writings and the conversations held with participants. The data could have been presented in two
stages, where the results of the autobiographical writings are presented before the
results from the conversations. While the fusion provided a means to present the
results from the data collectively, a two-staged approach would have provided a
clearer distinction between the data from the two sources.

However, one of the successes of the study has been the opportunity to have
participants in airlines that operate in every continent of the world, thus, enabling the
research to be able to represent the global airline industry. In this way, the research
has also contributed to leadership studies by expanding the research beyond Europe
and the United States. Another limitation is the fact that the experiences of the leaders
were narrated retrospectively, and as such, benefit from hindsight, which will
undoubtedly influence the “stories of leadership”, shared with the researcher.
Perhaps, the participants shared with the researcher what they thought the researcher
would like to hear, or only shared parts of the experiences, thus, painting an
incomplete picture of their experiences. However, the research design attempted to
mitigate this by not being explicit about the focus on tacit knowledge in the study,
and by not sharing the detailed conversation guide with the participants prior to the
study. In this way, it is hoped that the tacit knowledge items identified reveal some
truths about the leadership behaviour of the participants.

10.3 Concluding remarks

Understanding the leadership behaviour of airline leaders provides useful tools for
achieving and enhancing the effectiveness of airline organizations. In addition, the
assessment and understanding of leadership behaviour provides information that may
be useful in the recruitment and selection process. It can also contribute to the identification of future leadership development needs. Further, the assessment of effective leadership behaviour provides useful lessons for long-term career management and skills development (Kroeck et al., 2004).

This study could be applied to any industry as the findings of the study are relevant to understanding leadership behaviour in other dynamic and complex environments, such as the financial services industry. It is anticipated that the research findings and the tacit knowledge inventory will be relevant to airline leaders, especially those in middle management in the airline industry who want to be promoted to senior management, as well as senior management who want to learn from other colleagues. The findings can also be relevant to other individuals interested in understanding leadership behaviour in the airline industry.

The study has analysed leadership behaviour in the airline industry in an innovative and creative way by analysing the autobiographical writings of leaders, designing the research instrument in the form of conversations and presenting the member check to participants in the form of infographics. This work has contributed to leadership studies and tourism studies. Specifically, it contributes to aviation studies, having identified the tacit knowledge of airline leaders and having presented these in an accessible format for airline leaders. The study presents rich data, which has been distilled to illuminate the leadership behaviour of airline leaders, and in this way provides an understanding of the leadership behaviour of senior executives in the global airline industry.
Post-Script

Through the struggle, the skies⁴

Reflections on my research journey

“Real knowledge, like everything else of the highest value, is not to be obtained easily. It must be worked for, studied for, thought for, and, more than all, it must be prayed for.”

– Thomas Arnold

Introduction

This chapter is a reflection on my PhD journey. It provides explanations for the decisions I made along the way, including the reasons for deciding to do a PhD, choice of institution and research topic. My journey has not been a smooth one, and I touch on my experience of ill health during this journey: how I never thought I would be able to read or write again, and therefore, my joy and satisfaction at being able to re-enrol for, and subsequently passing the upgrade to be confirmed on the PhD programme. I share some of my experiences on the data collection phase and my reflections following the preparation and submission of this thesis. I have broken the chapter into three phases: phase 1 refers to the reasons for doing this PhD, and the initial stages of the research journey; phase 2 refers to my experiences of ill health during the PhD; and phase 3 refers to the period following my re-registration on the

⁴ ‘Through the struggle, the skies’ (Par Ardua Ad Astra) is the Royal Air Force Motto.
PhD programme. The phases are meant to represent a linear time-series of my journey, but they are not of equal length in terms of duration.

Phase 1: Decision to enrol for a PhD programme

I enjoy reading, and I am deeply curious about the phenomena I experience in the world around me. These qualities in particular are what attracted me to the possibility of an academic research project whilst I was at the University of Keele (the institution from where I obtained my first degree in Business Economics). I had just started my final year at Keele and I was beginning to consider the next steps in my career. I must state that I had undertaken a summer internship with KPMG in London in the summer, following the end of my second year, and had been offered a full-time position as an associate with KPMG, to start at the end of my final year.

So I found myself wanting to do a PhD, yet armed with an unconditional offer of employment in a Big Four Accountancy firm in London. I shared this dilemma with one of my lecturers, who was a chartered accountant and had decided to combine her career as an accountant with an academic role as a lecturer at university. She advised that I should take the opportunity to train as a chartered accountant with KPMG and also gain valuable work experience. She said that if after I had started working with KPMG the desire to do a PhD remained, then at least, I would have tried out an alternative, would have experience of working in the industry, and be convinced of my desire to do a PhD.

I took her advice, because although she did not have a PhD, she had experience from both of the worlds I was considering, as an accountant and also as a lecturer at a
university. Therefore, she was in a good position to compare the two. I worked at KPMG as an associate on projects relating to infrastructure, government and healthcare. It was a condition of my employment that I qualify as a chartered accountant and the role incorporated a training contract with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland. Therefore, during my time, I also studied and took my Chartered Accountancy examinations, where I qualified with first time passes. The three years with KPMG passed by quickly and started on a high note, but I remember feeling unfulfilled and writing down at the beginning of each of the years from 2006 to 2009, my New Year resolution to enrol for a PhD programme. The end of my training contract with KPMG therefore seemed like a good time to reconsider a return to academic study.

However, it was a confusing time, one during which I decided to speak with a career coach, so as to discuss my career motivations, my personal characteristics and the type of organizations that will fit the most with these characteristics, so I could be fulfilled. I put the confidence to decide to leave KPMG down to my conversation with the career coach. She helped me weigh out each of the options and what I wanted to do in life, and recommended that I follow my dreams. As I had been away from the academic world for a few years, I decided to enrol in a Master’s programme to re-acclimatize to the academic world and also to test my readiness to embark on a three to four year long research journey. The Master’s degree was an opportunity to understand the current debates in the field of development studies, a key research interest of mine, and to explore possible research projects for my PhD.
At this juncture, I must say that I had already decided on a PhD in Tourism studies, as I enjoy travelling, and from my travel experiences, I was interested in understanding the role of tourism as a tool for development. My Master’s in globalisation and development studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, at the University of London (“SOAS”) provided the foundation for my research journey. It confirmed my decision to situate my research in tourism studies, and also provided me with knowledge of the globalisation phenomenon, a phenomenon, which hitherto I had observed, but had lacked the knowledge to critically analyse and explain.

During my time at SOAS, I started to look for a suitable supervisor and institution for my PhD research project. After a few months of contacting potential supervisors, I decided to apply to the University of Surrey and the University of Oxford. I was accepted for a PhD programme by both institutions, and this presented a dilemma of choosing where to go. I was so confused and decided to reach out to members of the tourism industry to try to gain some understanding of the institution they thought was better suited for my research project. I undertook this mini-research by searching online for the top tourism consultancies in the world, reviewing the profile of the directors and sending an introductory email to two directors, who had piqued my interest: they were female, had undertaken a Master’s programme in a development related subject and worked in the tourism industry. I must say at this point that when I reflect on this decision, I am surprised at my audacity. I can only say that I got the confidence to do so from my experience of looking for supervisors for my research project, and in fact, my email to the two directors was a tailored version of the one I had sent to potential supervisors.
The email set forward my dilemma and asked for their suggestions. I was pleasantly surprised to receive a reply from one of the directors I contacted. Olivia Ruggles-Brise took the time to reply to my email and shared that the University of Surrey was considered a top institution for tourism research and she was inclined to recommend this. I had to make the decision myself, but her email provided me with a valuable perspective, and this bore very strongly on my decision to enrol at the University of Surrey. I also spoke to my proposed supervisor, Professor Graham Miller, about my dilemma, and I was reassured that the University of Surrey under his supervision, was the right place for me, following his willingness to listen to me and his spending time advising me on how I needed to approach the different choices available.

In the first month of my PhD programme, I was invited to be an associate of the Nigeria Leadership Initiative (NLI), a “platform for credible, accomplished and uniquely patriotic Nigerians to develop and express values-based leadership skills with the aim of assuming a transformative role in the continuous development of Nigeria” (NLI, 2012). Upon my return from the initial associates’ seminar, Professor John Tribe, one of my supervisors, suggested a focus on leadership in the tourism industry, as a way to merge my personal characteristics and interests with my research project. This would also fill a gap in the literature on tourism studies. Therefore, the suggestion was a wise and timely one, and I am grateful for it.

Thus began my research journey into leadership in the tourism industry, and I was in the process of reviewing the literature on leadership and tourism to identify gaps and narrow down my focus when I became ill.
Phase 2: Hiatus

In life, one experiences setbacks, but life is such that we are able to bounce back quickly, due to previous experiences of setbacks. When I fell ill, I had no prior experience with which to compare it, and I had no one in my family or friendship circle that had experienced anything close to my illness. I will never forget the experience of being in an ambulance, taken to the stroke unit at the hospital, and discovering that I was unable to walk, talk, read or write. It was a time of great uncertainty and confusion, and I had to withdraw from my PhD studies. Again, I thank my second supervisor, Professor Graham Miller, for his support and encouragement at this time. He never made me feel that this was the end, rather he encouraged me to take the time to get better, and always referred to my continuation of the PhD programme following my recovery. This helped to set my mind on the goal of getting better.

The hardest part of the illness was finding myself in a position where I could not read. This had been my life-long hobby and suddenly I was unable to engage in it. I was appointed a speech therapist, an occupational therapist and a neurologist who worked very hard to get me on the road to recovery. After some months, I was able to continue my PhD, albeit at a slower pace. I still have some limitations as a result of this experience, but I am also thankful for some of the lessons I learnt. The most important lesson I learnt during this period was about the fragility of the human body. It is a complex machine, made up of so many parts, which increase the likelihood of things going wrong. It made me amazed that if so much can go wrong, it is a wonder it does not happen more often. This deep appreciation for the human body
corresponds to my appreciation for the airline industry; I draw many similarities between the human body and the airline industry, the fact that both are complex machines.

Phase 3: Research into the airline industry

My decision to focus this research project on the airline industry was due to my experience of air travel in Africa, my understanding that connectivity and access were important for the growth of the African continent, and the desire to understand the behaviour of leaders in the industry. I am fascinated by much of human achievement, not least the ability to design aircraft that are able to carry many people and move from one place to another, in the air. Even after so many years, the desire of man to master the skies, through many years of struggle, spanning from the Greek legend of Icarus to the success of the Wright brothers in building the first aircraft in 1904, to the current, complex airline industry, a century after the first commercial airline flight in 1914, I remain awed by its rich history, dynamism, impact and potential. I was not able to find satisfactory academic literature dedicated to understanding senior executive leadership behaviour in the airline industry, and so I decided to focus on leadership in the airline industry. I was aware that up to this point, I had not worked in the tourism industry, and I knew that such exposure would provide me with a deep understanding of the current issues faced by the industry. It was at this time that an internship opportunity arose at the World Travel and Tourism Council (“WTTC”) and I negotiated with my supervisors and the WTTC, a role as a part-time policy and research analyst. I was responsible for researching on the policy papers issued by the organization and also for the research on the speeches delivered around the world by the CEO, David Scowsill. This experience was invaluable, as it enabled me to be
deeply immersed in the issues facing the tourism industry, in particular the aviation, hospitality and cruise sectors. It was a steep, challenging learning curve, but one that I am grateful for.

While designing my research instrument, I went through a stage of doubt and confusion, trying to figure out the best research instrument to use. I decided on a research instrument that was tailored to my participants, and met with Graham Robinson, a former PhD student at the University of Surrey Business School, to whom I had been introduced following a question I asked at a training session given by Dr Paul Tosey. Graham has been a very helpful guide. He shared his experience of his research on elite leadership with me, and gave me useful pointers on the design of my research instrument; in particular, to have a semi-structured interview labelled as a conversation, in acknowledgment of the time-pressures the participants face, and some reticence they may have regarding participating in a PhD research ‘interview’. This proved to be valuable advice, as following the conversations, participants commented on the style and said that they enjoyed the relatively informal, but structured format. Then came the matter of contact, and I am grateful to my former colleagues at the WTTC for allowing me to use their networks to access the elite leaders that participated in this study.

Conducting the conversations was initially daunting, as I am a young researcher, and these are highly accomplished senior executives. Therefore, I decided to undertake interview training to be better prepared for the conversations. In all the conversations I had, the participants were helpful, generous with their experiences and their time, and in most cases, proffered personal career advice. I am very fortunate. One unique
theme that came through each one of the participants was their resilience, their ability to persevere and to overcome, to go through the struggles and to reach the skies.

I decided to present the information to participants in the form of an information-graphic, and I thank my friend Rotimi Thomas for directing me to the relevant software and programmes that enabled me to do this seamlessly. I had to train myself, and it took some time for me to get to grips with the technology, but the time sacrificed paid off, as participants commented on the creativity and clarity of the communication.

During my PhD programme, I sought to immerse myself in the researcher community. This was especially after I returned following my withdrawal from the university. I lived outside of the university town, and I felt that it was important to meet other people and be a key part of the researcher community at Surrey. I was happy to find that there were opportunities to get involved; again reminding me that sometimes in life, all we need to do is to open our eyes and our ears to see the doors that are open to us. I volunteered to be a member of the organising committee for the Surrey Post-Graduate Researcher conference in 2012 and 2013. This enabled me to meet other researchers outside my discipline and work with them in organizing a university-wide conference. It was a significant time commitment, but I suppose it taught me how to manage my time effectively.

I shared with my supervisors my desire to gain some teaching experience. I was very happy when they were receptive to the idea, and I was appointed a role as associate tutor on an undergraduate course. My experience of teaching revealed another side of
the university to me. I gained an awareness of the work that went into preparing a
teaching syllabus, and the preparation required for effective delivery of lectures and
seminars. I was also able to work with other academics, other than my supervisors,
and this enabled me to form relationships with other members of the department. The
feedback I received from my first semester of teaching was average, and I was very
disappointed. I reflected on this, using the information I had learnt from my literature
review on leadership, choosing to learn from experience and modifying my behaviour
based on the comments received in the feedback. I was given the opportunity to tutor
on two more courses during my PhD, and I was happy when the feedback received
showed an improvement in the students’ evaluation of my teaching. The teaching
experience was deeply rewarding in the sense that I was able to share my knowledge
with my students, but in turn, I learnt so much from them, about myself, about
teaching and also their experiences. It also piqued my interest in a possible career as a
lecturer. I shared these thoughts with my supervisor John Tribe and he suggested to
enrol in the Graduate Certificate of Education (“GCE”) provided by the University of
Surrey. This experience has provided me with even more appreciation for the work of
lecturers, with the opportunity to reflect on my teaching style, and research on how I
can be an effective teacher. My successful completion of the GCE led to an invitation
to co-author a journal article and present the findings of my research at a conference.

Indeed, my time at the University of Surrey has been one of development, learning
and sharing. There has been support and advice provided along the way, from the
careers service to training provided on the researcher development programme. I have
found my time here very fulfilling.
Currently, I am a research fellow on the Africapitalism research project, at the University of Edinburgh’s business school. In this role, I am responsible for project-managing nine other institutions in the United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, Ivory Coast, Kenya and Nigeria, as we research the role of business leaders in the sustainable development of Africa. I am also responsible for managing the activities, strategy and budget of the Sustainable Business Initiative, a centre within the university that is committed to researching and engaging with businesses on how they can sustainably achieve their potential. This has been a steep learning curve, but one I continue to enjoy, solidifying my desire to be an established researcher.

Conclusions: the practically intelligent researcher?

Throughout my research journey, I have sought to learn from others, and I did this by being proactive in selecting my environment, to undertake research following my own research and the advice received from others. The journey has not been a smooth one. There have been setbacks, moments of doubt, frustration and joy. My endurance and my faith in myself have been tested. The journey has required of me a positive mind-set, one that understood that life has its peaks and troughs and requires the ability to adapt to different situations. I tried to do this in my research journey, as shared in the sections above, on how I decided to enrol for my PhD programme at the University of Surrey, my experience of ill-health and the design of the research instrument for this project.

I have tried to share the significant aspects of my research journey in this chapter. In particular, my experience of a setback due to ill-health taught me that life was
transient, and I decided to maximise every day that I experience good health. This appreciation for life is coupled with the importance of following one’s passion. I feel privileged to have met people who have encouraged me to pursue my passion by providing advice, listening and sharing their experiences with me. I am aware of the fact that not everyone is able to pursue his or her passion due to different circumstances, and I remain humbly grateful for this. I am especially thankful to my mother for financially supporting this journey.

My research journey has been long, sometimes painful, but always rewarding. I have shared two aspects of practical intelligence that I have incorporated in my personal journey in this chapter, that of selecting my environment and adapting to it. The third aspect is shaping the environment. I have not yet published any journal articles, due to a decision reached together with my supervisors to wait until after my PhD has been submitted. This decision was to ensure that I completed my PhD on time, and also to allow me write from the findings from my research. I have now begun disseminating my information in the academic world, as I presented a poster and a panel presentation at conferences in 2014, and I have earmarked several proposed journal topics. I am in the process of writing three journal articles on airline leadership, the effect of student feedback on the teaching practice of new teachers, and the role of airline leaders and the airline industry on the sustainable development of Africa.

I take solace in the fact that the journey is not over, it has only just begun and I hope that I am able to shape the academic and professional environment as relates to leadership and tourism studies in the future.
I end this chapter with a quote that has proven important and relevant for my research journey:

“The destination is not the thing; it is the journey that matters. Travel too fast and you miss what you are travelling for”

-Anonymous

Thank you,

Adun Okupe.
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Appendices
Appendix One

Invitation Letter (sent by email attachment)

Adun Okupe CA
PhD Researcher (Tourism), 04MS02
School of Hospitality and Tourism Management
FBEL, University of Surrey
Guildford, GU2 7XH
a.okupe@surrey.ac.uk

Date

Addressee

Dear XXX,

**Leadership Research in the Commercial Airline Industry**

I recently mentioned to you that I was researching into leadership behaviour in the Commercial Airline Industry, and you expressed interest in sharing your experiences of leadership with me, as a part of my Ph.D. research project. This letter is to formally invite you to participate in my research project.
The meeting is expected to be relatively informal, taking the form of a conversation, which will provide an opportunity for you to reflect on, and share your leadership experiences. This research will be helpful to contribute to tourism studies by providing insights into leadership behaviour in the industry, and its findings will also be useful for leadership selection, assessment and development in the industry.

Please note that the conversations will be recorded for analysis of the data. I assure you of confidentiality in your responses and the output will be published anonymously. You have the right to review and edit the conversation transcript before the final version is deposited for analysis. A conversation preparation guide is attached for your reference, and I would be grateful if you can read through this, so you have some more information about the format of the conversation.

I look forward to our meeting at XXX. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by email on a.okupe@surrey.ac.uk.

Again, I would like to thank you for your interest in my Ph.D. research on leadership behaviour at the University of Surrey.

Yours sincerely,

Adun Okupe
Appendix Two

Conversation Guide

Research title: **Understanding the Leadership Behaviour of Senior Executives in the Commercial Airline Industry.**

Research Student: **Adun Okupe**
Supervisors: **Professor John Tribe & Professor Graham Miller**

**Conversation Guide**

The research aims to understand leadership behaviour of individuals in senior management positions who have worked in or are working in the commercial airline industry. It is expected that the conversations should last for at least forty-five minutes and no more than an hour.

The conversation will be a discussion of your experiences as a leader. To prepare for this, please be prepared to share your experiences on:

- What leadership means to you;
- Your experiences of leadership;
- Examples of events or incidents that have shaped your leadership behaviour.

I should be grateful if you could send me a copy of your curriculum vitae at your earliest convenience and before the interview date. The CV will add to the contextual analysis to your experiences.
Appendix Three

Confidentiality Agreement

Adun Okupe
University of Surrey

Research title: Understanding the Leadership Behaviour of Senior Executives in the Commercial Airline Industry

Research Student: Adun Okupe
Supervisors: Professor John Tribe & Professor Graham Miller

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

I agree to participate in the Ph.D. research project “Understanding the Leadership Behaviour of Senior Executives in the Commercial Airline Industry.” I understand the purpose and nature of this study, and I am participating voluntarily. I grant permission for the conversation data to be used in the process of completing a Ph.D. degree, including a thesis and any other future publications. I understand, to ensure confidentiality that my name, and the names of others who I may mention in the interview, will not be referred to in whole within the text of the thesis.

I understand that I will receive no compensation for my participation and I consent to the interview being recorded with the understanding that I may at any time, ask for the recording to be turned off.

Name of Participant:
Signature of Participant:

________________________________________________________________________

Date:

________________________________________________________________________
## Appendix Four

### Interview Guide for Researcher

**Interview Guide**

**Research working title:**
Understanding leadership behaviour in the commercial aviation industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>To warm-up the conversation before the interview proper.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I hope you have been able to read through the confidentiality agreement. Please sign it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Before we begin, do you have any questions about my research study or this interview?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**To gently introduce respondent into the interview and to understand if s/he reflects on leadership.**

**To learn more about the individual’s understanding of the term ‘leadership’**

**To gather examples of incidents that affected the leadership behaviour**

- Is leadership something you think about?
- Tell me what leadership means to you;
- How would you describe your leadership style?
- What would you say are the factors that help you to be an effective leader?
- Can you give me any examples of instances where you were effective as a leader?
- What would you say are the factors that hinder or limit your performance as an effective leader?
- Okay, can you give me examples of instances where you look back now and think you could have taken a different course of action?
- Why so?

**B**

**To understand the context of the airline industry and motivations for working in the industry**

- Can I ask how you came to work in the commercial airline industry?
- Can you tell me more about your experience working in the commercial
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>airline industry?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Why have you stayed this long?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If respondent has left the industry by the time of the interview, ask “why did you leave and when?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are you doing now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is unique about the commercial airline industry?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**D To close the conversation**

- This brings us to the end of this meeting.
- Before we close, do you have any questions or further comments you would like to make?
- I shall be writing up and analysing our conversation, and would like the chance to send this through to you to review, and to see if you have any other comments you would like to include. Are you okay with this?
- Request for referral to other contact who you can invite for the study
- Once again, thank you very much for your time.
Appendix Five

Member Check

Cover Email

Dear XXX,

Thank you very much for your time in 2013, where you shared your experiences of leadership, together with insightful examples of events that have shaped your leadership behaviour. You may recall that I asked for the opportunity to share a summary/findings of our conversation with you, together with findings from the entire data collection phase.

This phase was completed this January, and I have prepared a summary in the form of an info-graphic (see attached - you will need to zoom in to read this).

Guide to the document

a) The first part presents a summary of the data collected, number of airlines, proportion of male participants to female participants;
b) The second part is the summary of our conversation, which I have analyzed according to the following sub-themes:

i. **Intra-personal level** - this includes elements of self-reflection, motivating oneself, pushing oneself to do better, seeking challenges.

ii. **Interpersonal level** - influencing others, this relates to how you interact with your peers, subordinates, assignation of tasks, developing others, rewarding others, communication with others, establishing trust, and getting along with others.
iii. **Organizational level** - this relates to how to do tasks well, get your point across well, knowledge of how to approach tasks within the organization, solving organizational problems, managing organizational change, and protection of your reputation in the industry.

e) The third part provides a summary of responses from all participants in the study. This part is broken into 3 subparts:

1. What effective leadership is;
2. The changing nature of the airline industry;
3. Working in the airline industry.

I should be grateful if you could read through this, and for any comments you may have.

Thank you again for your participation in my research.
Appendix Six

Member Check

Infographic summary of conversation with participant

The infographic was prepared using Piktochart, a web-based infographic application, and sent to all participants as a picture file. A sample is presented overleaf, which has been formatted to be pasted in Microsoft Word.
Understanding the Leadership Behaviour of Senior Executives in the Commercial Airline Industry

Summary of conversations from the study

- 27 airlines represented in the study
- 91% of participants were male
- 9% of participants were female

SUMMARY OF OUR CONVERSATION ON YOUR EXPERIENCES

AT THE INTRA-PERSONAL LEVEL

It is important for a leader to have an unofficial and personal mentor relationship
Someone who has taken an interest in his/her career
And taken the time to explain things
Someone who has taken a risk to promote
Because this allows the leader to have the opportunity to learn
And to bounce off ideas in an unofficial way,
AT THE INTERPERSONAL LEVEL

It is important for a leader to be available to staff
But the leader should not micromanage staff
As this limits the ability of staff to display initiative
And reduces the results from staff
Because people get tired of being micromanaged.

It is important for a leader to be able to work with people in an atypical way and to
Where if you trust your staff then you give them the freedom to use their initiative on the best way
for the company to meet its objectives
For example, sponsoring a team member to play golf and have club membership and lessons as a
way to build relationships with clients
But it is important for targets to be set around the atypical way.

It is important for a leader to be available to staff
But the leader should not micromanage staff
As this limits the ability of staff to display initiative
And reduces the results from staff
Because people get tired of being micromanaged.
AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

At a time of crises or unexpected events, it is important for a leader to communicate with staff what is required of them to do at the time.
Where there are fears that the organization might close
It is important to be open with staff and reassure them so they know where they stand
And are therefore able to concentrate on the job that is required at the time.

It is important for a leader to be reticent and show restraint about expansion
Expansion is good but too fast an expansion of airline routes
Can make a good route to become unprofitable
Because services are oversupplied
And this can lead an airline to get into financial trouble.

It is important for a leader to have cultural sensitivity about his/her environment
And it is important for the leader to navigate such situations tactfully
For example, as regards nepotism, leader will not say no explicitly
But will make the job appear unattractive to the intended employees.
Because with nepotism, the people feel entitled
Have no concept of work and do not take direction well
And they can create difficulties within the organization
Because they think they are superior to other colleagues.
Leadership is not about what the leader can do, but what s/he can get others to do. It is important for a leader to carefully hire for attitude and train for aptitude. For example, for a ticketing sales job, the leader can hire someone with no airline experience but who has had non-easy sales jobs. Because if they are willing to do such roles and have had success, then they will be able to perform well in airline sales. Because you can train a person about the airline business, but you can’t teach a person to have the right attitude. And the right attitude is important in the service industry.

Leadership of leaders is an encouragement role, a teaching role. And it is important for a leader to get to know staff personally. Because if you know your staffs’ lives, you are able to know better what they will respond to. And also know when to push, when to support. Even if it is an investment of your personal time. Because leadership is about knowing your employees.

If you want to acknowledge exceptional work from your staff. It is important to know what their needs are and what stimuli they respond to. So a female manager with children in Accra will respond better to a credit voucher at the supermarket for groceries or a half-week off than to a week’s holiday in the Seychelles. Because if she has kids and family commitment, she is unable to just go away to the Seychelles.
SUMMARY FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH ALL PARTICIPANTS

What leadership means to participants, grouped into 3 levels:
Intra-personal, Interpersonal and Organizational

- Able to stand by tough decisions
- Analytical
- Focused
- Intuitive
- A Risk taker
- Proactive
- Reflective
- Resilient

Intrapersonal

An Effective Leader is

Interpersonal
- Accessible
- Credible
- Passionate
- Able to present complex information in clear, simple messages
- Caring*
- Able to give clear directions
- Reliable
- A Good Listener
- A Good Communicator

Organizational
- A Decision-Maker
- Innovative
- Creative
- Able to synthesise complex information
- Productive
- Strategic
- Keen about the development of others
THE DYNAMIC COMMERCIAL AIRLINE INDUSTRY

- Move from hierarchical to organic environment
- Wide Scope of Change
- Faster Speed of Change
- Greater Need for Information Management

WORKING IN THE COMMERCIAL AIRLINE INDUSTRY

- UNIQUE
- DYNAMIC
- FUN
- FAST-PACED
- INTERESTING
- OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE WORLD
- MEET PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD
- A TRULY GLOBAL INDUSTRY
- FAST-PACED, DYNAMIC NATURE OF THE INDUSTRY MEANS THAT LEADERSHIP IS REACTIVE RATHER THAN PROACTIVE
- TENDENCY TO RECRUIT WITHIN THE ORGANISATION MEANS THAT THERE IS LITTLE CHURN, BUT THIS AFFECTS INNOVATIVENESS
- LOW PROFIT MARGINS CREATE CHALLENGES
- THE FOCUS ON INCREASING DESTINATIONS AND FREQUENCY SHOULD BE REVISED TO FOCUS ON PROFITABILITY

Adun Okupe

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The Piktochart file that was sent to participants appeared as a seamless document, as displayed below.
Appendix Seven

Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Airline Leaders

The table below presents the tacit knowledge inventory for airline leaders prepared from the tacit knowledge items collected in this research study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Airline Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal Tacit Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Managing the self: Self awareness</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to reflect and be aware of his/her weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this awareness enables him/her to learn how to manage such weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And therefore become more effective as a leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be a role model and lead by example, inspire and motivate others,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To do this, s/he has to be able to identify own strengths and weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And this will improve his/her effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to realise the profound effect that body language and gestures have on others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because being self-aware enables the leader to behave appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Managing the self: Learning from experience</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to take the time out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To reflect on the role that leadership played in a situation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As this provides opportunity for learning.

| It is important for a leader to try to understand the team environment and dynamics when delegating. |
| Because rushing in introduces the risks of the leader taking over the situation whilst not fully understanding it and discouraging future support from the team. |

| It is important for the leader to know when s/he has made a mistake and to admit this by communicating to the relevant parties in the team so that they are aware of what is happening in the organization, and are able to understand the situation. |

| It is important to realize that sometimes with the best intentions and the best people the goal is not achieved because of other things in the environment as these can limit a leader’s ability to meet his/her goals. |

| It is important for a leader to be aware that a time of change may involve too many factors which presented together at once, may confuse team members because team members may be unwilling to leave their comfort zone. |

| It is important during a time of change for the leader to try to carry team members along so that they are aware of the long-term plan for the organization because this ensures that the leader does not lose the commitment of team members, which might make the organizational change more difficult. |

<p>| It is important for a leader to have a good reporting system and employ a team who are able to synthesise large amounts of information. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Because it is impossible for the leader to have the capacity to read every document.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for the leader to make the time out daily, in the morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To read synthesised reviews of events and happenings that might be of relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the activities of the company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this enables the leader to be aware of what is happening around him/her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be consistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In his/her behaviour with the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it is important for the team, that a leader is a person of integrity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to realise that a different person might be required for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When radical organizational change is required,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And that it might be time for him/her to leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to realise the importance of the issues that his/her team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are facing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And resolve these issues in a timely manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even if it requires escalating the matter to other members of senior management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this demonstrates that the leader is able to empathise with his/her team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be aware of the power of an organization’s culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And to know that an organization’s culture is able to disrupt business logic and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rational decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because this enables the leader to be prepared in the event of such situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to be able to ask for help from team members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Because this signals to them that you value them
And enables them to use their expertise to contribute to the success of the team.

It is important for a leader to know when implementing a strategy
To try to get as much information as possible, before the implementation
Because this enables the leader to understand more about the industry and reduces
the risk of error.

**Managing the self: Learning from others**

It is important that the leader is seen to participate in the change programme
When a leader is presenting messages for organizational change
As this makes the change programme credible.

It is important for a leader to be willing to learn from outside the peer group
Because the peer group contracts
And leadership at senior level is very lonely
And to have coaching as this provides the leader with an opportunity to learn
And to nurture and polish his/her leadership skills.

It is important for a leader to be proactive and not procrastinate
Because when an obvious problem is not dealt with,
It can become a much bigger problem with significant consequences.
And not able to take hold of opportunities when they arise.

It is important for a leader to look for others to learn from
And to draw parallels from others who inspire him/her personally and/or
professionally
Because this enables the leader to continue to develop and become a more effective
It is important for a leader to have an unofficial and personal mentor who is someone who has taken an interest in his/her career and taken the time to explain things. Because this allows the leader to have the opportunity to learn and the space to bounce off ideas in an unofficial capacity.

**Managing the self: Intuition**

It is important for a leader to realize that intuition can be gained from experience, background or education, and it can be useful in decision-making.

It is important for a leader to listen to his/her intuition because intuition enables the leader to be able to judge information in decision-making.

It is important for a leader to listen to intuition when building a team because human resources is the biggest challenge to success in an organization and it is important that a leader heeds warning signs, where the recruit appears to be over-projecting his/her skills, overly concerned about status, position or title.

**Seeking challenges and control: Resilience**

It is important for a leader to be resilient by not listening to those who say s/he should give up because change takes a long time, but it will come.

It is important for a leader to remain focused and committed to the core objective of the organization.
By being confident enough to say no or yes to others  
Because this ensures that the leader remains committed to the key objectives for the organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is important for a leader to be open to different sources of information, and to be resourceful and creative in reviewing information from feedback provided by customers And to use the information to refine the organization’s product offerings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for the leader to always ask “how can I get rid of these complaints and also create a profit centre?” Because if someone has taken the time to write and complain about something Then they will probably be willing to pay a little bit to get rid of the problem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Seeking challenges and control: Resourcefulness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is important for a leader to be able to take initiative And to take on challenges without being asked Because this is important for finding solutions to organizational issues And is important for leadership.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for a leader to benchmark his/herself and the organization By identifying those who have best practice, in particular specialisms or roles, Because it is important for the leader to be aware of what others are doing in similar roles, And to learn how s/he can improve and be more effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interpersonal Tacit Knowledge

*Influencing and Controlling Others: Building a team*

It is important when a leader is selecting a team
That s/he selects people that are passionate about the job
Because passionate people will help to ignite the less passionate team members.

It is important for a leader to carefully hire for attitude rather than for aptitude
Because a person can be trained for aptitude
But one can't easily teach a person to have the right attitude
And the right attitude is very important in a service industry, like the airline industry.

It is important when building a team
For a leader to choose people who are able to follow instructions
And also able to use their own initiative to suggest alternatives
Because leadership is a two-way relationship
And the leader should be able to give directions, yet also learn from team members.

It is important for a leader to select the right managers
People who are able to execute plans and visions for the organization
Because these are the managers that will take the organization in the right direction.

It is important for a leader to be confident about his/her inadequacies
And be open to hiring people that are able to compensate for them
Because this ensures the team helps and protects the leader
And it shows leader is confident and assured enough to work with strong people.

*Influencing and Controlling Others: Delegating*
It is important that a leader does not micromanage his/her followers

Because micromanaging undermines the confidence of staff
And limits the ability of staff to display initiative
And then they don’t do their best work
And the leader doesn’t get the best from staff.

It is important for a leader to agree milestones and clear objectives with the team
And to dialogue with them as to whether they are achievable
And to give guidance to the team but trust them enough to give them space
Because it demonstrates that you trust your people and are confident and comfortable with what they are doing
And they in turn will trust you.

*Influencing and Controlling Others: Rewarding and punishing followers*

It is important for a leader to be understand that the key thing about promotion is to make people feel recognized and valued
But a leader has to be careful about promoting people into new roles
As it is important to have the best people in the right place
And the fact that someone is a good station manager does not mean that they will be a good country manager
Therefore, a leader has to be able to think of ways to ensure a good performing staff feels recognized and valued.

It is important that a leader trains people
And where they make mistakes, it is important to resolve these well
And give them second chances
Because this is how people learn.
| **It is important for a leader to do the right things in the right way** |
| By giving full credit where it is due |
| And not dishing out blame in difficult situations |
| Because it makes people more inclined to respect you and trust you |
| And be confident that you will not blame them for things that go wrong in the team. |

| **It is important for a leader to react quickly to staff underperformance** |
| And to either replace them or ask them to leave the organization |
| Because these issues if not dealt with promptly can have severe consequences for the organization. |

| **It is important for a leader to communicate the expected level of performance** |
| To their staff and to stick to it |
| And lead by example within the right performance framework |
| Where the people that perform are rewarded |
| And those that do not perform have consequences for that |
| Because this is important for staff to be clear about what is expected from them. |

**Influencing and Controlling Others: Supporting and encouraging followers**

| **It is important for a leader to know the strengths and weaknesses of team members** |
| And to focus on these strengths and protect him/herself from their weaknesses |
| As this enables the leader to be aware of team members’ capabilities |
| And enables him/her to know the type of stimuli they respond to. |

| **It is important that a leader takes time to take the time to understand local culture** |
| And understand how company policy should be tailored to the country location of the organization |
| Because staff and client needs might be different from those at the head-office |
**Influencing and Controlling Others: Motivating followers**

It is important for the leader to realise that staff need guidance and motivation and direction because this enables them to execute the strategies set for the organization.

It is important for a leader to be reliable and not be inconsistent and act within fairly reliable sort of band of parameters for the team because reliability provides assurance for team members.

It is important for a leader reflect core values as this enables team members to identify with the leader because there can be no effective leadership if values are not communicated.

It is important for a leader to motivate team members to be consistent in their service delivery with customers, when no manager is watching because this interaction is critical for how well the organization performs and signals how the team members have understood their training.

**Supporting and Cooperating with Others: Supporting and encouraging followers**

It is important for a leader to be open to developing others in his/her team even when this requires a departure from the typical format of development because some followers might have key insight into what is required to develop a strategy, that might not be obvious to management and this enables staff to use their initiative to contribute to the success of the organization.

It is important that the organization is seen to take time to carefully train staff.
When implementing a change program
To equip them with the right information and skills
Because this assuages nervousness and enables staff to be confident about what is required from them following the change.

Supporting and Cooperating with Others: Building team spirit

It is important for a leader to work to create team spirit among staff
Because this enables them to form strong bonds
And a strong allegiance to the organization.

It is important for a leader to realise the role that fun can play in building team spirit
And to ensure that some aspect of fun is incorporated into leadership
Because this can help to keep the team going in difficult times.

Supporting and Cooperating with Others: Integrating teams

It is important for a leader to work hard to ensure team members see themselves as different parts of the same whole
And to enable them to understand how the goals of the other teams relate to theirs
So they know they are working together towards achieving the same goals.

It is important for a leader to ensure team members do not work in silos
But work together and interact regularly
Because this ensures that everyone is kept informed about what is happening in the organization.

Supporting and Cooperating with Others: Accessibility

It is important for a leader to take the time to have meetings with staff
And this might involve travelling to several locations
Because this allows the leader to get to know staff, see their challenges from their
perspectives and also communicate that their views are important.

| It is important for the leader to encourage participation from staff in decision-making |
| And not be autocratic. |
| As this enables both parties to understand where the other is coming from. |
| However, the leader has to be the final decision-maker as the responsibility for decision-making lies with him/her. |

*Supporting and Cooperating with Others: Developing followers to be leaders*

| It is important for a leader to provide opportunity for others to be leaders too |
| Because it is good for the organization to have several people with leadership ability |
| Who are able to take on leadership positions should the opportunity arise. |

**Organizational Tacit Knowledge**

*Communicating with a diverse audience*

| It is important for a leader to be mindful of who his/her audience is |
| And to tailor and adapt communication according to the audience |
| Because it is essential that people understand what the leader is trying to say. |

| It is important for a leader to ask for a written summary of proposals |
| And for him/her to review this and sign off |
| Because the review enables the leader to ensure that his/her message has been understood |
| And signing off means the leader has considered the implications of the decision. |

| It is important for a leader to use the data from complaints from customers |
As opportunities for innovation
And to be mindful of how the refined service offerings can be additional profit
Because if the customer has taken the effort to complain
They will be willing to pay for the additional service offering.

| It is important for a leader to ensure that s/he is clear on the expectations from shareholders |
| And to clarify as to how leadership performance will be evaluated |
| So that the expectations of the leader and shareholders are aligned. |

*Cultural Intelligence*

| It is important for a leader to understand the cultural codes and ways of thinking |
| And to respond appropriately when speaking with others |
| Because the leader’s awareness of cultural codes shows respect to the audience. |

| It is important for a leader to be aware |
| That people come from different backgrounds |
| And the same words can have different meanings in different environments |
| Because this awareness is important for effective communication. |

| It is important for the leader to interact personally with stakeholders |
| When trying to get them to make a decision as a group |
| And create bonds with them |
| So that they are able to engage better with the matter at hand. |

*Political intelligence*

<p>| It is important for a leader to get together with the relevant stakeholders |
| When deciding to implement change |
| And work out what exactly is the situation at hand |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>And why it needs to change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because this demonstrates the leader is willing to take time to work with people.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is important for a leader to have a coalition of supporters</th>
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<tr>
<td>When lobbying the government,</td>
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<tr>
<td>By forming a lobby group with a simple ask, and a clear end date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because the group increases the support for the cause, the simple ask enables</td>
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<tr>
<td>members of the group to coalesce around a simple idea</td>
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<tr>
<td>And the clear end date ensures that people do not endlessly dither.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is important for a leader when working with government and other leaders</th>
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<tr>
<td>To understand their objectives and priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>And work out a solution that can directly meets their goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>As this enables the other party to be willing to listen and work with the leader.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is important for a leader to be aware of where government leaders are in their political career</th>
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<tr>
<td>When dealing with government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because they only have a certain amount of time in their positions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because when the incumbent official leaves, the leader will have to build new relationships with the next official</td>
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<td>And this can be challenging.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is important for leaders in the airline industry to be immune to politics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Although they have to be able to work with political intelligence</td>
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<tr>
<td>But strive to remain immune to political timelines</td>
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<td>Because of the global nature of the work of airlines.</td>
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<tr>
<th>It is important for a leader to not dismiss government officials when they are no</th>
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longer in a position of power
Because building relationships with others should go beyond the position they are in
And a leader should remember that people can resume their senior positions in future.

It is important for a leader to be aware of the political and social connections of business decisions
And to be informed by the likely interests of all the stakeholders in decision-making
Because this empowers the leader and enables him/her to explain the rationale behind the decisions.

It is important for a leader to be politically intelligent
And be able to assess difficult situations
And make tough decisions, including when to leave the organization
Because politics can be a challenging arena, especially when dealing with powerful people.

It is important for a leader to be resilient
Especially when trying to influence external environment
And the leader has to be flexible enough to make trade-offs
As there are other issues that the leader may not have control over
That will impact and effect the leader’s objectives
And industry-level change takes a long time.

Managing Conflict
It is important for a leader to understand that the parties will not be prepared to
When it comes to conflict resolution, it is important for a leader to apply lessons from experience. When dealing with conflict, it is important to contextualize behaviour based on previous experience and present a measured, unemotional and non-instinctive response. Because this ensures that conflict is managed effectively as emotional responses will worsen the situation.

**Managing crisis**

It is important for a leader to take time to obtain all the relevant information about what happened at the time of a crisis. Especially when it involves the media and external environment. Even if the leader is under pressure to make a decision, because in a crisis, the first thing that is said, sets the tune for the whole crisis.

It is important for a leader to understand the cause of the crisis when dealing with crisis. And to have access to information from the relevant parties. By communicating regularly with them to get and provide information so as to jointly develop a solution. Because it is important that a leader is perceived to be aware of the aspects of the problem and to be in control/full command of the solutions.
It is important when trying to solve organizational or industry-level crisis For the leader to ensure that focus is kept on developing a solution And to present relevant information clearly to all relevant parties.

It is important for a leader to present information based on analysis And for the information to explain the direction that is required for all to pursue Including the steps that are required to move forward Because this encourages all relevant parties to be involved in the discussion As they can understand the relevance it has to them.

*Managing business continuity*

It is important for a leader to understand that sustainability is beyond the environment And relates to the sustainability of the business model And this sustainability depends on multiple relationships with various stakeholders Which can put the leader in a delicate position.

It is important for an airline leader to realize expansion for expansion’s sake is not a measure of success Rather, it also refers to profitability and that airlines have to earn the right to grow By proving that the growth region will be profitable.

It is important for a leader to understand that leadership is a relay And the position of leadership is temporal As this enables the leader to have the right perspective to his/her position And his/her duty to empower others
So they can lead effectively when the baton of leadership is passed on to them.

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<th>It is important for a leader to development opportunities for others</th>
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<tr>
<td>And create an environment for people to be given a chance</td>
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<td>And support them in doing so</td>
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<td>As this gives your people space to develop and be creative</td>
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<td>Because it is important for the organization to developing others</td>
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<tr>
<td>And the leader also leaves a good legacy by developing others.</td>
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