Exploration of a New Conceptualisation of Leadership, Utilising an Appreciative Inquiry Approach

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Abstract

Leadership is said to be pivotal to the future of health and social care organisations within the United Kingdom. Organisations across the sector face many challenges and there is an emerging recognition that these challenges are becoming increasingly complex with many problems perhaps being considered as wicked issues. To successfully address these difficult problems takes leadership. Defining this slippery concept has, however, proved problematic. Despite thousands of years of philosophical debate and over one hundred years of academic research, the concept of leadership still appears to defy definition. There are many theories, approaches and models of leadership, often with authentic evidence bases that tell prospective leaders how they should behave. There are often emerging fads or fashions in approaches to leadership. This isn't thought to be of great assistance to busy practitioner leaders working in complex environments. This qualitative study did not seek to identify a new model of leadership, it sought to explore literature in order to discover commonalities in leadership approaches, to develop a new conceptualisation of leadership and then, by utilising an Appreciative Inquiry methodology, explore the relevance of this approach to gain new insights into how leaders within health and social care communities consider that they will lead as they move into a difficult and uncertain future. The study utilised an approach to reviewing literature called Critical Interpretative Synthesis and explored commonalities across definitions of leadership regardless of fashion or fad. From this review four components were identified and called the leadership equation. The leadership equation was used a basis for appreciative inquiry, semi-structured interviews that asked twelve leaders working in health and social care organisations from a specified geographical area how they will lead in the future. The interviews produced data that was thematically analysed and three themes emerged, each supported by a number of sub-themes. In order to lead successfully into the future, leaders will need to consider how they behave in relation to the three themes labelled as Being Human, Being Tough, and Being Visionary. The study seeks to have relevance for practitioner leaders working in health and social care organisations within the United Kingdom. It also seeks to have relevance for academic leadership programme designers who might wish to consider these finding as they design the next generation of leadership development programmes.

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Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction Background and Statement of the Problem

Introduction

Leadership is considered to be a complex subject; this study explores leadership within the health and social care sector in the United Kingdom. The introductory chapter aims to introduce and establish the context in which this study has taken place. It describes the importance that is often given to leadership in organisations but it also identifies the difficulty in defining what leadership actually is. The chapter concludes by defining the research question and the aims and objectives of the study and sets out how the chapters that follow work.

Leadership is said to be of pivotal importance to the future of health and social care organisations (Darzi 2008, Ham 2011, Stevens 2014). Many authors (e.g. Alimo-Metcalf, Alban Metcalf 2006, Vardiman et al 2006, Anderson et al 2009, Amagoh 2009, Hotho, Dowling 2010, Severinsson, Holm 2012) have identified that organisations which are considered to have good leadership thrive, even when times are difficult, and conversely poor leadership is an often cited reason when an organisation fails (Francis 2013). As a consequence, the need to develop leadership capacity has been identified as an important issue in organisations across the world. This has led to significant investment in leadership development programmes (Clark 2012). In recent times, however, there has been growing pressure from stakeholders to justify and demonstrate a return on this investment (Hotho, Dowling 2010). Leadership is, however, a complex multifaceted concept, which has been subject to much debate over millennia, yet disagreement still exists as to how to define it. This study seeks to explore a new conceptualisation of leadership, and in conjunction with an Appreciative

Inquiry methodology, identify ways in which leaders perceive that they will lead in future organisations.

Background and statement of the problem

Leadership Today

Bolman and Deal (2008 p342) describe a common view that the right kind of leadership is a good thing and something we need more of "as a panacea" to problems of our world. Indeed in our current times there appears to be a constant cry for good leaders and for good leadership to lead us out of our difficulties. For example, at an early stage in the 2010-2015 United Kingdom's Coalition Government's period in office, when commenting about difficult and austere times ahead, David Cameron (2011), in his keynote speech to the Conservative Party conference, said

"*In these difficult times, it is leadership we need, to get our economy moving, to get our*

society working. Leadership works"

It appears to be relatively easy to speak eloquently about the merits of leadership; philosophers, commentators, researchers and indeed politicians have been studying it and attempting to do so for millennia. The difficulty is that whilst leadership is a concept, perhaps like love or democracy, that most people instinctively understand (Northouse 2013), it becomes really difficult to closely define what 'the right kind of' or 'good leadership' actually is or means (Crainer 1998, Boleman, Deal 2008). Who decides when, to use Cameron's comments, 'leadership works'. Northouse (2013) suggests that people are captivated by the concept of leadership. But as they begin to explore this complex and multi-layered phenomenon, they develop their own understanding of what it is, and this understanding is often subjective.

There has been interest in understanding the concept of leadership throughout history. Early writers include the 6th century BC Confucius and Lao-tzu, with Confucius identifying the importance of setting a good moral example and Lao-tzu recognising the need for shared ideas. Ancient Greek and Roman authors also wrote extensively on the subject, as an example a study by Plutarch dated around 100 BC compared the attributes of 50 Greek and Roman leaders (Bass, Bass 2008). Since this time there have been many examples of writers seeking understanding about the subject. During the late 20th century there appears to have been an explosion of interest with a great many authors attempting to describe their own understanding of the concept. A brief history of leadership development in this period is presented here to provide some context.

Stogdill (1974 p7) carried out a Meta-analysis of 187 leadership studies that had taken place between 1907 and 1973. In his conclusion he suggested that "There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it".

In 1991 Fleishman et al concluded that 65 definitions of leadership had been developed. Four years later Crainer (1995) considered the topic again and discovered the number had increased to 400 definitions. Eight years after that Bennis and Nanus (2003) identified 850 different ways that leadership could be described.

The exercise does not appear to have been repeated since this time; however O'Reilly and Reed (2010) identified, when searching the British Library Integrated Catalogue that 50% of all available articles with leadership in the title had been written after 1997. This would appear to support the impression of a continuing surge in academic work and thinking about leadership and it may be assumed that the list of leadership definition must now be in the thousands.

In 2003, 14,000 books related to leadership were on sale via the on-line retailer
Amazon.co.uk; by 2009 this had increased to 53,000 (Grint 2010). A similar search on
28th July 2015 revealed that this total had reached 138,237 books. A scoping search on
28th July 2015 of the Sheffield Hallam University Library gateway using the word
'Leadership' identified approximately 4,127,000 items. When filtered to only consider
peer reviewed publications, 766,668 journal articles were identified. Research into
effective leadership would appear to have experienced exponential growth.
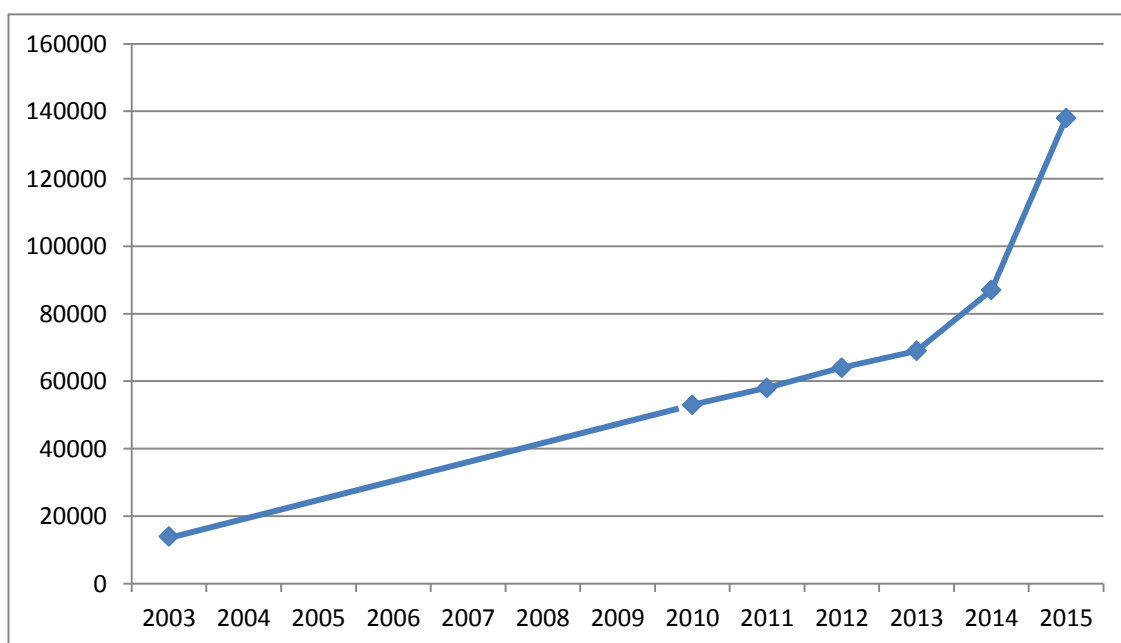
Fig 1 Growth of Leadership books on sale at Amazon.co.uk

This much activity might suggest a fascination with the subject (Northhouse 2013); it
might suggest that clarity is being distilled but it could also imply disputed and
contested territory. Simkins (2005 p10), when commenting on the elusiveness of an
effective leadership definition, said "some still believe that this holy grail is within our
grasp, or at the least the search for it is not in vain". Grint (2010 p1), however,
proposes that even after "three thousand years of pondering and over half a century
of academic research" we are no closer to agreeing a definition of what leadership

actually is. In fact, with so many different approaches and definitions, Grint (2010) actually questions whether this construct still has validity. Hernandez et al (2011) add that although many of the concepts that have been developed add something to our understanding of this complex subject, it is the difficulty in agreeing a definition that has led to the development of so many disparate approaches. It would appear that the amount of words that have been written on the subject, as authors and researchers continue on their quest to discover this particular holy grail (Simpkins 2005), might have obscured more than they have revealed, or perhaps created more heat than light (Grint 2010).

Organisations Today

Rittel and Webber (1973) conceptualised tame and wicked problems to describe issues in architecture and planning in the 1970s. Grint (2010) developed this concept and applied it to organisational leadership today. A tame problem may be simple or incredibly complex, but the problem is well defined and known solutions, that can be objectively evaluated, do exist. Wicked problems may also be complex or simple but they tend to have no known existing solutions. Solutions are usually judged as making the situation better or worse rather than being right or wrong, true or false. Solutions are contextual and the effectiveness of the solutions depends upon the perspectives of each of the stakeholders. As each wicked issue is unique, it is, therefore, difficult to objectively evaluate solutions. Wicked problems are multi-dimensional with each dimension having its own unique perspective; perhaps an analogy might involve a complex 3-D jigsaw puzzle that has no fixed solution. Each piece of the puzzle has multiple sides and to complete it all the pieces must interconnect. Grint (2010) suggests that leaders of the future will have to face many more wicked problems.

As an example, an integrated health and social care agenda that requires primary, secondary and social care co-operation and co-ordination might be considered a wicked issue.

Writing in the late 1980s, Handy (1989) suggested we were entering an era where the only certainty is that things will change. He believed we couldn't anticipate how or when changes would occur, only that they will. He asserted that future leaders will need the skills to be ready to adapt to this unknown world. Although a lot of water may have passed under a lot of bridges since Handy first articulated this idea, it would seem that his "Age of unreason" hasn't in any way passed and is perhaps still to reach it zenith.

Drucker, writing on a similar theme, stated "We are in one of these great historical periods that occur every 200 or 300 years when people don't understand the world anymore and the past is not sufficient to explain the future" (Cameron, Quinn 2011 p1).

These authors don't make reference to any particular sector; however, their concepts do appear to have a great resonance within health and social care organisations today. In particular the 'wicked problems' that Grint (2010) describes may have a particular timbre when considering that health and social care leaders face, what Hawkins and Smith (Chard et al 2013 p23) call "the unholy trinity of: greater demand for services, higher quality expectations and less resources".

Leadership in organisations

The leaders of the future will be dealing with unknown problems that require solutions that may not yet exist. Traditional models or old paradigms of leadership that in the past could have been considered the maps which provide direction and safe passage

to future places, may no longer be trusted to deliver this guidance as the territory is now uncharted (Alimo-Metcalf, Alban-Metcalf 2006, Soutar, Ridley 2008).

Additionally the leadership space itself has become increasingly complex, increasingly contested and increasingly noisy. With so many models of leadership, often supported by an evidence base, it is increasingly difficult for busy practitioners to understand how and why they should behave. Should they become transactional, transformational or compassionate (Naylor et al 2015)? The leadership approach that helped them so much in their early career may now perhaps have fallen out of favour. What, therefore, is the latest leadership cloak that they should put on in an attempt to follow the latest leadership fashion or fad? (Hartley et al 2008).

The organisational environment continues to be very challenging; as a consequence, in an effort to support future leaders, the leadership space continues to be very busy and in many ways contested with a great assortment of different approaches and models seeking to provide an answer. There is perhaps a need to attempt to cut through this noise, to look for commonalities across approaches and models and to develop a new way that practitioner leaders and also academic programme designers might find of use whatever their particular leadership schooling or approach. This study did not seek to identify a new model of leadership, it sought to explore literature in order to discover commonalities in leadership approaches, to develop a new conceptualisation of leadership and then, by utilising an Appreciative Inquiry methodology, explore the relevance of this approach to gain new insights into how leaders within health and social care communities consider that they will lead as they move into a difficult and uncertain future.

The Research Question and the aims and objectives of the study

The Research Question was; what do health and social care leaders perceive is required of leadership in contemporary and future organisations?

The aims and objectives of the study are listed below:

Aims of the study:

- To provide new insight into a concept of leadership that will have relevance to practitioner leaders regardless of their leadership style or approach.
- To elicit opinion on a contemporary view of leadership that has been derived from the literature.

Objectives of the study

- Derive a model of leadership from the literature to elicit conceptualised understanding of leadership.
- To generate insight into how leaders perceive solutions will emerge to wicked problems.
- To develop an approach to leadership that could inform curriculum design of leadership development programmes.

Study Structure

Chapter 2 introduces a literature review approach called Critical Interpretive Synthesis (Dixon Woods et al 2006). This was the approach used to explore leadership literature. Chapter 3 provides details and justification for the design of the study. Chapter 4 is the introduction to the findings of the study and presents the three themes with their supporting sub-themes that emerged as a consequence of the thematic analysis of the

data. Chapter 5, 6 and 7 provide a detailed analysed narrative for the three themes and their supporting sub-themes; Chapter 8 presents a concluding discussion with Chapter 9 containing reflections on aspects of the actual process of undertaking the study including exploration of what might be considered the limitations of the study. The final chapter closes the study with final concluding thoughts; it also considers how the study might have implications for future practice and includes a series of recommendations.

The Researcher

This is a qualitative study based within the health and social care sector within the United Kingdom. In chapter 3 the justification for the design of the study is established. The chapter identifies that the study is based within a relational constructivist epistemological perspective. Creswell (2009 p8) suggests that "constructivists seek understanding of the world in which they work", it was therefore considered important to the congruency and the context of this project that some time was given to describing the researcher's world and his experience leading up to the beginning of this particular research journey. The following section seeks to provide this context.

In order to gain a promotion at a very early stage of a fledgling military career, the completion of a week long leadership course was a requirement. During this week, after a long exercise, the approach of the instructors was considered to be bullying and aggressive. A challenge to this approach that questioned what this had to do with teaching leadership led to a rather abrupt and almost untimely end to the researcher's contribution to the leadership course! So began a fascination with what effective leadership is. Some years later after a period at a university, the researcher began a career as a social worker working in a local authority. It was an interesting period as a

large county had split into four local authority areas and workers had to select the area where they would work. Over the following two years the four organisations experienced very different outcomes. One of the local authorities was identified as a top performing organisation and one as a failing organisation that was put into special measures. Again this provided the researcher with an opportunity to observe leadership with leadership styles and organisational culture being considered pivotal to organisational success (Cameron, Quinn 2011).

Over the next eight years the researcher developed his leadership role and identity in a variety of positions within children's social services in a local authority environment culminating in a middle management role.

An opportunity presented itself to work for a private sector organisation delivering children's social care. This was a huge leap away from the stability and security of working within the public sector local authority. With the first week of commencing this role a management buyout was initiated supported by the venture capitalist 3i Group. The 3i Group's business model was to expand the business rapidly and then sell it on for a large profit. So began an exciting period of activity where anything was possible. Unfortunately a range of venture capitalists had developed an interest in this relatively small and specialised sector. This led to a rapid expansion in provision that wasn't supported by a rapid expansion in the customer base. As a consequence, and in an effort to maximise profit and reduce costs, four organisations were merged. Each organisation had its own leadership group and its own organisational culture. There followed a rather turbulent period when a number of senior people left the organisation, and efforts were made to establish a common culture. It was during this period that the researcher was promoted to Operations Director for the Group. In an

effort to achieve profitability a number of Chief Executive Officers were parachuted in and then out (if results did not improve) of the business. Each one had had successful careers in other sectors, for example, one ran an organisation selling fitness equipment; one had been extremely successful working in the car manufacturing industry. None had experience of this sector. After reflecting on the situation a number of years later, it was clear that these people were under a lot of pressure to achieve the results that the 3i Group required. They didn't, however, understand the sector or the culture of a sector that involves care for some of the most vulnerable members of our society. They perhaps didn't understand the motivation of the people that work in the sector. Generally people were motivated by a desire to care rather than a desire to generate the greatest profit for shareholders. The researcher had and still has a great amount of respect for the CEO he worked for, however, the incompatibility in values and culture led to an unsustainable relationship. When an opportunity to teach leadership to health and social care professionals at a university presented itself it was grasped with both hands.

The university had a desire to recruit someone from a social care background; this was in an effort to reduce an imbalance in the teaching team that was comprised only of health care professionals. The majority of students were, however, from a health sector background so it became critically important that an in depth understanding of the health sector was developed, the researcher became immersed in health service leadership teaching and consultancy.

To conclude, at the start of the study the researcher had real life applied leadership experience within a public sector social care environment, a private sector social care organisation and an in depth academic understanding of the health care sector, all

within the United Kingdom. Health and social care funding within the United Kingdom has traditionally come from different sources, this has led to very different cultures and different ways of being across the sectors. The future will require greater integration and it is within this context that this study was formed.

At the start of his academic career the researcher reflected that he had a degree of practical, applied leadership experience but actually very limited theoretical understanding and knowledge. In order to rectify this every effort was made to absorb leadership theory and leadership texts; at this point a resonance with Grint's (2010) account of his early academic development emerged. Grint (2010) recalled that although he had a great amount of practical experience the more he read the more confused he became by leadership literature. As the start of this study edged closer the researcher felt somewhat overwhelmed by leadership material and the vast range of, at times, conflicting leadership models, he had a desire to try and seek clarity in his own mind and it was this that was the genesis of this study.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Literature Review Introduction

The literature review utilised an approach called Critical interpretive Synthesis. The first part of the chapter explains the complexities of leadership literature reviews and justifies why this particular approach was taken. The second part of the chapter describes the actual process of the review; with the third part of the chapter providing the written findings of the review.

Approaches to Reviewing the Literature in Management and Leadership Research

Just about all research projects have, at some point, a literature review stage. Seuring and Gold (2012 p554) believe it to be the "backbone of all academic writing", whilst Wilson (2010) suggests a review of the literature will, in all probability, be a major part of the research project. Abrams (2012 p189) describes the importance of the context setting role of an effective literature review, suggesting that it helps to situate the research "in the landscape of existing literature". The portrayed landscape may be rich, colourful and bountiful, or barren and bleak with maybe an occasional oasis providing some welcome relief. This could be a consequence of the research topic itself. Perhaps, however, it could be a consequence of the researcher's approach, thoroughness and rigour. It is vitally important for the validity of the research that the reader can understand the journey that the researcher undertook in reaching their particular view of their landscape.

When considering the research topic of leadership, the portrayed vista could be compared to a wide, deep and ever growing ocean. This ocean has strong tides that

ebb and flow, and powerful currents and whirlpools that move vast volumes of water in different and often contradictory directions. As suggested earlier, a 2003 search via the online retailer Amazon revealed that just over 14,000 books related to leadership were on sale, by 2009 53,000 books were available (Grint 2010) and by 2015 this number had reached almost 139,000. A scoping search in July 2015 of the Sheffield Hallam University Library gateway using the word 'Leadership' identified in excess of four million items, over seven hundred and sixty six thousand of these were academically credible peer reviewed journal articles.

It could be suggested that with the breadth and depth of this field, it may be just about possible to weave together threads of information to support eclectic perspectives or bias on the topics that authors may favour (for example, there are a number of articles that discuss leaders and moustaches). Tranfield et al (2003) agree that it is possible to use literature to support a wide range of opinions. They argue that although a literature review is a key tool in management research, a lot of management literature reviews attract significant criticism for describing particular authors' contributions to the field without particular critical appraisal, and without clarity regarding inclusion criteria, thus leading to claims of bias. In support of the literature review concept, Transfield et al (2003 p209) add that the right approach helps to manage the "diversity of knowledge" that is available. They also suggest that a comprehensive review helps the researcher "to map and assess the intellectual territory" within a particular area of study.

Abrams (2012 p189) discusses situating the research within "the landscape of existing literature"; Tranfield et al (2003) describe mapping intellectual territory, both create mental images that suggest the importance of cartography. Darkes and Spence (2008

p9), when considering the art of cartography, state "maps that don't work are often unclear, imprecise and inefficient". There are many ways that a cartographer might draw a map. There are also, it would appear, many ways of drawing together a review of the literature. As a cornerstone of the research project, the importance of selecting the right approach to reviewing the literature, and of then being explicitly clear regarding the application of the approach, might mitigate Darkes and Spence's (2008) warning about unclear, imprecise and inefficient maps. If a reader gets lost within the early literature review stages of a research thesis, they may never find their way to the conclusions at the end.

Chambers et al (2002) discuss how the concept of considering existing or old knowledge to help inform the creation of new knowledge has been accepted as necessary for approximately two hundred years. It was not until the twentieth century, however, that methods to enable a consistent approach began to be developed. Hallinger (2013) described being somewhat surprised that although research designs have been subjected to much scrutiny, the rigour and approach to reviewing literature within this field has received very little critical attention and commentary from the academic community.

Grant and Booth (2009 p91) believe that in recent times there has been an increase in perhaps unacknowledged variations to both the approach and rigour of the review. In an effort to provide some clarity to what they describe as a "diversity of terminology", they identify and describe fourteen of the most commonly used review typologies. They concluded that all of the review typologies have their usefulness. They accept a degree of overlap between their typologies, acknowledging that no internationally accepted definition has been developed. Perhaps, as Mays et al (2005), and Rhodes

(2011) suggest, the real usefulness of the approach will be contingent upon the actual aim of the review and the nature of the available evidence.

Grant's and Booth's (2009) commentary is extremely useful and provides a degree of the clarification that they intended when they began crafting their article. The complexities of this topic, however, lead them to conclude that their typologies are not definitive; in addition other authors don't arrive at the same conclusions or definitions. There appears to be a consensus of opinion concerning the lack of a clearly defined, articulated and agreed way of reviewing qualitative literature within management and leadership research. There are, however, a number of proponents of particular approaches.

To illustrate this, Mays et al (2005) suggest four basic approaches, three of which are not mentioned by Grant and Booth. Rhodes (2012) states that three commonly used approaches exist. Whilst Transfield et al (2003) argue that as systematic literature reviews are considered the gold standard in what is known as the hierarchy of evidence, (generally within positivist paradigms), this approach should be the adopted approach for all management and leadership literature reviews.

Transfield et al (2003) reiterate an issue that consistently arises within management and leadership research. There is no agreed method or approach to working within this messy and inefficient real world research environment (Ham 2005, Mays et al 2005, Edmondson, McManus 2007, Gray 2009). As a consequence, research is completed utilising a wide array of epistemological and methodological approaches.

Transfield et al (2003 p208) argues that the creation of management research that is both theoretically and methodologically rigorous, as well as being relevant to the

practitioner, is a key objective within the management and leadership research community. The systematic review process would, they believe "enhance the legitimacy and authority of the resultant evidence" and provide decision makers, practitioners and those responsible for policy direction with reliable, consistent, and credible evidence. Transfield et al (2003) feel that this approach would lead to greater acceptance and credibility by others within the research community. They also accept the importance, and therefore the need to include qualitative and grey literature within their systematic reviews.

Mays et al (2005) argue that management and leadership research has many complexities. There is a need to derive and synthesise complex information that might originate from research and non research sources, in an attempt to provide answers to complex problems. Sources of evidence might be quantitative or qualitative and include grey literature. Their paper describes a number of approaches such as narrative synthesis, realist synthesis and meta-ethnography which they feel offers credible and systematised solutions to synthesising complex information.

Daly et al (2007) concluded that the Cochrane Collaboration has struggled to incorporate evidence from qualitative studies into systematic reviews. Although Hannes et al (2013) identify and celebrate substantial progress in this regard in recent years there is, it would seem, still much debate.

The main areas of contention, it would appear, lay in the assessment and synthesis of qualitative and grey literature findings. Indeed, Sandelowski et al (1997 p366) considered the difficulties of synthesizing qualitative studies: they suggest the sheer diversity of epistemological and ontological approaches "seems to work against efforts to synthesize findings". A number of authors (Sandelowski et al 1997, Finlayson, Dixon

2008, Finfgeld-Connet, Johnson 2013, Hannes et al 2013) believe that the issue of quality in qualitative research still generates considerable controversy and debate. It would seem that although the subject has made substantial progress in recent times, these authors conclude that there is still little consensus in deciding what good qualitative research is.

Mays et al (2005) add that a hierarchy of the quality of evidence that considers all methods of research and across all substantive topics simply does not exist, and as systematic reviews that consider quantitative and qualitative evidence are still at a relatively early stage of development (Finfgeld-Connet, Johnson 2013), the definitions of quality inclusion criteria have yet to be agreed. They do, however, offer a set of useful questions for the researcher to consider:

• "Is the aim of the review clear?

• Are review questions relevant to the concerns of a manager/policy maker in a particular setting?

• Are methods explicitly and comprehensively described such that another team could repeat the review using the same methods?

• Is each step clearly justified" (Mays et al 2005 p19).

Dixon-Woods et al (2006 p2) think that the conventional systematic review is an excellent tool for synthesising evidence "where the aim of the review is to test theories". It is more limited, they suggest, when the intention is to consider many different forms of evidence. Eakin and Mykhalovskiy (2003 p187) believe it to be flawed logic that the procedural rigour of typologies like systematic reviews equates to

quality outcomes. They argue that this fixed process tends to "oversimplify and standardise the non formulaic nature of qualitative inquiry".

The complexities of the subject area and the need to synthesise evidence and knowledge from a number of sources lead to the conclusion that Cochrane style Systematic Literature Reviews perhaps do not currently offer the best fit for management and leadership studies.

An approach, however, in which literature is reviewed systematically to remove elements of bias and provide a structure in which relevant studies on a particular subject are considered, critically appraised and synthesised would be a useful approach to take (Chambers 2002).

In a discussion paper, Ham (2005) advocated for more management and leadership studies to follow approaches like those set out by Mays et al in an attempt to develop and explore the synthesis of qualitative evidence in management and leadership research. In an update of a study that considered papers that had synthesised qualitative findings during the period 1988-2004, Hannes and Macaitis (2012) reviewed papers from 2004-2008. They discovered a significant increase (almost double) in the number of studies that claimed to synthesise qualitative research findings. The range of journals in which articles had been published also expanded considerably. The common approaches identified across papers included:

• The explicit acknowledgment of the data bases that had been explored.

• The identification of research terms used.

• The details of the critical appraisal exercise that the researcher undertook to ensure the consistent validity of included papers.

There are many ways of describing the process of reviewing literature which, at times, leaves researchers uncertain about the type of review to carry out (Greenhalgh et al 2005, Finfgeld-Connet, Johnson 2013). What is clear is that others need to be able to identify the process of review so that they can be assured of how the picture that has been painted has been arrived at.

Critical Interpretive Synthesis

Dixon-Woods et al (2006) discuss the development of an innovative approach to the critical analysis of a complex body of evidence.

They suggest that two principal approaches to conducting reviews exist. The first is an aggregate review, this particularly suits systematic literature reviews. The aggregate reviewer brings together data and looks for similarities between phenomena, so that data can be aggregated for analysis. The reviewer will focus on summarising data in accordance with clearly developed and well specified criteria.

Interpretive reviewers, however, have a very different approach; they believe that the review itself will involve induction and interpretation. Its purpose is to develop theories and concepts as a consequence of the articles that have been reviewed, "the product of synthesis is not aggregation of data, but theory, grounded in the studies included in the review" (Dixon-Woods 2006 et al p36). Dixon-Woods et al state that although a number of approaches to enable synthesis of qualitative data have been developed in recent years, very few methods have been developed that allow for the synthesis of evidence regardless of the study type. They believe that Critical Interpretive Synthesis allows for this. They also state, emphatically, that this is an approach to review, not just synthesis.

Leadership is said to be a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon (Northouse 2015).

The research environment is messy and real with no consistently agreed approach.

Other approaches to reviewing literature might exclude important concepts

(Annandale et al 2007). It would seem that a literature review that followed a Critical

Interpretive Synthesis (CIS) approach might permit evidence from multiple sources to

be used to advance knowledge in this complex field.

The objectives informed by the research question considered within the literature

review were:

• What is meant by leadership?

• Is there a best way of developing leaders within these organisations?

A conventional systematic review would identify the review question a priori. The

question would be clear, well specified and tightly focused so that the parameters of

the study and the inclusion criteria would be defined in advance. The aim of the review

would be to aggregate the evidence in response to the review question.

The CIS approach is useful when the definitions within the subject area are fuzzy and

contested (Greenhalgh et al 2005). Eakin and Mykhalovskiy (2003 p190) suggest the

question should be "more like a compass than an anchor" and, as such, the question

may not fully emerge until the end of the review.

To understand the process of developing leaders and leadership, it was felt important

that the concept of leadership was explored. This appears to be a contested and fuzzy

area.

The Process of the Review

The Critical Interpretive Synthesis concept suggests that a number of search strategies are utilised; this includes searching databases, chaining, searching websites, discussions with experts and use of existing expertise (Dixon-Woods et al 2006, Flemming 2010). The search strategy demonstrated in Fig 2 was undertaken.

Utilising the search strategy of databases, the search term typed into the Emerald and Business Source Premier Databases was 'Defining Leadership'.

The Emerald Database initially identified 7,781 articles whilst the same search on Business Source Premier revealed 16,787 studies. Clearly this amount of information exceeded the capacity of the reviewer. Different databases have different optional criteria, the Emerald database allows for the search terms to be considered in "all fields except the full text." The addition of this criterion reduced the number of journal articles to 83.

The Business Source Premier database was amended with the inclusion criterion of words "included in the abstract". This reduced the number of journals articles to 63.

Clearly the addition of the inclusion criterion may mean that important papers were missed; however, it was felt that papers of interest to this study would have identified the concepts of interest within the abstract.

The search term did identify a large body of literature; it did not, however, produce the comprehensive quality overview of literature that was hoped for. A number of authors (Greenhalgh et al 2003, Mays et al 2005, Dixon Woods et al 2006) discuss the iterative development of search terms. In this case, Evaluating Leadership, Leadership Development and Evaluating Leadership Development were also used.

Dixon-Woods et al (2006 p37) describe how the specificity of systematic review inclusion criteria defines the boundaries of the fields of literature that can be included. They suggest "interpretive reviews have more diffused and ill defined boundaries" that may shift as the review progresses. The CIS approach does not require all articles to be considered, only a purposive sample of between 18 and 20 authors. This, they feel, complies with the underpinning principles of theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation associated with primary qualitative research. As a CIS review is interpretive not aggregative, it isn't necessary to have a complete summary of all the data.

An initial concept underpinning the review was to produce a map that others could follow. Additional iterations of the search term create a more complex map that becomes more difficult to follow. An easy to follow map however, which leads to a destination that is of no value to the reader is completely flawed logic. It appears a compromise must be reached that allows for iterative searching so that the right literature is identified for inclusion but still allows others to see why this literature is considered right. The purposive sampling process might suggest that others may follow a slightly different route.

In this case, the volume of the identified literature was large and beyond the capacity of the researcher to aggregate all of the papers (Flemming 2010). The purposive sample approach was felt to be appropriate within this research strategy and for this research question, and offered a valuable range of literature. In practice, theoretical saturation did seem to have been reached.

The retrieval process was relatively straightforward. Article titles were read and discarded if they did not contain relevance to the research topic. The next phase involved the reading of abstracts; again, abstracts that did not appear to be relevant

were discarded. Articles were retrieved and an initial scoping read considered whether the article met the quality inclusion criteria developed by Mays et al (2005). The second question regards the relevancy to managers and policy makers; this was adapted to consider the relevancy to this project.

Articles that were assessed to be on the edge of the inclusion criteria were reviewed again in an attempt to consider their contribution to the topic. Dixon-woods et al (2006) suggest that reviewers are allowed an editorial voice and that articles that offer a significant contribution might be used even if they do not meet particular inclusion criteria. Articles were then read again and their contribution to a particular aspect of the review indexed. Articles identified via chaining techniques were retrieved and followed the standard quality process identified above.

An additional step was added after considering the quality inclusion criteria; it was felt necessary to evaluate the overall contribution that the paper made to this review. So articles may have met all of the inclusion criteria, but overall their contribution might have been considered to be poor. Equally some articles did not meet some of the inclusion criteria but appeared to be extremely relevant. An overall score considering the contribution value of the paper was added. The researcher then became immersed in the reviewed articles with the earlier developed Fig 2 providing an anchor (or lifeline) back to the real world.

 A degree of tension emerged at this point; there was a need to follow a rigorous process to ensure a degree of replication but also a desire to continue to explore the richness of the literature. There was also an acknowledgement of timeliness as the reviewer became immersed in the literature itself and it was felt that the literature review could have continued ad infinitum. The importance of a disciplined, pragmatic

and purposive sampling approach became more evident as time advanced and

progress of the larger study stalled. Appendix 1 shows results of the searching phase

within the literature quality check framework table.

Figure 2   Search Strategy

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                                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                                    │ Research question formulation│
                                    │                             │
                                    │    Defining Leadership      │
                                    └─────────────────────────────┘
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                      ┌───────────────────────┐   ┌───────────────────────────┐
                      │  Database search      │   │ Existing Knowledge sources│
                      │                       │   │ explored books, websites, │
                      │ Emerald, Business     │   │ and trade publication     │
                      │ Source Premier        │   │                           │
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  ┌──────────────────┐           ▼                         │
  │ Titles not       │◄──┌───────────────────┐◄────────────┘
  │ relevant         │   │ Titles read for   │
  │ discarded        │   │ relevance         │
  └──────────────────┘   └───────────────────┘
                                  │
  ┌──────────────────┐           ▼
  │ Abstracts not    │◄──┌───────────────────┐
  │ relevant discarded│   │ Abstracts /chapter│
  └──────────────────┘   │ introductions read│
                         └───────────────────┘
                                  │
                                  ▼
                      ┌───────────────────────┐
                      │ Articles/chapters     │◄──┐
                      │ obtained read and     │   │
                      │ prioritised for       │   │
                      │ relevance             │   │
                      └───────────────────────┘   │
                                  │                │
                                  ▼    ┌───────────────────────┐
                                       │ Snowball /chaining    │
                                       │ technique             │
                                       └───────────────────────┘
                                  │
                                  ▼
                      ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                      │ Quality of article checked using        │
                      │                                         │
                      │ "Is the aim of the review /chapter clear?│
                      │                                         │
                      │ Are review questions relevant to the    │
                      │ concerns of this project?               │
                      │                                         │
                      │ Are methods explicitly and              │
                      │ comprehensively described such that     │
                      │ another team could repeat the review    │
                      │ using the same methods?                 │
                      │                                         │
                      │ Is each step clearly justified?"        │
                      │                                         │
                      │ (Mays et al 2005 p19) (adapted)         │
                      └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                  │
                                  ▼
                      ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                      │ Contribution to the debate considered    │
                      └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                  │
                                  ▼
                      ┌───────────────────────┐
                      │ Overall Score         │
                      └───────────────────────┘
                                  │
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                      ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                      │ Synthesis and inclusion in the review    │
                      └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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CIS evolved from Meta ethnography. From this approach Dixon-Woods et al (2006 p40) considered the Lines of Argument synthesis (LOA) as the most relevant approach for CIS. This "involves building a general interpretation grounded in the finding of the separate studies". In defining LOA synthesis Dixon Woods et al (2006 p40) describe First Order Constructs as the everyday understanding that people have. Second Order Constructs refer to the conclusions, theories and explanations that primary research studies report. Third Order Constructs build upon and extend the findings of second order studies. The CIS approach has "respecified" Third Order Constructs and suggests that the term 'Synthesising Argument' is used to integrate evidence from studies included in the review. Synthesising Arguments provide a "more insightful, formalised and generalisable way of understanding a phenomenon".

Findings of the Review

The literature review itself explored three areas. The first part of the review discusses the difficulty of defining leadership, the second area is described as a Synthesising Argument and identifies that leadership is actually a social construct. The third area is again a Synthesising Argument and introduces the Leadership Equation.

Leadership: the difficulty of a definition

The concept of leadership has been fascinating writers throughout history. Bass and Bass (2008 p4) described how "written concepts go back nearly as far as the emergence of civilisation". As suggested earlier, despite this longevity, issues still arise with regard to how leadership is actually defined. Grint (2010) and Northouse (2015) conclude that although there are many definitions, the majority of these will probably fall into one of four loosely aligned but often contested typologies.

- Leadership as a Position. If this typology is adopted it is considered that leaders have positional power which enables them to get things done within their area of responsibility or power.

- Leadership as a Person. This typology considers the personal qualities and attributes of the leader.

- Leadership as a Result. The leader will dedicate their efforts and attention to the achievement of commonly agreed goals. Successful leadership (or otherwise) is determined by the achievement of these goals.

- Leadership as a Process. This typology suggests leadership exists as a process that takes place between leaders and their followers. It suggests that the leader both affects and is affected by their followers and that the relationship between leaders and followers is not linear but is interactive and fluid. If leadership is considered a process it is open to everyone and not exclusively given to the formally designated leader of the group.

A brief history of recent research themes might help provide some illumination to the development of leadership thinking. The majority of research studies in the first half of the 20th century were concerned with attempting to define and refine behaviours, qualities or characteristics of leaders (Avolio 2007). This period of research, sometimes labelled trait theory, is characterised by the belief that leaders are born and not made. The search, at this point, was to identify the characteristics or traits that made great leaders. A great number of traits were identified. The significant problem that Mann (1959) discovered after reviewing all of the studies conducted between 1900 and 1957 was that the correlation between leadership and the identified personality variables (or traits) was inconsistent and, significantly, overall quite low.

A series of models of leadership that fitted into an approach known as Contingency or Situational Leadership followed. The concept behind these approaches was first identified by Stogdill in 1948. Stogdill (1974) was engaged in a meta-analysis of leadership traits and could not identify any significant results. He did, however, identify for the first time that the situation played a large role in how the leader behaved. Research efforts then focused on validating a number of contingency and situational modules. The majority of models from this period (a number still have relevance today) consider that effective leadership is an artefact of the fit between the leader's characteristics and of the unique situation that they confront (Avolio 2007, Haslam et al 2011). Northouse (2015) suggests that leaders should adapt their style to meet the needs of the situation.

In 1978 MacGregor Burns developed a new concept of leadership that he called Transformational Leadership. A collection of similar transformational approaches emerged during this time that became known as new paradigm approaches (Alimo-Metcalf, Alban-Metcalf 2005). The adaptation of the term Transactional Leadership also became common and is considered the antithesis of Transformational Leadership. Burns's concept gained momentum and in the 1990s was perhaps the most popular and most researched of the new paradigm approaches to leadership (Judge, Bono 2000, Alimo-Metcalf, Alban-Metcalf 2006).

Transformational Leadership was felt to be a leadership style that fitted the needs of the workforce at a given time (Northouse 2015). Burns wanted to develop a concept that positively linked leaders and their followers. The aim of his model was to transform people; to help them become the best that they could become so that together, the organisation and the people in it could achieve so much more than had

been originally expected. The model included concern for ethics, standards and satisfying the needs of followers (Alimo-Metcalf, Alban-Metcalf 2005).

Burns distinguished Transformational Leadership from Transactional Leadership. Transactional leaders rely on what is called the exchange or transaction that occurs between the leader and the follower. So at a simple level if a follower, working in an organisation, does what the leader requires of them, they will receive the reward that they had previously jointly agreed upon, i.e. a salary that recognises their contribution to common goals. This is the transaction or exchange. Burns believed that most leadership models are in essence transactional in nature and that this approach is evident at all levels throughout all types of organisations.

Research efforts focused on assessing the effectiveness of transformational models. As one example, Alimo-Metcalf, Alban-Metcalf (2005) discovered, following a large study of public sector organisations in the United Kingdom, that transformational leadership leads to higher levels of satisfaction, motivation and productivity and lower levels of sickness absence and employee turnover.

Whilst the popularity of transformational leadership continues, a model of leadership called distributed or shared leadership has been gathering attention. This again is an area of contested definitions (Currie and Locket 2011). The underlying concept is a recognition that it is becoming increasingly difficult in complicated multi-skilled environments (like hospitals) for a single person to be able to lead on all aspects of the organisation. The leadership task is distributed or shared with others. To be effective, distributed leadership is intended to be a whole organisation concept and culture, with all members of the organisation able to take a lead when required (Hartley et al 2008).

Synthesizing Argument - Leadership, a Constructivist View

A constructivist epistemological position would assert that truth does not exist independently of human interpretation, but instead meaning is attributed to an object as a consequence of its integration with the human world. Crotty (1998 p42) suggested that constructivists believe "meaning is not discovered but constructed". A constructivist world is not a static place, it has fluidity to it. As we engage with the world we make sense of the concepts and objects that we encounter. That sense making is influenced by our experiences. It may be our culture, our values or our social class but the sense we make of an object will be shaped by our experiences up until that time. The sense that we make may continually evolve as our exposure and experience of an object increases. Crotty uses an example of a tree to illuminate the concept. We will perhaps all have an understanding of how a tree should look. The trees we describe may even have elements of similarity to them. Our experiences will, however, affect the way we perceive trees, so the perception that a logger working in a pine forest on a wintry Scottish hillside has of trees might be very different to that of an olive grove farmer working in the hot Greek countryside. Simply, the logger's perception might change if he goes to Greece.

Organisations are complex and diverse with problems that are complex and diverse. Grint (2010) adapts the concepts of wicked and tame problems. A tame problem may require a complicated solution but the actual uncertainty of the situation is limited. The solution may be difficult, but the problem is solvable. A wicked problem is complex (as opposed to just being complicated). The cause and effect link is not clear and wicked problems are often incredibly obstinate. Tame problems require effective managers; wicked problems require leaders who can mobilise a range of people who,

with unique insight, might identify creative solutions to problems (Hartley et al 2008). People working in the expensive, unique, complicated and resource limited health and social care sector must endeavour to find solutions to wicked problems.

Despite much endeavour and effort, single or simple leadership solutions perhaps do not appear to have met the needs of this diverse and complex community. The positivist, reductionist approach that has been so prevalent in much leadership research has perhaps unsurprisingly failed to identify anything but simple concepts (Kempster, Parry 2011). Emerging qualitative approaches to research may identify solutions to complex organisational problems but, as a consequence of study design and the complexity of organisations that have contributed to the study, there is often little intention for generalisation, only to offer a contribution to a growing debate.

Bolman and Deal (2008) identify a common belief that leadership is the universally accepted cure of organisational ills, whilst Hartley et al (2008) identify many fashions and trends in approaches to leadership. There are many models and ways in which leadership can be described. Researchers, academics and philosophers have sought an answer to this difficult, complex and multi faceted phenomenon yet despite over three thousand years of research, it still appears to defy definition (Grint 2010, Crainer 1998). Northouse (2007 p2) suggests that although we "intuitively know what leadership is", when attempts are made to define it, the word has so many different meanings for different people. Hernandez et al (2011) describe how many of the models that have been developed have helped with our understanding of the concept, yet still new and disparate approaches are being developed.

It is perhaps time to call off the search for Simkin's holy grail (2005); it may now be time for a change to leadership theory (Tourish 2013) to end the relentless chase for

the one silver bullet. There is no one right answer or approach; leadership is a social construct and effective leadership is determined by our understanding of ourselves, the world in which we live, and our values and experiences that have led us to become the unique individuals that we are. This will change as our experiences change our perception of leadership in organisations.

Does this now make the leadership research community redundant? No, there may not be one single way but commonality does exist and it is perhaps this that should be explored.

Turnbull-James (2011 p7) questions the popular view that leadership is beyond definition. She reports that actually the field had unified behind a basic assumption for some time that "in its simplest form leadership is a tripod" which is made up of the leader, the follower and the goal that is to be attained. Others have recognised this position, for example Clark and Clark (1996 p25) simply didn't agree with what they describe as the "common perception of the elusive nature of leadership". Their definition suggested that leadership is an observable activity in which "leaders and followers willingly subscribe to common purposes and work together to achieve them". Northouse (2007 p3) defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal".

To develop Turnbull-James analogy we might consider the tripod as a three legged stool. Avolio (2007) adds that the context in which the leader operates is a fundamentally important consideration in their approach to leadership. It would appear that this is perhaps a fourth leg that transforms the tripod or stool into a chair. A chair might be considered to be a more stable seating platform.

It would appear there is unification of what leadership means. Ideally, the leadership chair might begin with four legs of equal length; this provides balance and a stable seating platform. It seems that a great mass of the debate within the leadership community surrounds the length of the individual legs of the chair. In the majority of early studies the focus was on the leader and what could, or needed, to be done in order to motivate followers to achieve common goals (Ray and Goppelt 2011, Graen and Uhl-bien 1995). The leader leg of the chair was by far the most important component.

Towards the end of the trait era the focus of academics and researchers turned to examining the situation or context that the leader confronts when leading. As we move into the 1980s and 90s, transformational leadership takes centre stage, with a focus on models that consider the needs of the follower. What can we do together to make the follower the best they can be in order to achieve our common goals? As we move onward our attention shifts towards distributed leadership, a clear move away from the earlier overwhelming emphasis on the hero leader, to a focus on the follower and the situation or context.

Synthesizing Argument - The Leadership Equation

It is clear that whatever model or approach holds sway at any particular time; it is always a balance or a re-balance of the following four elements. This could be labelled the leadership equation.

Fig 3 The Leadership Equation   (Johnson et al 2013)

The menu of leadership styles has become rich and diverse. Practitioners may choose from an eclectic array of approaches, many of which have a supporting evidence base. There is no clearly defined right approach; no simple model can be effective in all situations (Allio 2009). How then can an effective choice be made and justified? In order to develop effective leadership in organisations, regardless of the particular current fashion of leadership thinking, leaders, at any level in an organisation, must pay attention to the factors that contribute to the elements that form the leadership equation. It is suggested that if all of the elements have been scrutinised, analysed and uniquely considered by the individual leader and a balanced view arrived at, the leader will have the best chance of success. If any element is ignored or missed, it is suggested that their leadership will be ineffective.

Literature Review Conclusions

Leadership is a complex subject that has been studied extensively over a long period of time. Its importance to effective and efficient organisations has been considered and restated many times. This has led to a wealth of research seeking to identify the right approach to successful leadership. Despite much energy and activity, no single approach has been identified that provides an answer to this question, instead a wide and eclectic array of approaches is proposed. Through a critical interpretive synthesis of literature, a synthesizing argument that suggests leadership is a social construct has

been propagated. There will be no single right approach that is appropriate for all (Allio 2009). The literature, however, does suggest that, fundamentally, each leadership model contains a balance of four elements; the leader, the follower, common goals and the situation. In order for individual leaders to be successful, consideration has to be given to how each of these elements relate to one another. If the leader is able to do this, regardless of the style that they adopt, it is suggested that they will be successful. These four elements have been combined to create The Leadership Equation. The identification of the two Synthesising Arguments has been seminal to this study. The social construction of leadership helped to justify the epistemological approach taken. The leadership equation provided a platform and a format that led to the development of the interview questions.
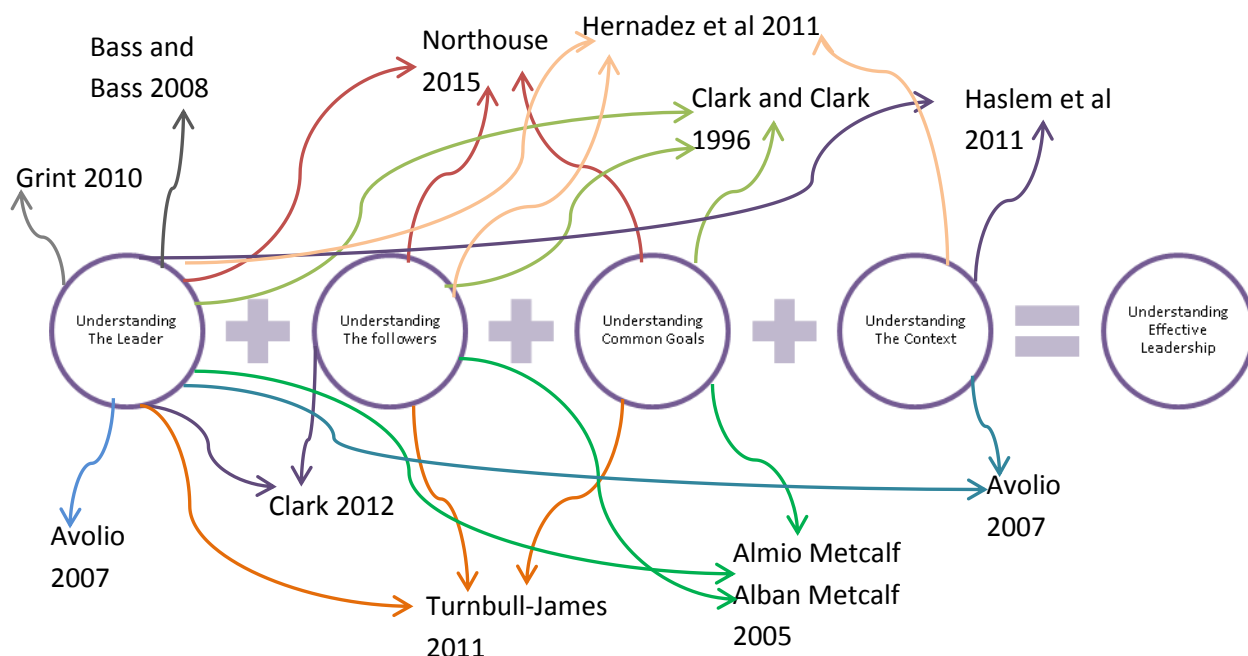

Fig 4 The Leadership Equation with supporting literature references

Chapter 3 Research Design and Justification

Introduction

This chapter sets out to describe and justify the choices that were made at the design stage of the study. It initially sets out the importance that has been placed in establishing a clear and congruent approach within each aspect of the design. The study utilises Crotty's (1998 p1) model to provide "scaffolding" for the design. Each stage of the scaffolding is described and the congruence between each step is explained.

Management and Leadership Research

In order to advance knowledge in the field of leadership and management within organisations, researchers are often required to engage in work based inquiry. This has been described as a messy and inefficient research journey as researchers engage with "real people, real problems and real organisations" (Edmondson & McManus 2007 p1155). The design of social research projects in this environment are sometimes said to be dynamic and challenging but can also perhaps be described as a series of compromises. Gray (2009) identifies that there is no consistent, agreed approach to working within this field. Whilst this diversity may create problems for some, it is considered a strong point by others (Bluhm et al 2011). Indeed Gill et al (2010) argue against attempts to advocate for a particular 'best' approach, believing that the acceptance of methodological diversity which considers context is all important in research design. It would seem that researchers in this field utilise a wide variety of different worldviews (Creswell 2009), epistemological and ontological perspectives

(Crotty 1998, Easterby-Smith et al 2012), methodologies and methods as they seek to demonstrate that their study provides an answer.

As suggested in Chapter 1, there has been an explosion of research that considers this subject area. This has led to what Crainer (Mullins 2007 p363) describes as "minefields of misunderstanding" through which practitioners and researchers must tread carefully. The exploration and elucidation of the research design of this study seeks to provide a cognitive map through Crainer's minefields (or perhaps mind-fields) of misunderstanding.

Denscombe (2007 p3) suggests that the unique nature of each research project is not congruent with "slavishly following a set of rules about what is right and wrong". As a consequence the designer of the project is faced with myriad different design decisions, options and choices that must be deciphered. Although Gray (2009 p16) believes there to be a "bewildering array of theoretical perspectives", it is the appropriate interpretation of these options that will significantly affect the way in which an issue is viewed.

Each decision is informed by a set of assumptions that the researcher brings to the project. Easterby-Smith et al (2012) comment that researchers often simply follow the tradition that has been passed on to them without any real consideration of these significant issues. Silfe and Williams (1995) suggest, however, that all theories and concepts are informed by an implied understanding, or assumptions that the theorist holds about the world. How particular issues are viewed will be determined by the experiences and values that the researcher, and indeed, the reader will hold. They go on to suggest that many researchers do not pay sufficient attention to demonstrating the implied understanding that led to the development of their theory.

Johnson & Duberley (2000) support Silfe and Williams earlier work and reiterate that researchers who work within the field of management and leadership often fail to explore and explain the philosophical assumption or lens (Creswell 2009) that determines their view of the world. Whitley (Gill et al 2010) commented that research within this field is fragmented and is often completed in an impromptu and opportunistic manner. He believed that there was often very little co-ordination between research strategies and methods.

The exposition of the researcher's philosophical assumptions is important in all areas of study. Practitioners within the leadership and management community, however, draw upon knowledge derived from an eclectic and pragmatic array of perspectives that might range from sociology and anthropology, to economics and statistical analysis (Easterby-Smith et al 2012, Gray 2009). Additionally managers already report scepticism about the usefulness of research (Gill et al 2010). The omission of the researcher's philosophical assumptions, the beliefs and values that completely underpin the research, would significantly weaken the credibility (or validity), dependability (or reliability) and transferability (or generalisability) of any research project, but within this field, where a commonly accepted and recognised way of conducting research does not exist, this omission is a major flaw in research design (Denscombe 2007).

The transferability of theory into practice within this subject area is of critical importance. If the reader misinterprets or misunderstands the nuances of a particular finding as a consequence of not fully understanding the lens through which the researcher has viewed the problem, the applied theory will be ineffective or at the very least, the results will differ from the intended outcome of the original research.

The research will therefore be considered to have little value. Theory that isn't transferable into an organisational context will hold little value for organisations and, indeed, might add additional layers of scepticism to an already unconvinced audience (Gray 2009, Gill et al 2010).

Each decision that designers take has both advantages and disadvantages, and although there are no right answers, some strategies might be better suited to a particular issue and perhaps a particular researcher (Denscombe 2007). It is, therefore, critically important to the success and validity of this research project that the designer considered the architecture of the research project, paying particular attention to ensuring that the rationale for each choice is explored and clearly understood.

Scaffolding or Skeleton

Crotty (1998) believes that it easy to become lost in this complex landscape; he attempts to bring clarity to it by proposing a framework or scaffolding from which research designers can begin to build their own projects. Crotty identifies many competing and conflicting concepts and theories within research literature. He acknowledges that others may present a different way of looking at these issues. His intention, however, is that this scaffolding will help to ensure that there is structure and robustness to the research design and a degree of congruence between each of his elements. Crotty (1998 p2) clarifies that "this is scaffolding not an edifice". It is assumed that as the project nears completion this scaffolding should be removed revealing the edifice or project that has been created. Crotty's metaphor achieves his aims of providing structure and direction for the research designer. I wonder, however, if Crotty might have developed a metaphor linked to a skeleton rather than scaffolding.

After scaffolding has been removed there should be no visible marks to indicate how it helped support the architecture during construction. If Silfe and Williams (1995) are correct it would appear to be vitally important, in order for readers to decipher the theory correctly, that they understand how the scaffolding worked so that they are able to understand the lens through which the researcher viewed the problem. A skeleton metaphor would suggest that there is structure giving stability and a sense of direction onto which the designer can build. The overall beauty of the final project isn't spoilt by messy scaffolding but, with a little insight, it is explicitly clear how the designer underpinned the structure of the project.

As Crotty (1998) suggests his scaffolding approach is just one of many that could have been taken. To illustrate this, Easterby-smith et al (2012) adopt a cross sectional view of a tree whilst Saunders et al (2012) describe layers of a research onion. It was, however, the simplicity of Crotty's model that led to its adoption within this study. There are many complexities and much confusion within this area and this straightforward model helped to provide a degree of light to guide this researcher through this particular fog.

Crotty (1998 p4) suggests that four elements should be clear and in balance within the research design. His elements are "epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods."
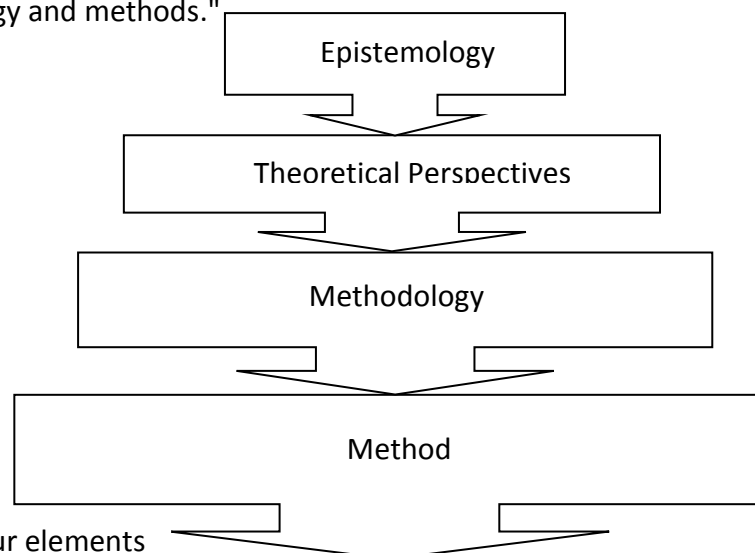

Fig 5. Crotty's four elements

Epistemology

A cornerstone of this research architecture is an understanding of the epistemological perspectives of the researcher. A variety of sources indicate the importance of establishing this perspective (Crotty 1998, Johnson & Duberley 2000, Gray 2009, Creswell 2009, Easterby-Smith et al 2012). Yet, as Johnson and Duberley (2000 p2) suggest, even though this concept has been debated by both philosophers and scientists since the time of Plato and Aristotle, the term remains somewhat esoteric and for most people it "obfuscates more than it reveals". Gray (2009) adds that those who are new to the study of philosophical perspectives often struggle to comprehend the concepts. This is not helped by a somewhat bewildering confusion of terminology that appears to exist within literature. Just as clarification seems to emerge following the dissection of a particular epistemological perspective, other authors introduce new language and commentary that takes the perspective in another direction (Crotty 1998). Given this and the concern that many perspectives are still the subject of debate and conjecture, it is not surprising that novice (and sometimes not so novice) researchers avoid tackling these issues.

Johnson and Duberley (2000 p2) seek to clarify the concept by breaking down the word; they state it is formed from the two Greek words episteme and logos. "Episteme meaning knowledge or science, whilst logos is understood to mean knowledge, information, theory or account". When combined they suggest that epistemology is knowledge about knowledge or "how we know what we know" (Crotty 1998 p8).

It would seem that epistemology sits above, below and all around the actual research project. Without such theories of knowledge, however unstated or inferred, it would not be possible to make any legitimate claim about what we think has been

experienced or what we think we know. It is the anchor that orientates the way that the researcher understands the world in which they exist. It is the anchor that justifies any claim that the researcher makes.

There is however a paradoxical problem with this anchor that has been labelled the "circularity of epistemology" (Johnson and Duberley 2000 p4). To develop our understanding of how we know what we know, we must have already developed trusted assumptions and knowledge about how we know what we know, thus the paradox. Alexander (2011) explores this further by suggesting that people who genuinely care that their beliefs are true, must also genuinely care that the sources that they have used to help them to establish their beliefs are also true. He suggests (Alexander 2011 p224) "in order to acquire a reasonable belief about whether our sources are reliable, we will have to rely on some sources of belief. By relying on those sources, we are presupposing that they are in fact reliable". Thus the circularity; it is almost like looking into two mirrors that stand in parallel. The image continually repeats itself without clarity about which image appears first. Sosa (Lemos 2004 p256), supports this premise and concedes that "eventually any reasoning for the reliability of our ways of forming beliefs will, if reflection is pushed far enough, exhibit epistemic circularity".

So does the circularity of epistemology debate render this epistemological anchor superfluous, or is this cornerstone redundant as a concept within research design? This, it would appear, is very definitely not the case. In essence, the circularity problem strengthens the claim that a clear and justified epistemological position must be established. There can be no absolute, incontrovertible and definitive claim for concluding 'what we know about what we know'. If there was only one definitive truth

there would be little need to assert it; it would be commonly understood. There can only be competing sets of philosophical assumptions. It is therefore the justification and elucidation of our stance that is significantly important within our research design (Lemos 2004).

Epistemological perspective - Social Constructionism/Relational Constructionism

A fundamental aspect of this study, as identified in the literature review, is the belief that leadership is a social construct. Social constructionists believe there may not be a single truth. The truth we construct is a consequence of our interaction with our environment and our experiences of this environment up until this time. Truths might have fluidity to them and might change as our exposure and experience of them changes. Young and Collins (2004 p377) assert that knowledge is therefore "culturally and historically specific". The social construction of leadership is determined by the nature of an individual's interaction with it up until that time. As we continue to be exposed to many differing perspectives on leadership, each individual construct may well be slightly or fundamentally different. The social constructivist accepts that multiple realities may exist.

Creswell states that social constructivists "seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" with researchers looking to develop subjective meaning from the participant's unique experiences (Creswell 2009 p8). This project is based around leaders within health and social care organisations. My background and career history place me firmly within this landscape; this is perhaps 'my turf' or 'my patch' and this is the place I feel I know well.

There is much ambiguity within literature regarding social constructionist/constructivist definitions. Young and Collins (2004 p375) believe that although the term has become "firmly established" it is still proving difficult to agree and consistently apply definitions. This multiplicity leads to a suggestion that social constructionism includes a wide range of perspectives. Young and Collins (2004 p378) "speak of a family of social constructionists". Burr (2003 p2) also uses a family analogy suggesting that whilst all social constructionist concepts do not all share the same single feature, there is, however, enough similarity amongst them to be able to see that they all have "a family resemblance". Danziger (1997 p401) adds that it "lends itself to a loosely knit network". Given the earlier stated importance of an epistemological anchor, it would seem significant to stipulate where this study is located within this family or network.

Relational Constructionism

Van der Haar and Hosking (2004) and Hosking (2011) describe Relational Constructionism as a concept towards the boundaries of Danziger's network that is particularly suitable for Appreciative Inquiry methodologies. They believe that reality is constructed as a consequence of the language, dialogue and relationship that exist between participant and researcher. They call this co-construction; it belongs to both the researcher and the participant. Co-constructions might be slightly different and multiple realties can exist. Participants in this study have been recruited from a diverse range of organisations, professions and roles. They are all, however, part of a wider health and social care community. They are also part of an educational, professional doctorate community. There is much that is different within this group, there is much that they share which, it is believed, will give them a degree of commonality.

Jha (2012) suggest that knowledge is constructed not only by an individual reflecting on their experiences within their world, but is also co-constructed by individuals interacting with others within their specific community. This suggests the importance of the relational aspect of constructionism.

Easterby-Smith et al (2012 p13) describes managers as tending to be highly educated, often holding higher degrees and PhDs; this is certainly the case with the sample used within this project. As a consequence they tend to be knowledgeable and interested in research processes and outcomes. This leads to the "possibility of the joint production of knowledge".

This would support the relational constructionism, co-construction approach. For example, at the end of one of the semi-structure interviews, the participant described how the interview process had allowed him to articulate his philosophy of leadership which up until that time he hadn't been able to put into words. In effect he co-constructed a reality. The interviewer also co-constructed a reality that might be different from the participant's perspective, and might have been based upon multiple conversations.

The epistemological perspective of this research project fits within a social constructionist/relational constructionist worldview (Creswell 2009).

Theoretical Perspective- Interpretivism

According to Crotty (1998 p66), theoretical perspective is taken to "mean the philosophical stance lying behind a methodology". In this study an interpretivist theoretical perspective is taken.

An interpretivist approach is closely aligned to a constructionist epistemology (Gray 2009). An interpretivist perspective would take an ideographic analytical stance to data (Keutel et al 2014) and seek to understand and explain human and social reality by exploring the uniqueness of individual experiences. The researcher considers how culture and history have contributed to the individual's interpretations of their real life experiences. Interpretivist research is said to be essential for developing in depth understanding of processes in organisations, teams and individuals, and for building understanding of how these processes develop over time (Bluhm et al 2011).

As with social constructionism, Interpretivism is an overarching concept that covers a range of diverse streams (Crotty 1998). Hermeneutics is one of these streams that seem particularly relevant to this study. Hermeneutics is a tradition with a long history that originally involved the interpretation of legal documents and scripture (Rennie 2012). In more modern times Gray (2009 p24) suggests that within a hermeneutic approach, the focus would be on interpretation more than explanation and description. "Social reality is far too complex to understand by observation" and therefore the researcher must interpret the data to achieve a deeper level of understanding. Smythe and Spence (2012 p13) propose that understanding is contextual and dynamic; they suggest that "through being in the world, we acquire an orientation that is interwoven, inseparably, with our history and culture. We inherit traditions, both formally and informally, through language and the processes of socialisation that mean we cannot stand outside the phenomenon in question because embedded in us are understandings derived from these previous experiences". As a leader, manager, lecturer and now researcher within the health and social care field, it was important

that the researcher recognised his own history, culture and role within this research design.

Methodology - Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is based on a set of five principles set out by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987). Rather than simply dictate a manual for 'doing AI', Cooperrider reported a desire for researchers to embrace the overarching philosophy of the concept (Boje et al 2012, Watkins et al 2011).

Cooperrider and Srivastva's first principle is that research should be appreciative, all things work to some degree and research should focus on the aspects that do work. Their second principle requires research to be applicable and practically useful. The third principle requires that the research is "provocative" (p162) in that findings should be both pragmatic and visionary. The fourth principle concerns collaboration. This approach requires collaboration between the researcher and the study participants. The fifth principle requires that the process of inquiry is an affirming process for participants (Cooperrider, Srivastva 1987).

Although frequently discussed in relation to action research and organisational change, Cooperrider's position has led to many different typologies flourishing (Boje et al 2012). Hart et al (2008 p634) confirm that a number of AI approaches have been "applied, researched and documented and this includes leadership development activity". Carr-Steward and Walker (2003) detail a number of AI studies that consider leadership and Grint (2005) suggested approaches like AI should be considered for leadership development studies. Robson et al (2013) identify a growing body of research within health and social care organisations that have utilised an AI methodology.

AI contests the problem focused, deficit dialogue prevalent in much research and favours instead a strengths based approach (Grant and Humphries 2006, Robson et al 2013). It seeks to identify what is possible rather than what is wrong. As a consequence it is reported to create a high level of goodwill, participation and collaboration amongst research participants (Carter 2006).

Gill and Johnson (2002) report that managers perceive research findings fail to understand their real world, leading to scepticism about research. Carter (2008) identifies a growing number of studies in this field show that research is not proving beneficial to the practitioner community.

The design of this study requires engaged participants who work in leadership roles; it is possible that engaging them in a deficit dialogue about their chosen profession might discourage open discussion. The participative, positive approach of an AI methodology may lessen scepticism and resistance, and perhaps, though collaboration and taking "better care of informants and research participants" (Carter 2006 p51) engage the practitioner community in research that has value to them as future leaders.

There are a number of critics of AI, the majority of whom refer to the denial of negativity and the lack of reflection. A number of authors use the analogy of light. As an example Rodger and Fraser (Grant and Humphries 2006) describe a plant growing heliotropically toward the light as a way of showing AI can provide an unbalanced and unreflective perspective. Fitzgerald et al (2010) considered the polarising positions that this can lead to and explores the concept of shadow. They provide a number of examples of shadow, and suggest that if a light is shone on an object, a variety of shadows appear. Thinking of the lighting used in theatres, the use of light and shadows

provides depth and structure to a performance. A spotlight may clearly illuminate an object but the nature and length of the shadows give it depth. Fitzgerald et al (2010) believes that after almost 30 years of use, the approach has reached a level of maturity that should allow for the emergence of the shadows as a way of adding depth to the portrayed picture. In this study, whilst not seeking deficit discussions, shadows emerged that provided depth and structure to the picture. This project confidently embraced Fitzgerald et al's shadows.

Typically a comprehensive AI intervention would involve four stages; this is often referred to as the 4D cycle, with the stages labelled as discover, dream, design and destiny (Watkins et al 2011). The discovery phase is intended to discover what the participant feels is best about the topic of discussion, based upon current and past experiences. So in the context of this study during the discovery phase, participants were encouraged to think about what is best about the way they lead. The second phase is called the dream phase and asks participant to imagine how things might or could be. The third 'design' phase calls on participants to consider concrete plans for their ideal future, and the final stage, the destiny phase, focuses on sustaining the ideal future within the participants' real world (Robson et al 2013).

Robson et al (2013) discovered that when used as a mode of inquiry, researchers often do not embrace the full 4 stages; this, it would appear, is of particular relevance to studies that are not designed as action research projects. This complies with Cooperidder's original intention of a philosophy rather than an AI handbook.

When considering the aspect of AI to incorporate into this design, the research question and the aims and objectives of this study were revisited and are shown below:

- What do health and social care leaders perceive is required of leadership in contemporary and future organisations?

- To provide new insight into a concept of leadership that will have relevance to practitioner leaders regardless of their leadership style or approach

- To elicit opinion on a contemporary view of leadership that has been derived from the literature

- Derive a model of leadership from the literature to elicit conceptualised understanding of leadership

- To generate insight into how leaders perceive solutions will emerge to wicked problems

- To develop an approach to leadership that could inform curriculum design of leadership development programmes

It would seem that the first two phases of the 4D cycle were the most applicable. The second two phases, the design and destiny phase, whilst not irrelevant to this study do not perhaps add a great deal. It was considered, therefore, more effective to only work with the discover and dream concepts. The design decision was to adopt the overarching positive dialogue methodology of AI but to only utilise the first two phases of the 4D cycle.

The methodology of this project is based within the overarching philosophy of AI which, according to Bushe, is an approach "firmly grounded in social constructionist theory" (Boje et al 2012 p87). Cooperrider and Serivista's (1987 p132) "sociorationalism" definition has a congruence with an Interpretivist theoretical perspective.

Method

Constructionists believe that the sense people make of the world is based on their historical and cultural perspectives, therefore, researchers should seek to understand and interpret information within this context (Crotty 1998). Easterby-Smith et al (2002 p25) add that constructionists gather "rich data from which ideas are induced".

Bluhm et al (2011) describe how an interpretivist seeks to understand and explain human and social reality by exploring the uniqueness of individual experiences. The researcher considers how culture and history have contributed to the individual's interpretations of their real life experiences.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015 p21) postulate that if you want to understand the world and the lives of people, why not simply talk to them. One of their concepts is that interviews are pivotal in the "social production of knowledge", they believe interviews are active processes in which the interviewer and the interviewee, as a consequence of their interaction and relationship, produce knowledge and this knowledge is "contextual, linguistic, narrative and pragmatic". Ribbins (Bridge, Coleman 2007) suggested that people are interviewed to find out what they are thinking, thus gathering rich data in a way that other methods could not achieve.

These elements together describe an approach that requires exploration, interpretation and sense making through the generation of rich data; this would perhaps be best facilitated by a discursive typology like a semi structured interview.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a methodology that is said to generate a participative collaborative feel within research participants. Carter (2006 p56) suggests that "generative questions are used within conversational interviews to trigger storytelling

about experiences, memories, shared histories and values"; again the focus is on conversation and exploration. Although other techniques are identified in a number of AI studies, the semi-structured interview approach is considered to offer the most effective method within this research methodology.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2015 p150) defined semi-structured interviews as an interview that seeks to obtain descriptions of the "life world of the interviewee, with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena".

The design method of this research project used appreciative, semi-structured interviews which enabled the researcher to guide participants through the two phase AI agenda, but allowed enough flexibility to fit in with a conversational interviewing approach (Bridges and Coleman 2007).

Sampling

Choosing a sample method is a key decision in all research designs. Marshal (1996) reports that real world qualitative studies often require and utilise pragmatic and flexible approaches to sample selection. A purposive sampling approach was used to recruit participants for this study. The sample criteria included alumni and members of a university Professional Doctorate programme who are in leadership roles. The sample criteria also included academics who teach on leadership programmes. The Professional Doctorate programme is designed to help participants develop and reflect upon their leadership role. They should have considered the questions that this research is, in effect, asking. As they have also travelled or are travelling this professional doctorate path, it was considered that they may have been supportive of contributing to a fellow traveller's journey. All participants will have had the

opportunity to consider leadership approaches either within their job role or as a part of the Professional Doctorate programme. Throughout this interview process, they were offered an affirming opportunity (at least this was the intention) to articulate and co-construct their considered perceptions of leadership. It is believed that this sampling approach was congruent with the relational constructionism epistemology, interpretivist theoretical perspective and AI methodology. Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed as soon as possible after the interview. The digital file was stored as a password encrypted file.

Sample size is also a key determinant in most doctoral studies; Mason (2010) describes how achieving data saturation is considered the overarching principle of most qualitative studies. He then explores how this concept has been challenged by a number of researchers. As an example Strauss and Corbin (1998 p136) suggest that data saturation is in reality "a matter of degree" as the longer the researcher is immersed in the data the more likely it is that something new will emerge. They conclude that it should be considered that data saturation has been achieved when discovering something new is actually counter productive and the new thing really doesn't add to the existing findings. Mason explored the sample size of a wide range of PhD theses; he concluded that there are many different approaches to arriving at a sample size. Interestingly he identified that in the larger sample size examples, it became evident that nothing new really emerged after approximately six interviews. Francis et al (2010) agree that no consistent approach has been developed to determine when data saturation has been reached. Their model claims to pragmatically operationalise this issue. They suggest that the researcher should identify an initial sample size, it should then be established how many additional

interviews would be carried out without further new data emerging; this second component is identified as the stopping criteria. In this study the initial interview sample was nine interviews with the stopping criteria being three interviews, therefore, nine initial interviews took place, and if after undertaking a further three interviews no new themes emerged, it was assessed that data saturation had been achieved.

Sample

Twelve interviews took place. The sample population was purposively selected and the pragmatic inclusion criteria were:

- participants had to have completed a University Professional Doctorate Programme

  or were in the process of completing the Professional Doctorate Programme.

  All had to be in leadership roles (engagement in the Professional Doctorate programme ensured that this was the case)
- Academics that teach on leadership programmes

Participants held a range of different jobs and worked in leadership roles within their organisation. The sample included participants who worked in public, private and third sector organisations across the health and social care sector.

Table 1 shows the range of roles and organisations within the sample population. This sample population is recruited from a relatively small pool. It is important for the validity of the final report that readers understand the sector, the level and the role that participants had. It is equally important given the relatively small pool that the sample is drawn from that individual participants are not identified. Therefore the

overarching role and sector that the participant is employed in is highlighted, but the

speciality, geographical location, specific job title and organisation is omitted.

Additionally participants were randomly allocated a pseudonym. This is obviously not

their real name and does not reflect their gender, although the ratio of male and

female names is congruent with the genders of the actual participants. This is to give

the qualitative comments more of a real life feel. This exercise was completed at the

end of the interview process and before data analysis. It does not reflect the order of

the interview schedule, neither does it reflect the order of the data analysis, it is purely

a random allocation.

Study identifier	Role	Sector	Pseudonym
Participant 1	Senior Service Manager	Mental Health	Tom
Participant 2	Partner	Primary Health Care	Hannah
Participant 3	Assistant Director	Third Sector national organisation	Kate
Participant 4	Assistant Director	Secondary Health Care	Shaun
Participant 5	Advanced Practice Leader	Primary Health Care/ national liaison role	Hayley
Participant 6	Senior Academic	Higher Education	Lucy
Participant 7	Service Manager	Children's Social Care	Mohamed
Participant 8	Consultant	Acute Secondary Health Care	Isabel
Participant 9	Senior Academic	Higher Education	Rebecca
Participant 10	Senior Service Manager	Secondary Health Care	Sarah
Participant 11	Senior Manager	Public Health	Charlotte
Participant 12	Consultant	Private Sector	Jessica

Table 1 Participant Roles, Sector and Pseudonym

The interviews

The literature review stage identified the Leadership Equation as a new way of conceptualising leadership. The four elements of the leadership equation are shown below (Johnson et al 2013).

The interview format synthesised the four stages of the leadership equation and the first two stages of the AI questioning approach.

The full interview questions are shown in Appendix 2, as an example, however, the first two questions are shown below:

1. The equation suggests that leaders need to understand themselves, what they can offer; please can you consider what it is about you that makes you a good leader?

2. In an ideal world can you envision what a great leader might do?

Ribbens (Bridge, Coleman 2006) suggests there are a number of ways of carrying out an interview. Perhaps the most common approaches are face to face, telephone or emerging e-based interview formats like Skype. The researcher had experience of engaging in face to face and telephone interviews and felt relatively comfortable about this process, thus allowing him to focus on the content. He had very little Skype experience.

The participants were offered a choice of face to face, telephone or Skype interview. Face to face interviewees were offered a choice of location; interviews could be carried out at the University or at a suitable venue of the participant's choice. Participants chose their workplace or the University, no other venues were requested.

Choice was considered to be a really important ethical and practical issue in relation to the participative nature of this research project. Hanna (2012) suggests that offering the participant choice and some control over the research process encourages a more equal relationship between researcher and participant. To get the best out of research sceptic leaders (Gill and Johnson 2002) requires an engaging and participative process. Adding a choice of interview approach contributed to an appreciative, consultative, "joint production of knowledge" (Easterby-Smith et al 2012), partnership focused ethos. Eleven interviews were face to face. Of these, six interviews took place at the University and five took place in the participant's organisation. One participant asked that we carry out the interview via Skype.

Study identifier	Interview type	Location of interview
Participant 1 (Tom)	Face to face	University
Participant 2 (Hannah)	Face to face	University
Participant 3 (Kate)	Face to face	Participant's organisation
Participant 4 (Shaun)	Face to face	Participant's organisation
Participant 5 (Hayley)	Face to face	Participant's organisation
Participant 6 (Lucy)	Face to face	University
Participant 7 (Mohamed)	Face to face	Participant's organisation
Participant 8 (Isabel)	Face to face	University
Participant 9 (Rebecca)	Skype	remotely
Participant 10 (Sarah)	Face to face	University
Participant 11 (Charlotte)	Face to face	Participant's organisation
Participant 12 (Jessica)	Face to Face	University

Table 2 Showing the Location of the Participant Interviews

Face to face interviews

A face to face interview allows an interviewer to use all of their senses to develop what Senge (Gallos 2006 p769) might call "a creative tension". The interviewer would assess the interviewee's responses, both verbal and non verbal, and thus develop a proportionate, questioning approach that gets the best out of the interviewee. This, it was considered, would generate the richest amount of data; this in particular suits the researcher's experience and training as a counsellor and social worker. It would also be supportive of Carter's (2008) notion of conversational interviews.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015 p149) describe the interpersonal nature of interviews suggesting that an interview is a "conversation between two partners on a theme of mutual interest". In an attempt to create this conversation, interviews that took place at the University were held in relatively quiet, informal coffee areas. Participants were always offered a drink first; this was an attempt to induce an informal conversational approach. Each interview was preceded by a short chat in an attempt to reassure and put the participant at ease before the formal recording device was turned on.

If a drink was offered at a participant's organisation it was always accepted, this was thought to be good manners and again might help the participant feel relaxed and in control, thus creating the best environment for data gathering.

Skype

The Skype interview process initially caused some anxiety as the researcher was not very familiar with Skype. After reflecting on the suitability of Skype, it would appear to be a current and efficient method of conducting interviews. Flick (2009) describes the benefits of the real time, synchronous interactions of web based technologies, of

which Skype is clearly an emerging one. This approach might mitigate the loss of the non-verbal signal that enhances a face to face interview. Hanna (2012) concluded that it was an effective, empowering approach in which non-verbal cues were picked up.

The researcher's experience did not really support this based on the one Skype interview he carried out. The benefits of seeing the participant are clear, however, the camera is in a slightly higher place than the viewing screen. In order to observe non-verbal cues a focus on the actual participant is required. The picture that the participant actually sees is the researcher with their head slightly lowered and not looking at them. For the participant to feel that they are being looked at directly, the researcher needs to look into the camera, therefore not observing the participant and not seeing any non-verbal cues. The situation can be helped by adjusting the camera but still, the nature of the interaction is slightly odd. These observations were the perception of the researcher, and not supported by the participant who is a regular Skype user. In spite of this the quality of the data was just as rich as in the face to face interviews. The virtual nature of a Skype interview is perhaps not as 'real' as a face to face interview. But the convenience to the participants and the time saved in travelling perhaps compensates for this. Perhaps early expectations of this simulation were a little ambitious and maybe a greater familiarity with Skype itself would ease uncomfortable perceptions.

Time

Time was again an important factor; participants were advised that interviews could take up to an hour. The researcher always allowed for additional time to avoid any feeling of rushing the participants. The researcher was, however, always conscious of the time constraints that may affect busy managers and leaders, this was therefore a

compromise between the need to create a relaxed, informal, conversational environment and respect for the participant's busy schedule.

Interview times did vary, the shortest interview was 20 minutes and the longest 65 minutes. The average interview time was 38 minutes. There was little difference between the average times of the interviews when considering the effect of locations. The University based interviews averaged 38 minutes whilst interviews that were held in the participants' organisations averaged 37 minutes. The Skype interview, at 44 minutes, fitted into the range of interview times.

Study identifier	Interview type	Place	Time of interview
Participant 1 (Tom)	Face to face	University	31 minutes
Participant 2 (Hannah)	Face to face	University	35 minutes
Participant 3 (Kate)	Face to face	Participant's organisation	20 minutes
Participant 4 (Shaun)	Face to face	Participant's organisation	65 minutes
Participant 5 (Hayley)	Face to face	Participant's organisation	35 minutes
Participant 6 (Lucy)	Face to face	University	38 minutes
Participant 7 (Mohamed)	Face to face	Participant's organisation	29 minutes
Participant 8 (Isabel)	Face to face	University	43 minutes
Participant 9 (Rebecca)	Skype	remotely	44 minutes
Participant 10 (Sarah)	Face to face	University	49 minutes
Participant 11 (Charlotte)	Face to face	Participant's organisation	34 minutes
Participant 12 (Jessica)	Face to face	University	29 minutes

Table 3 Time and Location of Interviews

Ethical Issues

"It should go without saying that our research should be of the highest ethical standards" (Braun, Clarke 2013 p61). It was certainly the aspiration of the designer that the study sought to consider and achieve the highest ethical standards. Ethical consideration could initially appear to be a relatively straightforward, almost tick-box process that has to be completed in order to comply with regulations and rules. It is, however, a far more complex and subjective area that may have philosophical connotations and should be considered in more ways than just the simple observation of rules. Ethical considerations manifest themselves in a number of ways. In order to meet the requirements of what Brinkmann and Kvale (2015 p89) describe as the "bureaucracies of ethical review boards" a detailed proposal that considered ethical issues was presented to the Faculty Research Ethics Committee of the supporting University. After consideration, formal approval to proceed was given on 20th February 2014. A copy of the approval letter can be found at Appendix 4

Ethics and Management Research

As suggested earlier, researchers that venture into management and leadership research tend to have an eclectic background and as a consequence no agreed single way of conducting research has been established. As Bell and Bryman (2007) discovered, this continues into the field of ethics in research. This research community tends to draw on ethics codes developed in related fields of social enquiry. For example, this project has sought to comply with the Health Research Authority guidance and in particular the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (DH 2005). Bell and Bryman (2007) looked at the ethics codes of nine social scientific associations (this included the health and social care governance framework)

and using a content analysis method sought to identify the main ethical codes. They
concluded with eleven codes, eight related to the protection and best interest of the
research participants and three to the accuracy and lack of bias in research finding.
These codes are summarised in table 4:

Number	Heading	Description
1	Do no harm	Ensure that no physical or psychological harm is done to participants.
2	Dignity	The research process must respect the dignity of all those involved in the process.
3	Informed Consent	Participants are fully informed and give their consent to participation.
4	Privacy	Research participant's privacy must be protected.
5	Confidentiality	The confidentiality of research data is maintained.
6	Anonymity	Individuals and organisations cannot be identified within the research.
7	Deception	Ensure that deceptions within the research process through either misleading behaviour or lies are avoided.
8	Affiliations	All personal or professional affiliations are declared to ensure that potential conflicts of interest are clearly evident.
9	Honesty and Transparency	All communication must be open and honest.
10	Reciprocity	The concept that the research should have some mutual benefit to both the researcher and the research participant.
11	Misrepresentation	A need to avoid misleading, misrepresenting or simply false reporting of the research findings.

Table 4 Content Analysis of Ethical Codes (Bell, Bryman 2007)

This project sought to comply with all of the above codes; whilst some were fairly
obvious, some held a higher degree of risk within a research project that could be
considered as insider research and needed further exploration. Costley et al (2010)
explored the notion of insider research; although this study took place within multiple
organisations, it had, as a key criterion, members or alumni of a professional doctorate

programme who were in leadership roles in health and social care organisations. This therefore might be considered a community of practice that would be included in an insider researcher definition. Promising privacy and anonymity to colleagues who contribute to research are key ethical codes, but within this relatively small sample population, this area required additional care and thought. Promising privacy and anonymity to managers and leaders who work in health and social care organisations would be relatively easy but the addition of the criterion of contributing to the professional doctorate programme caused this to become much more difficult, indeed as Costley et al (2010 p32) suggests "almost impossible".

In order for the research to have credibility, readers needed to have an indication of the type of leadership role that the participants held. The researcher also wished to show the diversity of roles and sectors within the sample cohort. This had to be achieved whilst maintaining the privacy and anonymity of the participants. One table (Table 1), does indicate the type of role and sector of the participant, which is felt to be the most exposed place for participants; however, no geographical, organisational information or other detail was provided. Additionally the participant number and pseudonym were randomly allocated, so in the extremely unlikely circumstance of someone observing the interview schedule, the data that is presented does not follow in the same order as the participant interviews. After Table 1, throughout the rest of the report, participant indicators are completely anonymised. Detailed participant information including consent to be involved within the study is securely stored in a locked drawer. This, of course, is and has been available for external auditing scrutiny. Participants were informed that they could withdraw their data at any time up until

the report is published should they feel concerned in any way about their contribution. Up until this time no request to withdraw data had been received.

Additionally the design of the study utilising appreciative inquiry and adhering to Cooperrider and Srivastva's (1987) five principles meant that contribution was intended to be an affirming positive process, rather than a process that involved the more common deficit dialogue of a number of research projects. It was perceived as important that the privacy and anonymity of the research participants was protected and this was given a great deal of consideration. This positive dialogue approach suggests that should participant information be exposed, the positive exploration should cause little or no harm or damage to the participants' reputation.

The ethical code of reciprocity was also considered within the relational constructionist epistemology. It was intended that throughout the interview process the research participants engaged in a co-construction of their approach to leadership and together with the joint production of knowledge concept, felt that they too had benefited from involvement in the research project.

Costley et al (2010 p31) also suggests that research participants are more likely to feel obliged to contribute to insider research. Again this was recognised as an ethical dilemma. As stated earlier, it was felt that fellow travellers on the professional doctorate journey might be more willing to contribute to this journey, however, it had to be stipulated clearly that participation was entirely voluntary and there was no pressure or obligation to contribute. A statement to this end was included in the participant information sheets (Appendix 3), this was reiterated during verbal invitations to contribute and the verbal briefing given prior to the start of the interviews.

To conclude, ethical issues were considered during the design stage and attempts were made to mitigate risk. A number of authors (Brinkmann, Kvale 2015, Easterby-Smith et al 2012) emphasise strongly that research ethics is not a tick box exercise and although planning is important, researchers need to be open throughout the research process to the emergence of issues. Although difficult to evidence, the researcher felt these words resonated and reverberated within his head throughout the project (particularly during the data collection phase) and as a consequence, the researcher believed that he was continually open to the consideration and emergence of ethical issues.

Data analysis approach

There are, it appears, a perplexing array of diverse approaches to qualitative data analysis, with little guidance or rules for why a particular approach is adopted (Gray 2009). Attride-Stirling (2001) argues that there is a need for greater disclosure of the analytical approach deployed. She states that the 'how' question is often omitted from studies; this, she feels, is inexcusable and compromises not only the validity of the research, but also prevents others from developing and improving systems and approaches.

Thematic analysis is an approach to analysing qualitative data that is said to be a foundational method; as such it is often the first method that researchers experience. Thematic analysis can be usefully applied across a range of research designs and has a compatibility with a constructionist worldview (Braun, Clarke 2006). According to Guest et al (2012) thematic analysis moves beyond the simple counting of words or phrases and seeks to identify implicit and explicit ideas that exist within the data. Indeed Braun and Clarke (2006 p78) describe it as a "useful research tool which can provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of the data".

There are numerous similar frameworks available to help the researcher structure their thematic analysis, for example Smith and Davies (Dahlberg, McCraig 2010) and Denscombe (2007) support a five stage process. Gray (2009 p496) describes "six principles" whilst Braun and Clarke (2006 p87) suggest six slightly different phases. Easterby-Smith et al (2012) devised a similar seven stage process with the addition of a reflective stage. The researcher had used Braun and Clarke's model in earlier research and had intended to follow this process again; however, the addition of a reflective phase seemed a sensible addition to otherwise relatively semantic changes to the process, and so it was a synthesis of the Braun and Clarke model with the addition of the Easterby-Smith et al's reflection phase that was adopted during this study.

The first phase of the model suggests that the researcher should become familiar with the data. This stage involved immersion in the data through reading, re-reading and listening to the recorded interviews across the whole data set.

The second phase was a reflective stage, in which Easterby-Smith et al (2012) suggest that it is easy to become overawed by the amount of rich data that has been generated at this point, leading to what may seem an impossible task of attempting to interpret and make sense of it. Anecdotal conversations with other researchers would support a feeling of impasse at this stage, so a reflective pause during which the researcher steps back from the detail of the data and considers how initial thoughts about the data might add to or challenge existing knowledge, was thought to be a useful stage.

The third phase was a coding stage and involved a return to the detail of the data to begin the process of identifying and coding concepts that are emerging.

The fourth phase involved searching for themes within the generated codes.

The fifth phase again involved reflection and a review of the codes and themes to ensure congruence within the data codes and themes.

The sixth phase involved defining and clarifying the themes.

The seventh phase involved a final review and the writing up of the findings. (Braun, Clarke 2006, Easterby-Smith et al 2012). Reflection on the application of this approach is considered in chapter 9.
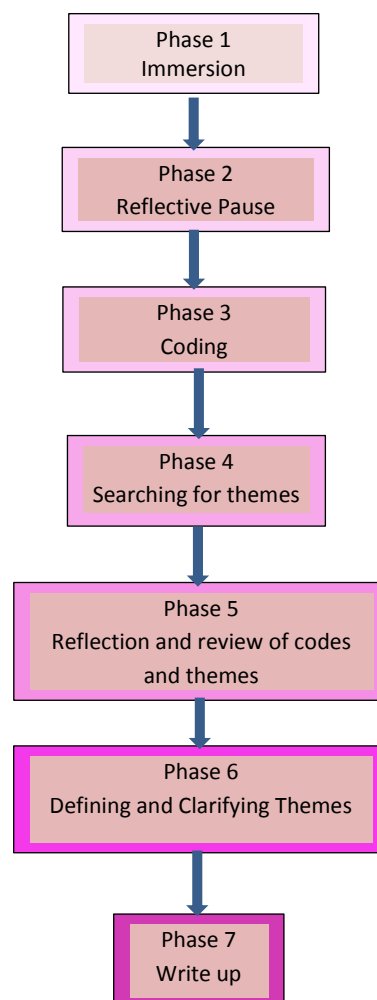
Phase 1
Immersion

Phase 2
Reflective Pause

Phase 3
Coding

Phase 4
Searching for themes

Phase 5
Reflection and review of codes and themes

Phase 6
Defining and Clarifying Themes

Phase 7
Write up

Fig 6 Flow Diagram of Data Analysist Process

Chapter 4, Introduction to the Findings

Themes and Sub-Themes

This short chapter provides a brief introduction to the three themes and the eleven sub-themes that were identified through the data analysis stage. Greater analysis is provided in the subsequent three chapters.

The initial data immersion and coding stages identified ninety-one individual codes. Utilising the synthesised Braun and Clarke (2006) and Easterby-Smith et al (2012) approach through personal reflection and then discussion and debate with the supervision team, the codes and data were analysed and further refined, eleven sub-themes were eventually identified. Further reflection and analysis led to the development of three higher order overarching themes. The three overarching themes were labelled as Being Human, Being Visionary and Being Tough. The higher level themes are demonstrated in fig 5.
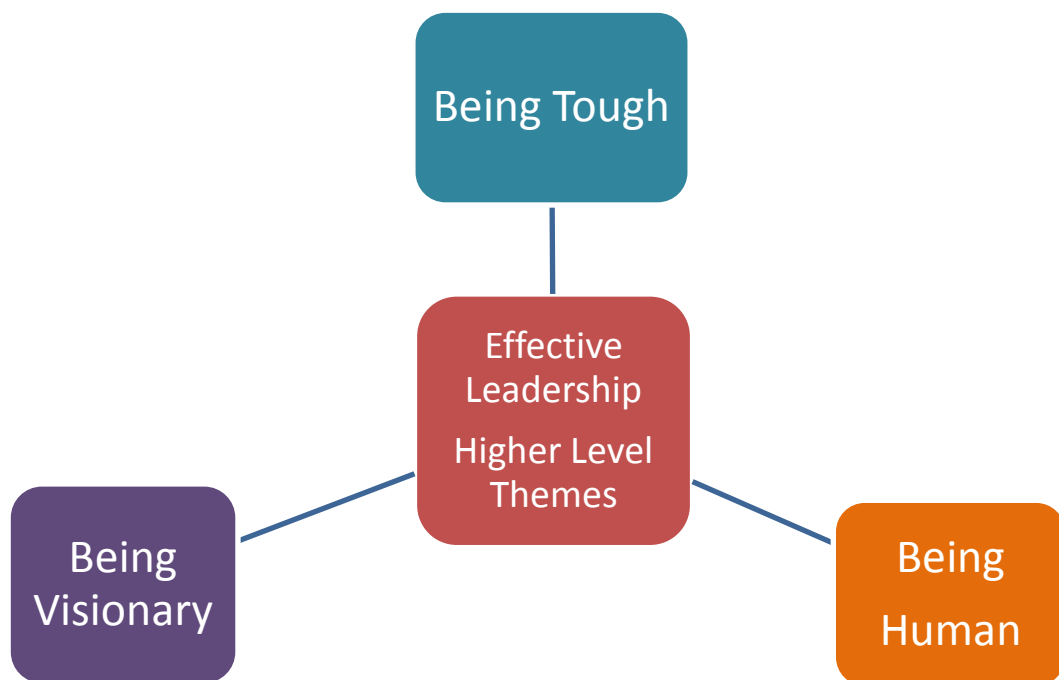
Fig 7 Higher Order Themes

The eleven sub-themes are demonstrated in fig 8.

Fig 8 Higher Order Themes and Sub-themes

Being Human

Four sub-themes contributed to the development of the Being Human theme which were given the label of Being Real, Being Parental, Being Authentic and Being Credible.

Being Tough

Three sub-themes emerged within the Being Tough theme which were given the label of Being Strong, Being Resilient, Being Political.

Being Visionary

Four sub-themes underpinned the development of the Being Visionary theme which were given the label of Being Far-sighted, Being Understanding, Being a Learner and Being Creative.

As a number of the ideas and concepts that emerged from the data could have been accommodated in more than one sub-theme, there were concerns that there might appear to be a degree of duplication across chapters. It is acknowledged that at times some duplication is apparent but after reflection, further analysis and some consolidation it was concluded that where ideas and concepts do appear in more than one chapter, they are in themselves important components of the themes and sub-themes that they have contributed to.

Each theme has been given its own chapter. Within the chapter the sub-themes that contributed to its development are exposed and explored in detail. The chapters follow a format that predominates with a narrative account supported by literature and theoretical understanding. Each chapter concludes with a summary of the narrative that relates to the theme. The following 'Concluding Discussion' chapter draws together the issues that correlate to the three findings chapters.

Chapter 5 Being Human

Introduction

The Being Human chapter is the longest of the three finding chapters, it contains almost 10,000 words. The issues that are presented within the chapter were very personal to the participants and signify the importance of being human within the leadership area.

Thematic analysis of the data exposed the four sub-themes that contributed to the creation of this theme. These sub-themes were labelled as Being Real, Being Parental, Being Authentic and Being Credible. Each of these sub-themes is explored in depth in this chapter that, as stated earlier, adopts a narrative approach supported with literature and theoretical knowledge.
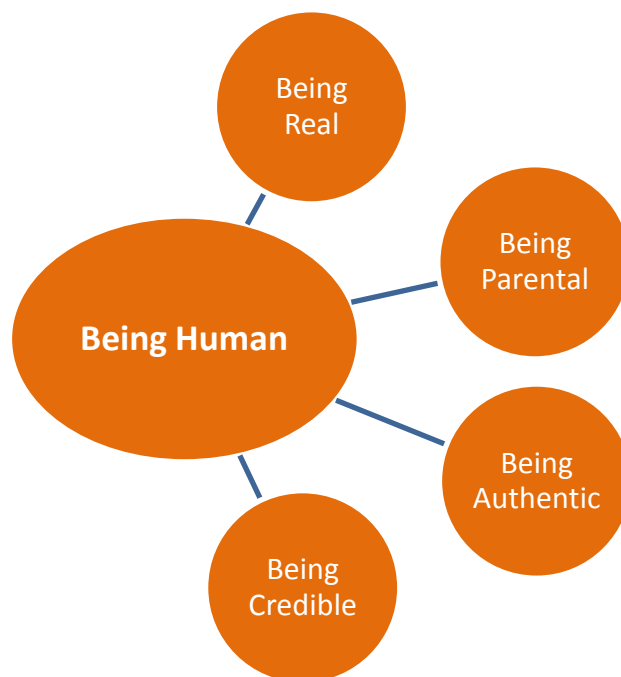

Fig 9 Being Human Theme and Sub-themes

Participants identified personal and human qualities that they believed were important for leaders to have. A range of concepts emerged through the stages of data analysis that led to the development of this Being Human theme. The data suggested that followers have to believe their leaders act in ways that make them human beings. Followers need to believe that leaders are real people, not robots or even superheroes, but people that feel, think and importantly care. The Being Human label seemed appropriate as it did appear to have a degree of congruence with the issues that had emerged from the data; it seemed perhaps to be a good common sense label. A supporting definition of what Being Human might mean was sought in academic literature and a bewildering array of concepts emerged. A simple scoping search of the University Library Gateway using the term 'Being Human' generated 6,780,678 returns. So it would seem a little ironic that within a study that is attempting to understand leadership, which in itself is a concept that some believe defies definition, (Crainer 1998, Nohria and Khurana 2010) a simple supporting theme title used to help cast light on an important aspect of the concept appeared to be so full of complexity and generated so many shadows.

Being Human - Being Real

The first sub-theme to be discussed emerged from consideration of twelve concepts. After a great deal of consideration and reflection it was given the title of Being Real. This was chosen because participants stressed the importance, if they were to lead effectively and if people were to follow them, of coming across as real people, people that feel, people that laugh and people that other people want to be around. Participants reflected that the people who motivated, inspired and led them, their role models, all had qualities that made them seem grounded as human beings; they

weren't perceived as aloof, above or better than the people who they worked with. At a later stage in the findings chapters, longevity and the sustainability of leadership are explored, however, when describing the sustainability of leadership, Tom identified the importance of being real; he added *"the ones that are real last the test of time"*. The issues that led to the development of this sub-theme are discussed below.

A concept developed that identified the importance of being interested in people; this was articulated in a number of ways but simply epitomised by Sarah who described having *"a genuine interest in people"*. A number of participants considered it important that this interest was genuine or real and not feigned. Kate described treating the people that she worked with as*" individuals, all unique, you adopt or adapt accordingly",* whilst Mohamed described the importance of *"treating everyone in the same way and treating people with respect and dignity"*. This was a core value that he held as a person but he also reflected that this was especially significant for a person in a leadership role.

Being real seemed to include keeping a foot in or staying in touch with the real world of practice. Isabel suggested that she often worked at a strategic, sometimes governmental level advising on policy. It was, however, really important for her to be grounded in practice; she stated that she didn't want to lose touch with practice or with the people that would be delivering the policy, and, as such, she wanted to remain in touch with the real people that deliver her service. Hayley echoed this comment stating she felt leaders often lose touch and she passionately wanted to *"keep it real".*

It was important to participants that they were seen as people who were approachable, and good to be with. Shaun described the importance of being *"a real person, not an*

ivory tower person". He supported this by giving an example from his past. He had recently arrived at a new organisation as a relatively junior manager. The model of leadership he had experienced from his previous employer, he described as being inspirational. The senior leader was always open and available and he appeared to know each staff member by their first name. Shaun described his key attributes *"he was accessible, approachable and he would listen"*. As was expected of new employees in his old organisation, he believed that he should introduce himself to the chief executive of the new organisation. He was informed by administrative staff that this wasn't what happened in this organisation. The message, although politely given was interpreted as "why would the CEO want to talk to you"*.* He reflected that although this took place a number of years ago, the contrast in the styles of the senior leaders was so stark, (with one leading to an empowered follower, the other leading to a disempowered employee) that the message had remained with him and had a major influence on his practice.

He expanded on his example by describing a situation where the offices of the leadership team were on a corridor that was accessed via a locked door. Therefore, they were not accessible and apparently seemed unwilling to engage with followers. This led, in his view, to a perception that they were out of sight and, therefore, out of touch with the beating heart of the organisation. They appeared to exist in an Ivory Tower.

Another area that supported this sub-theme was the ability to listen effectively and empathetically. This was not about having the patience and good manners not to talk over the other person, but the genuine desire to listen and hear the other person's story. Rebecca suggested this was *"deep listening"* and *"listening in a way that reads*

the whole content of the message". Heifetz et al (2009 p34) might describe it as "hearing the song beneath the words". Rebecca felt it was important that leaders should always *"put yourself in the place of the people you are leading",* this might cause the leader *"to reflect on the way your actions would affect that person".* Fundamentally she felt that is was always important to be aware of issues of power in leadership; what might be a relatively simple issue to the leader might be interpreted very differently by the follower. It was therefore very important that leaders *"recognise your actions are disproportionately important in a leadership situation".*

Sarah described *"listening so that you can walk in their shoes".* This comment suggests so much more than simply hearing the words of the followers. Listening so that you can walk in their shoes demonstrates the importance of having a real understanding of what it might be like to have to act on the leader's instructions. She believed that this was a significant factor in the way that she leads people. This approach of constant listening and understanding the implication of her decisions for her followers, helps her to be more effective in all her decisions. Perhaps paradoxically, she finds this especially so when having to make difficult choices that might adversely affect her followers. Understanding the effect on her followers helps her to be sure that when making difficult choices, she makes the right choice even if painful. She believes that this approach also helps her followers to believe that she has considered their interests in all decisions, even if this adversely affects them.

Isabel remembered the leader that inspired her and believed that it was his ability to listen that made her feel *"like you have been heard".* She also reflected that he always had the *"time, or at least the perception that he had time for me".* Isabel believes that this is a fundamental leadership ability and suggests that it is only through listening

and giving people time that *"you can demonstrate that you are interested in them as people"*. Shaun reiterated this point and discussed the relationship that he had with an inspirational leader a number of years ago. He reflected on the qualities that his leader displayed and identified he was accessible, *"very approachable"* and *"really willing to hear my ideas"*. Shaun reflected that although he hadn't talked to this person for some years he had felt so valued by him that *"I know if I picked up the phone now, he would talk"*.

A concept articulated in a number of ways by participants, suggested that leaders need to demonstrate that they have a sense of humour. It is clear that laughing at everything wasn't felt to be appropriate, but the ability to recognise lighter moments, enjoy them and show others that enjoying them is good, was felt to be important in recognising that the leader is a real, feeling person. A number of different words were used to describe this. Sarah suggested the leader needs *"a sense of humour"* whilst this was described by Tom as being *"giddy"*. In exploration of this word, Tom felt it to be important to create an atmosphere where people can perhaps relax a little, be themselves and, therefore, express themselves. He felt that in work environments which can, by their nature, be very task focused, this approach leads to better creativity and a less stressful place to work.

Hayley stated that the leader should be able to have fun and in this context she described the importance of actually enjoying her role. She considered coming to work to be a fun activity. In effect, she believed that her enthusiasm for what she does is infectious for her followers. In addressing criticism of an AI biased positive view of the world, Fitzgerald et al (2010) identify the importance of shadows emerging within AI

studies. For Hayley the emerging AI shadow would be that the implication of not finding work 'fun' is an unenthusiastic leader will lead to unenthusiastic followers.

A concept identified the importance of the perception that the leader was 'real' by being close to their followers throughout the highs and low of organisational life. Tom stated *"you gotta get your hands dirty"* and went on to explain the importance of being with the people he works with through all times. He stated *"I'll take the rough and the smooth"*. Tom described how cost improvement measures required that some people working within the teams he led had to be made redundant. It was pivotally important to him that he had the difficult redundancy conversation, they were too important to delegate to a member of the human resources team. He described being up half the night preparing for the conversation. He stated it *"sits with me very badly"* ….. *"it is not something I have ever enjoyed doing or ever wanted to do"* but he felt, if he was to be a leader, he had to be there through the rough and the smooth. He reflected that his approach was generally well received with people actually grateful for his thoughtfulness and thanking him. He believed that in order for his conversations to be effective, it is really important that he should *"be real and be human"*.

Analysis of this sub-theme indicates that these participants have recognised the need to seem real or human to their followers. There could be a difficulty in quantifying what 'real' actually means, as it is a very subjective word. The examples provided seem to indicate that these leaders want to identify with their followers. Haslam et al (2011) introduce the concept of in groups and out groups, suggesting that leaders are more likely to succeed when they are perceived to be standing for the group (they are one of us - the in group) and more likely to fail when leaders are set apart from the group

(they are one of them - the out group). In order for individuals, groups, organisations and indeed societies to move forward, Haslam et al (2011 p82) believe leaders have to be integrated into groups and not be "remote and distant isolates". Statements put forward by participants of the study like *"listening to understand their world"* or *"being a real person not an ivory tower person"* and *"grounded in practice"* would suggest an innate desire to be a part of an "in group, to be one of us". Haslam et al's (2011) research does not suggest that leaders cannot have differences from others in the group; it does, however, suggest that these differences must be perceived as supportive of the group's identity and long term best interest.

The importance of openness and of being visible was identified in this Being Real sub-theme. This has also been identified in recent research by Ofsted (2015 p13) into leadership in successful Local Authority Childrens' Services. The Ofsted research identified that one component of highly effective organisations is the interest and openness that senior leaders demonstrated to their staff. Their report (Ofsted 2015 p13) stated that interest "engendered trust and commitment amongst staff". The supporting qualitative comments made by staff to inspectors were very similar to comments identified in this research. One participant told the researcher (Ofsted 2015 p13) "I tell them that I am interested in what they do, and then I show them that I am". Another suggested that "the DCS sat with me for half an hour to discuss the case with me". These comments had a particular resonance with Isabel's comments that only by giving people time *"can you demonstrate that you are interested in them as people"* and display *"being grounded in practice"*. It also resonated with Sarah's comments about *"listening so you can walk in their shoes"*.

West's (2012 p6) work on leading teams refers to the importance of being positive within teams in order to generate what he called "organisational citizenship." He suggests that organisational citizens create an empowering environment in which people will work for each other and go the extra mile for colleagues. In support of this he refers to Fredrickson's (2009) work on positive psychology. Although Fredrickson focuses on individuals rather than organisations or indeed the identification of leaders, she believes that positive emotions and positive thinking bring out the very best in the individual. She provides guidance on ways in which positivity can be developed; a key aspect of this is the need to be genuine, to be open, and importantly, to be real.

Being Human - Being Parental

It is acknowledged that Being Parental is perhaps a more controversial title for some readers than for others. Not all people have had positive parenting experiences and this label could cause an adverse emotional reaction for the reader. After a great deal of thought, and with respect to some participants' direct links to parenting, it was decided to retain this title. As with other 'simple' titles in this study, academic definitions of parenting are somewhat contested. Smith (2010 p689) explains "academic knowledge of parenting is still very much a developing field, with a number of different, and to a certain extent competing, theoretical and research approaches being pursued simultaneously". Smith believes that parents want the best for their children; they want them to be healthy and happy, to thrive and to be secure. She also suggests that good parents uphold a level of parental control. The components that contributed to the sub-theme were assessed to offer a fair degree of congruence with aspects of what a good parent might do.

A recurring concept suggested that effective leaders are compassionate when dealing with followers. This seemed particularly important to participants when things were tough. Sarah discussed the importance of this when dealing with issue of poor performance. She felt that it was particularly important in these difficult meetings that she displayed behaviour that was *"honest and real but also compassionate"*. She stated *"being in a disciplinary, that doesn't mean, you know, you have to be nasty about it, you can be, you have to be correct, but it can be done as kindly as possible"*.

Tom explored the same theme suggesting that he would be *"pragmatic about how I deal with things, when someone is on a performance review, I will go at their pace"*. He reflected that there are frameworks that need to be followed, but he felt it more important to take a compassionate approach and perhaps work at a pace that the follower could adhere to, rather than to slavishly follow a particular structure. He identified that this sometimes clashed with the managerial aspect of his role, but he believed that eventually this approach would lead to a better outcome for both the individual and the organisation.

Mohamed described the importance of nurture alongside compassion. He described situations where staff members were experiencing difficulties, and one managerial response might be to take the task away from the person, or simply to do it for them. This approach might be pragmatic in the short term but Mohamed believed that sometimes, in order to facilitate growth, a person might need to experience difficulties. As a result of this experience, they will develop a greater understanding of how to deal with problems and situations. The leader's role is to work with the person to ensure that they don't get too lost in the situation or indeed, get things wrong. The leader's role is to facilitate the worker's growth by helping them work through their difficulties

to discover the solution to their problems. Mohamed stated *"you can see why they're having a difficult time and sometimes, it isn't about providing a best solution at that period of time because that person might have to go through a journey. But it's not taking it out of their hands and doing it for them, it's basically, what can we do, what can you do, and how can I support you in getting to that, that last bit ?"*

Rebecca developed this theme; she suggested that *"the essence of understanding followers"* is a need to be aware of *"when they need the supportive hand rather than the driving hand".*

Isabel explored this nurturing and learning aspect of her role. She identified that a number of senior colleagues had been reluctant to pass on the learning they had acquired as they perceived it might make them feel redundant or threatened by the newly acquired knowledge of a more junior person. She felt this was entirely the wrong approach and stated that *"I'm more than happy to give somebody all of the skills and teach them everything that I know so that they can do it themselves, but I don't feel threatened by that".* Again one of the important factors she reiterated was the notion of passing on skills, techniques and tips to enable the worker *"to do it themselves"*. She enforced Mohamed's idea of helping an individual find their own way, stating *"it's certainly not around teaching them, it's letting them come to terms with their own thoughts or their own confusion on things sometimes".*

Charlotte described the importance of really getting to know staff members so that she can *"help them stretch themselves".* She described a situation where a colleague came to her looking for support to undertake developmental activities that she believed would not really have intellectually stretched the person. Charlotte thought that the worker had far more ability than she believed, but lacked confidence in herself.

Charlotte worked closely with the worker to help her realise the potential she had and, through a nurturing approach helped to give her colleague the confidence to successfully undertake a programme that did stretch her. In another example a worker kept requesting high level development activity that was not particularly relevant to her role and would have been difficult for her to actually achieve. Charlotte believed it was important that she helped her colleague to see what was achievable at that time. She concluded by stating that, a component of leadership was a *"need to know your people"* in order to *"know what is best for people"* to *"help them stretch themselves".*

Kate identified a concept that she called *"intelligent kindness"* which she described as being similar to emotional intelligence. She explained that intelligent kindness *"is about appreciation and understanding of position and personality, why are they thinking that and why are they taking those decisions".* Kate felt that if she was able to use intelligent kindness she could understand why and how a person had arrived at a particular position, and therefore, be able to help them see how things could be different and how she could help them to move forward.

Hannah identified a similar concept; she felt that it was important that she got to know her staff and was able to see and explore their potential. She felt that it was her role to nurture people and develop opportunities so that they could grow and develop, but within safe boundaries. She suggested it was sometimes difficult for people to put themselves forward for leadership roles. As a consequence, in the first instance she would ask a colleague to attend a particular meeting with her. She suggested *"you sort of say look, why don't you come along to this and sit with me ".* As their confidence and ability to contribute developed, she would then step back. She stated that she helped them to develop *"the skills and knowledge and competence to be able to do it and the*

confidence to do it and then I stand back and let them go, I think that, I suppose, is like parenting isn't it?" As she continued with her analogy of being parental, she confided that she often found *"the hardest bit is the standing back and letting them go"*. Rebecca developed this idea by suggesting that leaders place boundaries around situations to keep their followers safe. Within these barriers, however, followers should be free to explore their own solutions. Again she made reference to a parental role for leaders and stated *"this comes from child rearing as much as anything else, the old saying about love them, limit them and leave them alone"*.

Mohamed identified a feature of the leader that had inspired him. The qualities that he remembered particularly were his ability to identify the strengths each person possessed and as a consequence made them feel good about the work that they do. Even though Mohamed remembered difficult and challenging times, what he recollected was *"just the way that he made everyone's strengths shine through, that is a lovely attribute"*.

Another concept emerged that supported this Being Parental sub-theme. Leaders should demonstrate to their followers that they are able to both care for and protect them. Mohamed described *"knowing your people, keeping an eye on your people"*. He had earlier identified the importance of respecting people and helping them to grow by not taking difficult tasks away from them. He developed this theme further now by identifying the importance of protecting his workers by being aware of how they are feeling. He identified that if someone was feeling particularly *"grumpy"* he would sit down with them and simply provide appropriate support. He described a situation where he identified that a member of his team was struggling, he spent some time

with this person and talked to him. He felt this was an *"important investment in him as a person"* and that this was vital if they were to follow him.

Hayley discussed how the senior leadership team in her organisation were from a different professional background to her. In this context junior members of the team who shared her professional background would come *"to me with problems first rather than go to (the management team)"*. She stated they would bring issues *"if things look like they're not going quite as smoothly as they should be or they're struggling with things".* There is clearly an issue of professional cultures and Hayley believed that as a leader, negotiating these choppy waters and therefore protecting her followers, was a key part of her leadership responsibility.

Rebecca identified her belief that leaders should *"act as a shield"* for their followers. She described her experience of an organisation that had multiple systems which at times got in the way of innovation and creativity. She felt strongly that it was the leader's role to *"manage the system"* *"to take the flak that comes from inside the system"* or *"to ride shotgun"* and to *"get the system out of the way and let the people do good things"*. Reflecting on her experience, she suggested that sometimes the requirements of the system interfered with the *"mental capacity, time and space of people"* working within the organisation. This was, in Rebecca's view, a waste of a precious resource and therefore, a very bad thing. She felt the leader's role was to protect the staff so that they don't *"have to suffer it."*

Tom supported this and suggested he acted as a *"protective buffer"* to his staff preventing an overload of information. Tom had a strong belief that protecting followers was a key aspect of his role. He reflected that as a practitioner, he really cared for the people on his caseload and wanted the best for them. Now as a leader, in

his mind, his followers were his *"caseload and I am caring for them and I look out for them".* He stressed that it was really important that *"they need to know that you care for them and want the best for them".*

The final aspect of this sub-theme refers to a comment made by Mohamed when he suggested that *"In a team, I am the gel in keeping things together".* He described how he would often be the person that spends time with each of team member listening to them, supporting them, nurturing and nudging people to travel in the right direction. This, he felt, was the essence of leadership. It felt right to include his comments, that could easily be incorporated into an essay about effective parenting within the being parental sub-theme.

Being Human - Being Authentic

Authenticity is defined as being genuine (as opposed to being a fake). It is also attributed to mean a sense of trustworthiness (Oxford Dictionaries 2012). This sub-theme sits alongside the Being Real sub-theme and both contribute to the Being Human theme. There are clearly many similarities and overlaps between the two sub-themes. A significant difference would appear to be the level of honest, self-awareness that being authentic requires of leaders. A number of ideas contributed to its development and most participants identified with aspects of this important sub-theme.

An important concept identified the importance of knowing yourself. A number of participants identified with different aspects of this issue. Lucy identified that self-awareness was very important; she felt that she should both know and appreciate herself. Through self-awareness and exploration of her values, she felt she should treat

people well and in ways that she would want to be treated herself. She identified that this position, this learning, had taken a considerable amount of time, reflection and in some instances pain for her to achieve and understand. It was a powerful message that she wanted to be passed on to others.

Isabel had used the reflective requirements of the Professional Doctorate Programme to help refine her self-awareness. She reflected upon difficult work decisions that she had had to make. The situation had required her to stand on her own and state what she believed to be the right course of action, even though others, who in some cases held more powerful positions, didn't agree with her. Her comments have been included in a number of coding themes but Isabel particularly identified that, in order to stand tall in a crowd, in order to do what is right, it is important to know yourself. She stated she didn't think she *"would have gone into all this in my head if it hadn't been for doing the doctorate"…… "but I think it's useful for me to have had that kind of awareness or at least an explanation for myself, where I am, how I am and how I think and that makes me, it certainly gives me some qualities that I would hope that a leader would have".*

Sarah reflected that the leader that had been in her post before she was appointed was a really inspiring person, a real *"tour de force".* She was initially very concerned that she just didn't have the qualities to be able to match this person's style and approach but after much reflection, she identified the importance of not trying to be anyone else. Sarah concluded that she decided to *"shape things in my own way".* She highlighted the importance of self-awareness in helping her work out how she would *"do it your own way".* She suggested that that self-reflection and self-awareness are ways of *" giving you tools and helping you grow, think, write in an improved way that*

then helps your service but then hopefully helps the people that are in your service enjoy their jobs better". She added that this self-reflection was a continuous and emergent process; she was always adjusting, adapting and refining aspects of her approach as time, context and people developed. She stated *"you know when you are leading how you would want to be led; you know the qualities that you admire in others".*

Shaun reflected that he had always, since he was a small child, had a tendency to try and organise people. In the early years of his career he identified that he *"had a tendency to want to control"* and this led to him being too controlling. He suggested *"I can see I have had a set idea about how it should be done, perhaps I was a little too persistent".* He recognised this aspect of his personality was perhaps not yielding the outcomes he wanted and through self-reflection and self-awareness, altered his approach within his team. He discussed reflecting not only on his own approach but also on the way that other people interacted with him; this helped him to see why he had clashed so badly with some people. Through this discovery he was empowered to modify his approach. He stated that through self-awareness he now *"recognises different ways of working in teams".*

Rebecca discussed a different component of self-awareness. She identified the importance of understanding what made her angry and what frustrated her. She also realised that these things might not be the same issues that caused anger and frustration to her followers. For Rebecca, it was really important that she was aware of what would constitute a personal situation as opposed to something organisational or situational. She also considered the importance of being self-aware enough to know not only the source of her anger and frustration, but also strategies to deal with this

that mitigated the effect on her followers. She concluded by stating *"I think that good leaders are very much in touch with themselves and understand themselves very well"*.

Mohamed added to this and identified the importance of self-awareness in recognising internal strengths and weaknesses. He suggested *"you have to understand yourself and when you need to be you, with you, and when you feel you can give"*. Mohamed identified that in order to give of themselves, leaders have to be aware of when they actually have the capacity to give, and when they need time to recover and repair their own strength and energy. This self-awareness is vital in providing an emotional pacemaker, which protects leaders and helps to avoid the development of feelings of burnout. Heifetz et al (2009 p293) identifies that leadership can be an exhausting occupation and that leaders need to take care of themselves, not as an extravagant selfish obsession but to ensure they have the strength to continue to fulfil their purpose. He considered that they need to "create a personal holding environment" or sanctuary in which they can reflect and consider their emotional wellbeing. This will help their understanding and management of how the stresses of various situations are affecting their health. He suggests that a leader can become so "consumed with purpose" that they actually forget to care for themselves. Heifetz et al (2009 p293) identified that people often forget to care for themselves "at the very moment it is particularly important to do so".

Tom described the importance to him of authenticity in leadership; he stressed his belief that actions are always important, perhaps far more important than inspirational, but maybe only presentational, words. He introduced the concept of charisma in leadership and remembered what he described as a charismatic leader. He recalled listening to this person and being very inspired and motivated by him, only to feel

immensely disappointed at a later stage when the charisma didn't live up to his expectation. He felt his leader said all the right things but there was no depth or substance to his words. He concluded that he *"finds the big flashy leaders always kind of disappoint me in the end, I like them and I think they're brilliant, and then, they don't seem to have that, they don't seem authentic, they don't live it forever".* He reflected upon popular culture and how pop stars create images of themselves that perhaps aren't real *"it is image not reality".* Tom felt that people whose performance was based upon image would not stand the test of time, whereas the authentic leaders are *"the ones that are real and last the test of time".*

Lucy identified authenticity as an important leadership aspect. She felt that to be authentic, leaders should recognise the importance of explicitly demonstrating the values that underpin their behaviour. She reflected that the leader's behaviour has to be congruent with these values. She suggested leaders need to be *"authentic 90% of the time, if they are not authentic, people will know; some people are very charismatic and can persuade people in the short term but authenticity is really important, people want to be seen to live their values and accept them".* Jessica developed a similar theme suggesting that in order to be accepted as authentic, leaders need to do far more than simply talk about what they value, she said *"it's not just about saying that is who you are, it's actually demonstrating that this is who you are".*

Rebecca believed there was a common assumption that great leaders are charismatic; *"there needs to be this kind of charisma, almost in built attraction".* She believed this to be a false premise and after reflecting on her own experience of leaders she felt were great, stated *"there is an ability to be a great leader without having yourself in the limelight all the time".*

Lucy, Tom, Jessica and Rebecca discussed the concept of charisma in leadership. Charisma has a long history within leadership literature. As an example Bass and Bass (2008) described Max Weber's introduction of the concept of charisma in leadership in 1922 as an attempt to explain the rise of Prussian bureaucracy in the early twentieth century. Charismatic Leadership is considered a model itself and is a component of many other leadership models, in particular transformational leadership; this therefore appears to be a really important aspect within leadership literature. Indeed Bass and Riggo (2006 p5) suggest that "conceptually leadership is charismatic". It is interesting to note, however, that these participants viewed charisma with suspicion and even in some cases, hostility. It appears they wanted their leaders to demonstrate so much more than talk. Indeed Tom recalled his negative experience of a 'charismatic leader' when he stated *"I was taken in by the hype and it was pop star stuff, no depth, yes he was charismatic, yes he said the right things but it felt that he had a script and a persona that is really false".* Perhaps they identified with Bass's concept of in-authentic, pseudo-transformational leadership or "the dark side of charisma" where self-interest and exploitative insincerity creates negative outcomes for followers (Bass, Riggo 2006 p6). Perhaps as this is a UK based study, the reserved British culture did not welcome a more extrovert style. What is clear is that authenticity and charisma have to be delivered by consistency over time, and by so much more that inspirational speeches.

A contrasting approach to the perhaps loud charisma that Lucy, Tom and Jessica found so unappealing was identified by a number of participants. Sarah remembered leaders that had inspired her in the early stages of her career. She discussed observing leaders that had a *"quiet inner confidence"* which she felt was so important in a clinical setting. She again reflected on her career and believed that over time she had worked to

develop this quality, suggesting that through difficult and good times she has discovered that her *"inner confidence has grown over the years"*. Tom again identified clinical leaders who had inspired him in the early years of his career when he recalled *"They were strict but they were also kind, they were caring, they knew their stuff. They knew how to get people on board in a way that you almost didn't recognise that they were doing it"*. He reflected on the amazing charisma of famous leaders like Martin Luther King but concluded that they were perhaps exceptional. The real leaders in the real organisations that he had worked in; the people that truly inspired him, were *"very quiet people who kind of somehow surround you and take you with them"*. Tom didn't think that this type of quality, this quiet charisma, was sufficiently appreciated and that leaders who demonstrated this didn't receive the recognition that they deserved.

Another quality aligned to this and included within this sub-theme is what might be described as humility within leadership role. The Oxford Dictionary (2012 p354) describes humility as "having a modest view of one's importance". Both Tom and Sarah stated they never wanted to be *"the big I am"*. Sarah continued by reiterating the importance of *"humility, to be a real person and not be the big hero"*. She has come to realise what a privilege it is to actually be considered a leader by other people. She suggested that she had known some people that almost believed it was their divine right to be considered a leader. She described a *"massive development in thinking of what a successful leader is, in that it is a privileged position"*. Hayley's account of her day to day activities epitomised humility in leadership. She described representing her professional group at a national policy level, deliberations regarding the strategic direction of the organisation that she works within, providing expert advice and

guidance to other members of the organisation and acting as a conduit to facilitate communication between different hierarchical layers and professional cultures. Yet within the early part of the interview she stated that she had *"never thought of myself as a leader".* It appeared to be a really genuine comment, not contrived or intended to portray a sense of false modesty. But this person, who was absolutely passionate about her service and her profession, who had developed an identity on a national stage and was a senior member of the leadership team in her organisations, didn't perceive herself as a leader. Consideration was given to the interpretation of this; was Hayley deluded, or abrogating responsibility? This is not believed to be the case. A comment by Isabel perhaps provides a degree of illumination. Isabel also works to inform policy at a national level. She discussed interacting with grandiose colleagues who appeared to be full of self-importance which she found distasteful and reflected that her own approach wasn't like this. She concluded by assertively stating that *"No it isn't all about me".* Hayley clearly had a leadership role and displayed a great passion for her service and her vision. It would seem that she perceived herself to be a part of the system; it wasn't all about her and, as such, she perhaps personifies the concept of humility and authenticity. She recognises that she isn't able to deliver her vision on her own and as a consequence needs to empower other people. She appeared comfortable sharing power and other parts of her transcript suggested she wanted people to be the best that they could be. Hayley's approach to leadership might align with the concept of Servant Leadership. Greenleaf (1970) stated that servant leaders have to first of all have a desire to serve others, and then a desire to lead. Although this study isn't about servant leaders, it was fascinating and impressive to talk with a leader who appeared to have adapted a very natural, authentic, servant leadership

approach. What is clear, however, in the context of this study, is that humility appears to be a significant aspect of the way that some leaders lead.

Kate introduced a new idea into this sub-theme and explained that she had experienced some workers in her organisation who had had specific roles for long periods of time. She discovered that the machinations of organisational life somehow erode the core values that had originally inspired the worker to join the (third sector) organisation that she worked for in the first place. It was an important facet of her leadership role to guide workers *"back to these core values – what we should be doing as a business and how we should be doing that"*.

Isabel described the importance of having a moral compass that helped provide guidance when considering issues in her professional and personal life. She acknowledged that perhaps it wasn't always *"pointing in exactly the right direction"* but fundamentally, her moral compass helped her to make what she perceived to be the right decision for the right reason. She considered this to be important at all times but especially so when working with people who don't support her view. Using the analogy of the direction finding purpose of a compass, she felt that being aware of her moral compass gave her the strength to stay on the right track even when the stormy winds of disagreement were attempting to blow her off course or to push her in unacceptable directions.

Rebecca expanded on this theme and discussed how, in her opinion, great leaders are the ones who have a *"very strong personal morality that is transmitted to others and is acceptable to others"*. In support of this she discussed the *"power of symbolism"*. She believed that followers are very sensitive to symbolic gestures in organisations. For this concept to have a positive effect on followers, the symbols have to be *"congruent with*

the espoused approach to leadership". Rebecca identified that a lack of congruence might be perceived as *"one rule for us and one rule for them"* clearly having a negative effect on perceptions of leadership. She concluded by stating that leaders need to identify a set of symbols within their organisation, and that symbolic behaviour for everyone should actually reflect the way in which the organisation functions. These symbols may be espoused values or they might be instruction or protocols, but they do need to be congruent *"because if they're not it leads to enormous dissatisfaction and a lack of willingness to follow".*

There is a rich vein of leadership literature that discusses values in leadership, indeed a model of leadership called Value Based Leadership has been developed and academic exploration of this area is supported by the dedicated Value Based Leadership Journal. Frost (2014) described characteristics associated with the term that included self-awareness, courage, humility and continual reflection around the congruence between behaviour and values. It would appear that the participants, if not explicitly recognising Value Based Leadership, agreed broadly with its ethos. Schein (2010) believed that the values which permeate all levels within an organisation are, in the main, generated by its leaders. Kouze and Posner (2011) suggested that the practices and processes of leadership are in themselves amoral, they have neither morality nor immorality. As a consequence, it is the personal values that the leader brings to their followers that are of fundamental importance to the relationship between the leader and their followers. Leaders, therefore, need to be able to reflect, consider and be aware of what it is that they value.

Being Human - Being Credible

Kouze and Posner (2011 p xi) state that "credibility is the foundation of leadership".

They identify that before followers can commit to a leader's ideology and approach,

they really have to believe in their leader, this involves developing trust and this trust

has to be earned. Participants introduced ideas that, after analysis, were felt to

support this concept. The ability to develop trust and credibility were, it is believed,

fundamental leadership qualities that would fit into this Being Human theme.

A number of participants identified the importance of honesty, integrity and

trustworthiness. It felt was of particular importance that followers had to believe their

leader was honest and had integrity before they could develop trust in them. Sarah

identified the apparent isolation that leaders can feel. She suggested that at times she

felt *"very exposed"* and as a consequence felt that it was really important that she

behaved appropriately at all times; in some respect this meant avoiding the

organisational games that she perceived people sometimes became involved in. Sarah

stated she wouldn't *"talk about them behind their back or play people off "….. "so you*

have to be very clean (whiter than white)". She also reflected upon the importance of

being real, and felt that integrity and honesty would only be authentic and credible if

they were integrated aspects of an engaged and interested 'real' person. She added

"but you also have to be human with a bit of humour". In her conversation about trust

and credibility Sarah touched on many of the concepts that have been included in

other parts of this chapter and indeed other parts of the findings section. She

concluded by suggesting that an important aspect of leadership was the trust that was

developed by leaders being *"really genuine, honest professional so that people trust*

you implicitly and they don't think that you're a bit flaky". She again reflected on the

attributes of people that had inspired her and identified that a common feature of all of these people was that they were *"people who build trust easily".*

Kate emphasised the importance of demonstrating belief and trust in the abilities of her followers. She suggested, in relation to task completion *"if they say they are going to follow through you must trust them to deliver".*

Having a positive belief and clear, strong values emerged as concepts within the data. Lucy felt *"you've got to 100% believe what you're doing".* Again as with honesty, integrity and trustworthiness, an aspect of this is ensuring that leaders articulate this to their followers. Lucy felt it wasn't enough to simply say that *"you believe in your service, but I think you also have to exemplify that about you";* it was her assertion that leaders, if they are to be believed, need to demonstrate a congruency and consistency between their actions and what they say.

Hayley believed that having a passion for her service was significantly important and, as discussed within a number of other themes, it is the articulation of this passion to her followers that is of importance. She considered her role models and described *"it is because of how they interacted"* that relayed their commitment and passion for the service. Kate also considered passion for the service. Whilst she did identify the importance of loyalty to the organisation that employed her; she felt it particularly important that her passion was more about the service that is being delivered to people.

A prominent idea emerged regarding professional credibility. This was a multi-professional cohort; the intention was to attract leaders from across the health and social care sector. The recruitment criteria, therefore, did not stipulate a particular

professional background. After analysing participant responses, however, it would appear that six of the participants had a nursing background, although only two were actually in nursing leadership roles. Professional credibility emerged as an issue across the participant cohort, but overall this issue seem to ignite more intense emotions in those that had a nursing background. This perhaps suggests that the idea of professional identity and credibility is considered of more value in some areas than in others.

Hayley recognised that having professional credibility was absolutely essential to her identity as a leader. She stated *"I am a clinician, every single surgery of every single day, that's what I do and so my body of work sort of speaks for me".* It was her expertise that she felt gave her the credibility to lead, at least with others that shared her profession. She explained she had a passion for acting as a role model for others, so that they might aspire to be the best that they could be. Her desire was also to be a strong advocate for her profession and for it to be recognised within other professional groups that might hold very different values; therefore professional credibility was essential to her. Throughout her interview and across a range of different topic areas that included the people who had inspired her, Hayley returned to this issue of professional credibility. An important aspect of this was that she had actually *"done the job"* and was still doing the job; her credibility, in her view, was dependent upon the currency of her practice, her experience and her expertise.

Tom considered the concept that only people of the same profession would have the professional credibility to manage others from their profession. Whilst he reflected that he could understand why people might feel this way, he felt this was a false premise. Tom explored the importance of gaining the trust of his followers. He

believed that leaders really need to understand how their followers are experiencing their world. He suggested that it is relatively easy to issue commands and expect compliance but *"until you have walked in their world"…… "and discovered it"* it would not be possible to achieve the level of credibility required of a successful leader/follower relationship. He explained his belief that there must be a reason for people to behave in the way that they do. It is ultimately the responsibility of the leader to try and develop an understanding of the pressure that the follower is experiencing. He concluded that credibility is not dependent on profession, but on the ability that the leader has to really understand the experiences, pressures and perhaps the professional culture that contribute to creating the world that the follower walks in.

Mohamed suggested that credibility was vital for leaders. He believed that leaders do need to have a level of technical competence, they need *"some skills"* but fundamentally, credibility came from the application of perhaps softer skills like empathy and compassion. Mohamed believed that leaders gain credibility by *"spotting what makes them tick, find what makes them tick"* and by trying to understand the worldview of their followers, leaders gain credibility.

Rebecca discussed professional credibility at length; she also recognised what she considered the false premise of only being able to lead people from the same profession. She particularly returned to the concept of listening and of what she considered as *"active listening"*. She described this as *"being sensitive to the environment that surrounds you"*. Credibility is gained through not only being able to listen and understand what followers have said, but also by *"being able to listen and understand what the market and what the context has said"*. She could envision the

leader acknowledging and understanding the reality that the follower described, but also of articulating and defining the problem within perhaps a wider frame.

Rebecca also explored credibility when problems arise. She suggested two approaches exist when things go wrong, the first *"is to do the same only louder!"*, the second is to *"think fundamentally about what is going on, and ask do I need to do something differently?"* Rebecca commented that good leaders have to be prepared to admit that they have got things wrong. She believed, perhaps paradoxically, that by admitting *"they've got it wrong and then do something different"*, generates far more credibility than denial. In this context, she believed that leaders need to be visible to their followers at all times but this is especially important when things haven't gone well.

The last issue that Rebecca identified in relation to credibility was the ability to interpret when to intervene in a situation and when to leave the follower to resolve the issue. To intervene too early and too often could adversely affect the follower's sense of professional competence. To not intervene could lead to claims of isolation and leader disinterest. To be credible, leaders have to manage this dichotomy. This concept perhaps accords with aspects of the Functional Leadership approach described by Zaccaro et al (2001 p454) who considered that leaders used "discretion and choice in what solution would be appropriate in particular problem domains". An aspect of this approach is, therefore, to actually make deliberate choices of when to intervene and when to leave followers to resolve their issues.

A number of participants identified the importance of respect in helping to build credibility. Jessica describes the importance of respecting people and their opinions within the teams that she leads. She identifies that giving an appropriate level of respect to her followers helps to develop her credibility. She stated *"It's respecting*

them but it also establishes your credibility". She recognised the hierarchical position that leaders often find themselves in; sometimes she had experienced leaders who adopt almost a sense of superiority towards their followers. She did recognise that occasionally these leaders had been considered by others as successful. In her view, however, to develop credibility in the long term as a leader in the health and social care sector requires that she respects others who work with her.

Mohamed also described the importance of respect in gaining credibility, he felt it important to *"understand and treat people as equals"* and added *"if you treat people with respect and as equals they will show you their needs".* Mohamed believed in working with people, and through a process of mutual respect, he could help them to identify how they could become the best that they could be. This approach, he felt, would in turn generate credibility in him as their leader.

Charlotte considered the leadership qualities that had inspired her. She recalled that the leaders she held in the highest regard were very knowledgeable about the services they ran, but they were also willing to listen to the views of the people that worked with them. As an example of how she applied this principle in her practice, she would say *"this is how I think we should go, but, what are your views, and can you think of anything better?"* She considered that *"not being protective of her views"* and therefore changing her perspective, when others in her team identify a better solution, actually enhances her credibility rather than (as she feels some might say) make her look indecisive and weak.

Chapter Conclusions

It would seem that an essential aspect of effective leadership is that the leader is perceived as a person that is real and who really cares. The participants in this study wanted their leaders to be real to them, not distant and aloof, not sitting in an ivory tower. Equally they didn't want their followers to put them on pedestals. There were many concepts that were particularly important to each participant of this study. This is a lengthy chapter, longer than originally intended, but in order to be faithful to the voices of the study participants it was felt that its length was justified and important. Many concepts were included but the words of Boyce (1997 p56) seem to epitomise the findings of the chapter "Leadership is not some secret science. Rather, it is the simple daily application of basic principles of human behaviour; things like listening, analysing, deciding, acting, caring, respecting, participating, empowering, envisioning, serving, and learning. But most importantly, good leadership is enjoying ideas, insisting on integrity, and appreciating the successes of one's associates."

As suggested this chapter is the longest of the three findings chapters. This highlights that the concepts discussed within it are very important to the participants of the study. Perhaps it also identifies that the unique nature of what it means to be human is reflected in the uniqueness of what it means to be a leader (Bass, Bass 2008).

Chapter 6 Being Tough

Introduction to Being Tough

It is clear from Chapter 5 that leaders need to demonstrate to followers that they are real, thinking and feeling people. This in itself could be considered a good thing and it would seem that these people would be excellent to be with and to work with in both teams and organisations. This, however, doesn't seem to reflect the whole picture of effective leadership. A number of participants identified a range of concepts that suggested that leadership is actually, at times, a difficult and lonely role. A role that is perhaps not for the faint hearted and requires that leaders demonstrate a level of robustness and resilience. In simple words it could be summarised that leaders, if they are to be effective, need to be tough.

Three sub-themes emerged from the data and were clustered together under the theme's Being Tough title. The sub-themes were labelled as Being Strong, Being Resilient and Being Political. As with the previous chapter, this chapter provides a mainly narrative account with additional support from literature and explores how participants identified the concepts and ideas that have contributed to the development of this theme and these sub-themes.

Figure 10 Being Tough Theme and sub-themes

Being Tough - Being Strong

This Being Tough sub-theme was built on a number of concepts identified in the data including, for example, 'courageousness'. During the process of analysis it became difficult to establish how, for example, being strong differed from being courageous. The differences appeared to be a little semantic and it perhaps became a rather pedantic process to include and justify one concept within one label and one concept within another label. It was eventually decided to include a range of related concepts within the Being Strong sub-theme. The majority of participants recognised the importance of aspects of being strong in their leadership roles and therefore contributed to the development of this sub-theme in a variety of ways.

The first aspect of being strong related to a having a *"strong moral code"*. Although this was discussed in Chapter 5, it has re-emerged here as providing the armour that allows leaders to challenge the status quo. Mohamed reflected on the culture that he grew up within. He identified that his community was a rather oppressive place with people holding very fixed views of right and wrong but, as a consequence of nurturing and open minded parents, he developed a strong moral code that allowed him to challenge the established way. He remembered that even as a small child he would often "*ask the awkward question".* He believed that he had carried this forward into the leadership roles that he has performed. As a consequence he didn't feel intimidated or *"afraid of standing up in front of 30 others and saying, well actually that's not right, or I believe that we can do things in a different way."* Mohamed felt he had a strong moral code, a strong sense of right and wrong which almost demanded that he stand up and express his views if he did not believe the options being considered aligned with what he valued. *"Standing up for what you believe in"* was a really important characteristic

that Mohamed prized in himself and valued in the leaders who had inspired him. Mohamed believed that being true to his values was so significantly important that he would always do this, regardless of personal cost.

Isabel referred to her *"moral compass"* as an artefact that gave her the strength to stand up for what she believed in. Again she supported and developed her perspective with early recollections from her childhood. She identified that as a child she *"didn't quite fit in"* among the communities where she lived. Her domestic situation led to her moving to a number of different communities during her childhood and as a consequence of the experiences that she had had, she was always just a little bit different to the other children in the community. She recalled that she was actually quite intelligent and reasonably good at a number of things. Although she felt that she didn't quite fit in, or conform to others expectations of her, she was often considered somewhat of a leader by her peers and teachers. She remembers never really *"having a burning desire to conform"* and as a consequence, as she grew up, realised that she was *"quite comfortable with being at odds with other people".* Isabel identified that she can be friendly and quite happily get along with the people that she disagrees with, but she does not have a desire to conform to their views and opinions. She stated *"I'm quite happy to be in a in a room full of people and be the only person that thinks one thing, and I'm not gonna bend ".* She recognised that such a dogmatic stance might be considered as stubborn. Isabel couldn't actually decide if stubbornness was a good leadership quality or if it might actually cause hostility and resentment in followers. She concluded by suggesting that it would be dependent on the situation and on her followers but she did concede that she would, at times, compromise on some aspects of her position. Isabel did assert that she would not fundamentally change her view in

order to conform to the opinions and views of others whatever the cost to her. She stated *"I'm not happy to be unpopular, but I am prepared to be unpopular"*. Isabel identified this as being strong and felt that it was an important aspect of her leadership.

Jessica considered the importance of being strong and standing up for what she believed in. She felt it important that leaders are clear about what they value and what they hope to achieve. She suggested *"doing the right thing isn't necessarily about following the herd, it's about standing up for what is right".* A fundamentally important point in Jessica's argument is that leaders need to have considered and developed a clear view on what it is that they believe to be right.

Sarah considered this from a slightly different angle, she believed that followers want to stand behind a leader who is courageous and willing to fight for their corner and not crumble or run away at the first obstacle. If followers are to trust and perhaps take a risk in developing new projects, they need to know that their leader is a person that they can believe in and someone who *"if there's something important to fight, to fight it and to represent them well".* In the same context Rebecca identified that followers need assurance that their leader will be strong and not abandon them at the first sign of trouble, she stated *"followers know if something goes wrong they have someone looking after them".*

Shaun believed that leaders are often under a great deal of scrutiny and recalled that they often describe feeling quite exposed (a similar concept identified by Sarah in the Being Human chapter). Shaun felt that exposure and scrutiny prevents some people from adopting a leadership style that is natural to them, instead they seek to follow the approach that they believe is expected of them. This he felt is perceived by followers as a lack of authenticity and, therefore, compromises the leader's approach

even further. Shaun believed this to be *"fear; they're not confident enough to behave naturally"*. He suggested that over time he had developed the strength to not feel the need to pretend to be someone else. He said *"I'm comfortable enough in my own skin and I've been around, studied enough and now I'm old enough, ugly enough to kind of think, yeah whatever, do what you do, do what you like, I'll do what I like"*. Whilst reflecting on his own situation he identified that other members of the senior team were a little confused by his approach, they didn't quite know how to deal with him. He believed, however, that his approach was right for him and his team. His team knew who he was and how he would support them, and as a consequence, they trusted that he would be strong enough to do the right things. It is perhaps an interesting dichotomy that Shaun didn't identify with a corporate image of the leadership team that he sat within but he did strongly identify with the identity of the team that he led. Remembering Haslam et al (2011) concepts of in teams and out teams, Shaun clearly identified the team he led as an in team; whilst it appears he identified the corporate leadership team (a team that his role and position required him to be a member of) as an out team. It would be interesting to observe Shaun's continuing role within the team that he leads (the in team) and how this is affected by his ability to be remain influential within the senior leadership team of the organisation that he works in, but with whom he does not appear to value, (the out team).

Being political is a sub-theme that will be discussed later in this chapter, but it would appear that Isabel's example of stubbornness and Shaun's description of his relationship with a senior leadership team would perhaps indicate that remaining true to themselves and their beliefs is valued more highly to these participants than

perhaps a requirement to act politically or a requirement to conform to the expectation of others. This could perhaps be described as moral courage.

In the introduction to the 2007 edition of Moran's classic book Anatomy of Courage (2007), General Sir Peter de la Billiere, whilst describing the characteristics of military leaders, identified a difference between moral and physical courage. He concluded that moral courage took a higher form and was much rarer than physical courage. He stated (2007 pxiii) "it takes moral courage to stand up against the crowd" "to reveal negligence that others would prefer to remain hidden". He continued "moral courage implies the belief that what you are doing or saying is right and that you are willing to follow through your conviction regardless of personal popularity or favour". He concluded by stating that moral courage is "so easy to expound" yet actually so difficult to achieve. This may seem a long series of quotes to present, but its clear resonance with the words and sentiments of study participants make it particularly relevant to this study.

Sarah introduced a new idea that seemed to fit within the being strong sub-theme. She believed that leaders need to always push themselves and take considered risks. She remembered observing colleagues after she had just completed her professional qualifying course and was a junior member of the team. She recalled that jobs would become available at higher levels and a number of experienced and competent people would discuss applying for them, but then did not have the courage to put themselves forward for the roles. She also recalled witnessing perhaps well meant but unhelpful comments from other colleagues about increased stress and responsibility or even capability that would squash any fledgling confidence that the potential applicant might be developing. She concluded that she would not let this happen to her. She

would keep her own counsel in these matters, be courageous in making her own decisions and where necessary and appropriate, take risks. She stated *"when positions have become available I have gone for them when other people have not",* and although she hasn't always been successful, she believes that taking "*this risk and putting my head above the parapet"* is an approach that has taken courage and has fundamentally made a difference. She commented that although this approach has been difficult, especially in the early years of her career, as time has progressed she has developed *"an inner confidence that has gradually grown over the years"* that gives her the willingness "*however uncomfortable"* to put herself forward and stand at the front. Interestingly it would appear that mental courage has similar qualities to physical muscles in that the more they are used the easier it becomes to use them. Perhaps it is also true that the less often that they are used the harder it becomes to use them. Sarah recognised that even with the growth of her confidence she is still *"uncomfortable"* when standing at the front, and when taking risks, but she still pushes herself to do so. Perhaps leaders do need a degree of discomfort to keep their level of leadership fitness up.

Jarvis (2006) describes Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development; this concept identifies three learning zones; a comfort zone, a discomfort zone and a panic zone. Vygotsky suggested that maximum learning and development takes place when participants are working in their discomfort zone. People in their comfort zone no longer push themselves and when in the panic zone, people freeze and become unproductive. Perhaps Sarah identified that she is actually most effective when she is discomfortable.

An aspect of leadership expressed as a part of the leadership equation (that was presented in the earlier literature review) and by Northouse (2015) was the need for leaders to inculcate common goals amongst followers. On occasion followers may stray away from agreed paths and common goals, they might at times, step out of line. When this happens, as Schein (2010) suggests, it is the leader's job to intervene and to re-direct the follower back onto the right path. This may involve challenging and difficult conversations, a number of participants recognised the importance of this concept within their leadership roles.

Mohamed stated that it is important that leaders are able to challenge followers when they don't believe their actions are congruent with agreed shared goals and vision. He added that challenge was vitally important, but also the way that this is done is key. Followership is a voluntary activity and an abrasive and aggressive challenge, he felt, would not be well received in the long term by followers. It was therefore important that the approach taken was carefully considered and didn't leave the follower feeling distraught and disempowered. Mohamed suggested that it was vitally important that he would challenge, but he would always attempt to do so in what he considered to be *"a lovely way."*

A number of participants used the word honesty as a way of describing how they deal with difficult conversations that they sometimes have to have with members of their teams. This is a very different interpretation of word honesty to the one used in support of the Being Credible sub-theme identified in the Being Human chapter. Tom explained that he has expectations regarding the way that people should behave and that if a follower deviates from expected standards, he would have an "*honest*" conversation with the person. He also identified that his approach to these

conversations was important, and stated *"I'm not much of a screamer"* and insisted that undertaking *"honest"* conversations with humility and compassion was vitally important. Lucy also described having difficult conversations as honest conversations with followers. She discussed the pressures of organisational life and stresses that followers can be under. As a consequence, during difficult times, it may be a temptation to try and protect followers by, for example, not relaying bad news in quite the same way as it had been delivered to her. This may be a parental protection instinct and could be considered a dichotomy within the study; Lucy clarified, however, that in the longer term, she felt it was always a better option to be honest, she felt that exposing followers to the wider real world that they existed within provided them with greater opportunities to develop and grow. So, no matter how hard, Lucy believed that honest conversations were always in her followers' best interests. She stated you have *"got to be honest with feedback, not vague, but I'm aware of how this can affect them so I'm constantly balancing".* She also admitted that this isn't an exact science and on occasion she *"gets it wrong".* Sarah illustrated her approach by discussing how, for example, if someone had worked outside the boundaries of policy, she, as a leader and as someone with responsibility for the area, would need to explicitly explain that this course of action was not congruent with being a part of the organisation or with professional standards and was not acceptable. The conversation that she would have was again described as *"honest and real",* she also identified that she would act in a *"compassionate and considered* way" and there would be no vitriol in her approach. Sarah recognised that these situations could be *"horrible"* but that they had to be dealt with.

In a study by Ambile et al (2003) it was identified that followers can be disproportionately affected by a leader's comments and that a negative, badly instigated intervention can have an adverse effect on the follower's motivation not only on the day of the intervention but also on the following day as well. For many reasons it would seem important that challenging, difficult or 'honest' conversations are a vital component of leadership, but what appears to be equally important is that leaders approach delivering these difficult messages with care and compassion. The way that a message is delivered, according to Ambile et al (2003), is important and has an evidenced effect on short term productivity. In the long run, however, the voluntary nature of a leader-follower relationship requires that great attention and consideration must be given to the way a message is relayed.

Sheard et al (2013 p19) discuss visceral behaviour in leadership; they explain that throughout history visceral factors have been considered "destructive forces in human behaviour and decision making". Visceral behaviour is identified as passionate behaviour and there is much literature that supports passionate leadership, indeed leaders that demonstrate passion are often described as helping people to achieve more than they believed they could ever achieve. Sheard et al (2013), however, describe the dark side of leadership to suggest that sometimes leaders that are only driven by passion and instinct use negative emotions like anger and fear to get in their way; they are perhaps inclined to make decisions that are based on an irrational, emotional outburst rather than by taking a considered, rational approach. They suggest that "weak leadership can be destructive as leadership behaviour can systematically and repeatedly undermine or violate the legitimate interest of others in the organisation". Sheard et al's (2013) research recognises the importance of passion within leadership but suggest that this has to be balanced with the ability to make

logical and rational choices and decisions. To achieve this balance takes, they suggest, wisdom and maturity. In arriving at their conclusions they reviewed many historical leadership texts and quoted extensively from Confucius, Aristotle and Lao-tzu. They describe how strong effective leaders have to develop mastery over their emotions, but believe leaders who lack this mastery will show weak, impulsive behaviour and will "fail to go through a rational decision-making process." (Sheard et al 2013 p21) It is assessed that participants in this study did articulate Sheard et al's (2013) wisdom, maturity and mastery of their emotions; they recognised the importance of not acting impulsively, irrationally or cruelly. They recognised that effective leadership does require honest or difficult conversations with followers but that strong, effective and enduring leadership requires leaders that have developed a level of mastery over their emotions and are strong enough and wise enough to act with compassion, sensitivity and care.

The last concept to emerge from the data in this study that has a congruence with the Being Strong theme suggested that strong leaders should have a clear view of what constitutes their personal and professional boundaries.

Sarah identified the importance of an empowering leader and how in her past she had been given great opportunities to explore activities and issues; she recognised she has always held leaders that are generous in this aspect in very high regard and acknowledged that they have always really motivated her. She identified this approach as important to her and one that she has always tried to emulate with her followers. Sarah also recognised that clear personal and professional boundaries need to be in place and that the leader needs to be able move forward and take control if the follower is beginning to flounder. Rebecca supported this and again recognised that the leaders who had really inspired her were the people that had empowered her and

given her the opportunities to deliver and develop. She described how her strong

leaders had put boundaries in place to prevent people from stretching too far. It was

felt that boundaries help people to feel a sense of safety and security as they know

what it is that they are able to do and what it is that is actually outside of their role and

responsibility.

A model of leadership discussed by Nelson Mandela (1995) involved an analogy of a

shepherd walking behind a flock of sheep, allowing the most nimble sheep to go

forward to identify the lushest grazing. Mandela suggested that strong, effective

shepherds lead the flock from behind, directing and guiding their progress through

meadows without them ever realising they were being led. He also identified that

shepherds constantly scan the horizon for signs of danger, or if the flock is dispersing

or wandering into areas that have not been chartered. If such a threat is suspected

shepherds quickly move forward and lead the flock to safer pasture. Hill (Hemp 2008

p126) explored Mandela's analogy and considered its relevance within modern

organisations. She believed that this approach "embodies the type of leaders we

increasingly need". She identified the image of the shepherd leading the flock from

behind is an indication of the collective nature of leadership in today's complex

organisations. She believed that the analogy of nimble followers identifying lush

grazing creates an impression of an organisation that encourages followers to step

forward, explore new opportunities and lead at appropriate times as and when their

particular skills are required. It also suggests a leader that is comfortable in sharing

power to enable this to happen. Hill stated this model also clarifies that at times

leaders must move forward and take control of the situation if this is what is required.

She concludes by suggesting that perhaps the leader is aware of the destination of the

flock but in some sense the flock is allowed to work out how to get there. Perhaps these participants hinted at, or even identified with the constructs within Hill's model. It is apparent that leaders need to maintain clear boundaries to ensure that followers do, to a degree, conform. Within heavily regulated health and social care organisations both the follower and the organisation are therefore kept safe. Perhaps paradoxically, however, these boundaries have to embrace elements of fluidity if followers are to explore and take advantage of opportunities that emerge in today's complex world. Hill acknowledged that this is a difficult model to adopt and it certainly isn't an opportunity for leaders to abrogate their responsibility. It does, however, involve many complex judgements and decisions, and it would appear that it would be a confident, skilled and strong leader that is able to navigate this duality of fluid boundaries. Another issue that seems to resonate from this particular perspective is that, as followers are empowered and learn to take control, they are perhaps learning to be strong themselves. The leader that is able to share power appropriately is perhaps providing developmental opportunities for followers and also role modelling the type of behaviour that strong leaders of the future will need to display. Interestingly, Hill suggested that leaders who adopt this approach are often difficult to identify as they don't fit within a conventional image of a leader. She stated (2008 p127), "because they don't exhibit the take-charge, direction-setting behaviour we often think of as inherent in leadership, they are overlooked when an organization selects the people it believes have leadership potential". This, she believed, is a missed opportunity.

To conclude this sub-theme, strong leadership requires leaders that have a clear view of their values and their morality. They know themselves and the boundaries of their personal and professional role. Equally followers need to believe they are strong

enough to represent them when the going gets tough. Strong leaders also need to continually push themselves and take carefully considered risks. Strong leadership also requires leaders who are courageous enough to have challenging, difficult conversations with followers, but who are wise enough to carry out these tasks with compassion and sensitivity. Finally, strong leaders were identified as people with the inner confidence and strength to be able to share power with their followers, without feeling threatened by doing this. They are also wise enough to be aware of when the situation requires them to move forward and take control.

The sub-theme title Being Strong might have invoked images of masculinity. Indeed there is said to be a tendency in some boardrooms to adapt macho behaviour (Sheard el al 2013). Research by Ely and Meterson (2008) considered leadership in the tough environment of offshore oil rigs. They discovered that a macho leadership culture led to increases in errors and accidents, and leadership approaches that were characterised by concepts of listening, openness and compassion reduced accidents. Their research was replicated in other sectors with similar results. What is overtly clear from data provided for this research is that macho types of leadership behaviour are explicitly not welcome and would actually be perceived as weak leadership. Strong leaders within this sector are required to be sensitive, compassionate and caring.

Being Tough - Being Resilient

A collection of concepts and ideas emerged from analysis of the data that, after review and consideration, were put together to form the Being Resilient sub-theme.

The Oxford English Dictionary (2012) defines resilience in two ways. The first defines the physical properties of a material and described "the ability of a substance or object

to spring back into shape". The second provided more of an emotional explanation stating resilience is "the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties". Clearly leaders don't physically change shape when under pressure, but if considered a little more figuratively, both definitions suggest that through difficult and adverse times, resilient leaders are able to be flexible but provide consistency, strength and stability to followers. Resilient leaders appeared to have developed the attributes that suggest to followers that they are not adversely affected by difficult times.

Buell (2014) acknowledged that although resilience has always been a component of successful leadership, the complexity of the modern health and social care sector, with its multiple reforms, budget constraints and ever increasing public and political expectations, requires even greater levels of adaptability and resilience from both leaders and workforces.

This concept emerged clearly from the data in this study, and although only one participant actually identified the word resilience, aspects of the concept resonated throughout a number of interviews.

Over the course of her interview Sarah discussed and identified a number of issues which, after analysis, have been put together and included within this area. Sarah initially imagined that she was a bucket, and that each day followers would arrive at her door with a sponge full of their problems. She described how they would wring out *"their anxieties and their troubles all day"* into her bucket and by the end of the day her bucket would be well and truly full. Sarah initially looked to someone else to help her, someone or something that she could pour her troubles into. She soon realised that this wasn't satisfactory and that she needed to identify another solution that didn't involve anyone else. Sarah began to visualise a new bucket which she described

as being the "*right shaped bucket*"; a bucket that could never overflow. Sarah concluded that she would often feel a weight of responsibility and the nature of her job meant that she had to hold a lot of complex information in her head. She decided that she needed to learn *"resilience to cope"* with these issues and considered that leaders need to adopt strategies that develop their levels of personal resilience in order to survive. She accepted that many people are resilient in one situation or another but leaders have to learn to cope with multiple work issues, responsibilities and problems every day, as well as dealing with their own day to day home life problems. This wasn't something she thought everyone could do. She had observed that some people in leadership roles cope by becoming almost robotic or emotionless in their dealings with people and emotionally charged situations. They perhaps limit or restrict their humanity when at work in order to cope and survive. Sarah felt this was the wrong approach; she identified the Being Human qualities described in Chapter 5 and believed that resilience is developed by openness, honesty, positivity, humour and by being compassionate and real with her followers. Sarah relayed this concept with determination and passion. It might be that Sarah's never filled bucket is constructed from these components and this image or strategy is used to help her to cope. Fredrickson (2009 p97) describes how all people suffer adverse times occasionally; she was particularly interested in how some people are able to "bounce right back to face the world again even stronger than before". She believes that resilience is a concept that resides in both the heart and in the head. Frederickson's research considered the actual physical and biological process involved in both organs; through experimentation she identified that people with resilient personalities physically respond and recover more quickly from negative stimuli than those with less resilient personalities. In the context of this research (which does not sit in an experimental

paradigm), it could be concluded that resilience is both an attitude and a conscious choice. Frederickson identified personality attributes linked to the development of more resilient personalities; she described people that experience joy, hope, inspiration and love. Although Sarah's language may be slightly dissimilar to the words that Frederickson uses, it is felt the qualities that she described would fit neatly into Fredrickson's attributes.

Sarah also considered that appearing calm in all situations portrayed a sense of resilience to followers. She remembered an analogy of *"a duck or a swan, you look calm on the surface, but you might be paddling like crazy underneath".* Sarah believed the actions of leaders in times of crisis are infectious and if she was able to remain calm, so would the people around her. Equally if she began to panic this would also be transmitted to followers. In this context Sarah believed the example that she set as a leader helped her followers to develop their own resilience and their own coping strategies. In some ways her approach has cyclical properties, her calmness helps her followers remain calm which then contribute to her own calmness. It is presumed that the reverse is equally true. In arriving at this conclusion Sarah remembered the calm strength of a leader that had particularly inspired her. This person had almost a presence and calmness that led to *"People feeling reassured by her presence".* This person was felt to *"represent people well".*

Having the resilience to withstand criticism also emerged as a concept within this sub-theme. It is of course always easy to criticise or be critical, and people often look for someone to blame if things are not quite what or how they believe they should be. The concept of the scapegoat dates back to the times of the writers of the Old Testament (Metzger, Coogan 2004) when the sins of a community were saddled to a

goat that was sent out into the wilderness. Often leaders within health and social care organisations are considered scapegoats when things go seriously wrong in organisations (Naylor et al 2015). Perhaps at a lesser level participants perceived that they are often scapegoated or criticised by people around them (both followers and externally) and that they need to have the emotional resilience to not be affected by these criticisms. Sarah identified this *"as not being flaky"* or not crumbling at the first sign of criticism. Self-awareness was discussed at length in Chapter 5 but both Shaun and Isabel return to this concept when discussing emotional resilience. Shaun identified that he had invested a lot of time in considering what he offered as a leader and as a person and through this he had developed an awareness of his strengths and perhaps his areas of development, he was therefore, quite *"settled in his own skin"* and as such he felt that he was *"emotionally robust enough to take criticisms"*. Isabel also considered herself to be emotionally robust and concluded that she was *"not too bothered about what people thought about me";* she qualified this by suggesting that she was in some ways open to debate about the issues that she presented and she could act flexibly, but she wasn't in any way affected by how people conceived her personally.

Mohamed discussed a stubbornness in his approach that he believed was essential if he was to be considered a successful resilient leader. He believed that he should *"see things through even if it is difficult".* Developing this concept, Mohamed believed it was really important that he delivered on the things that he said he would deliver; that as a person he was known as someone who could be trusted to deliver whatever it was that he had committed himself to, no matter how hard the task turned out to be. He

stated that he wanted to be remembered as someone who would *"do what he said and said what he would do".*

Jessica believed that it was important to be a person that followed up on issues. She believed a lot of people in leadership roles appear to be able to talk through issues, but actually don't, after the initial conversation, seem to deliver whatever it was that they stated they would deliver, or at least, what is delivered is very much diluted compared to the what was promised. She believed, especially in her consultant role, that she would be the one *"who will see things through not just there in the moment but actually follow things through".*

In a study that attempted to identify the qualities that leaders believed was important in their approach to leadership, seeing things through and "doing what they said they would do" was considered to be amongst the top attributes that leaders valued about their practice (Meager, MacLachan 2014 p7).

Another thread that emerged from the data and seemed to sit within this sub-theme of resilience refers to the importance of a leader adopting and maintaining a consistent approach to leadership over time. Charlotte identified that her organisation had experienced turbulent times recently with many changes instigated by an emerging policy direction that was fundamentally not within the control of the organisation's leaders. She considered how this had affected the behaviour of the people who led her. She reflected how it seemed that they didn't really know what was going on; this wasn't a surprise to her as policy did seem to be emerging. But this uncertainty had seemed to unsettle them and as a consequence their behaviour and language had become unpredictable. Charlotte didn't really know what, who or how to ask for clarification on tasks that she was responsible for. She would receive a different

response and a different type of response each time that she spoke to her leaders. This has caused her to distrust the professionalism of her leaders; she was quite accepting of an emerging policy direction leading to a lack of clarity over her priorities and tasks, but she did recognise that she struggled greatly with not quite understanding if she would be greeted with an angry response, a considered response or indeed a dejected response from her leader. She perceived that the leaders with whom she had previously developed a trusting and credible relationship with were not dealing with the uncertainty and change and were not demonstrating to her that they were resilient. This affected her trust in their leadership. What became clear to her through this experience was the importance of being resilient or at least being able to maintain a consistent approach for followers. Since identifying this important learning, Charlotte has tried to project a consistent resilient approach to her followers, so that even though she might not know the answer, her followers will know what type of response to expect from their leader.

A final issue to consider within this resilience sub-theme refers to the importance of leadership over time; the importance of experiencing a phenomenon and of developing the resilience to stick with it through both good and bad times and of simply not giving up. Followers will perhaps only develop trust in their leader if they are confident that the leader will be resilient enough to stick with them.

Tom had completed a leadership qualification at Master's level. He concluded that even after all of his studies, which he perceived had been enormously beneficial, leadership was something that couldn't be taught and could only be developed experientially and alongside experiences with his followers. Tom believed that leadership *"happens over time"* and that it is *"not necessarily something you can teach,*

you can add layers and knowledge and those sort of things, but I think most leaders emerge". Tom agreed with Kouzes and Posner's (2011) idea that followers need to trust their leaders and this, he felt, can only be truly developed over time. Tom believed that true leaders are the ones *"that stand the test of time"*, and in relation to this sub-theme it would seem that resilience is a quality that leaders will need in abundance during turbulent and troubled times. In order to fulfil Tom's image of a true leader, a person who would be able to build trust and stand the test of time, it is clear that they would need qualities that would make them truly resilient.

Being Tough - Being Political

The final sub-theme that contributed to Being Tough theme has been given the label of Being Political. A number of participants contributed important issues that have been put together under this sub-theme. Participants recognised that they lead in organisations that are complex, multi-professional and with many level of hierarchies and a number of different professional cultures. They recognised that if they were to have their way, to have their ideas adopted, they would have to work politically to ensure that their perspectives and ideas win enough support to be adopted. In a simple world the best ideas would be adopted by all, but within the complex multi-dimensional health and social care world, in order to have the best ideas adopted by all, leaders need to be political.

As stated in previous sub-themes, the title of the theme was chosen and seemed to make what might be called common sense. As before, a simple academic definition of 'political' was sought and again, elucidation was somewhat elusive with many differing ideas and concepts emerging.

Isin (2002) considered being political as inculcating a particularly dominant point of view within a community. Bass and Bass (2008 p338) suggest that organisational politics becomes particularly acute when the organisation needs to change or reshape itself; they believe that organisational politics play a role in developing what they describe as "new alignments" which in effect re-balance the interests of the organisation's members. At an organisational level "conscious and unconscious organisational values, beliefs and practices" are shaped and reshaped by political actors and leaders. Nohria and Khurana (2010) assert that the development of political skills is absolutely crucial for effective leadership in organisations; they do, however, identify that this is far more complicated than it first appears. The narrative that is explored in this section focuses on participants who work within organisations both large and small that share multiple organisational and professional cultures. It demonstrates how they successfully navigate difficult territory to achieve common goals and objectives.

Hannah works in a relatively small organisation that employs a number of professional groups. She works at an executive level but is the only person on the executive group from her own particular professional background whilst another profession dominates the group. She had considered and observed at length what she perceived to be *"fascinating relationships"* that exist between a number of professional groups. She identified that understanding organisational culture was hugely important in her organisation; she stated that there are *"loads of complex dynamics"* but as long as each actor plays their part, the organisation functions smoothly. If, however, someone steps *"out of their box"* and strays into other areas of practice or policy, problems can arise. Hannah identified *"a lot of sort of juggling that has to go on"* in managing and

developing these complex dynamics. Initially she suggested that she was lucky because she was able to work in this way, but when pushed she conceded that it was quite a skill that she had developed. She recognised the need to respect professional boundaries but in order to achieve the outcomes that she wished to pursue, she would work quietly and assertively; in most cases this approach won the day. It appears that Hannah had identified the way in which different professional cultures worked in her organisation. She didn't attempt to emulate a culture that she didn't belong to and she didn't attempt to directly challenge alternative cultures; equally she wasn't intimidated by other styles or approaches. She simply developed a deep understanding of how things worked, quietly and assertively working with and around the different and at times difficult groups, focusing on the issue that she wanted to address. It appears she was able to successfully manage the political tensions that existed within her organisation. Hayley works in a similar organisation and identified similar issues. She identified that she was a good problem solver and she would always look to *"find new ways of doing things".* She would then work to engage the people around her to support her solution. She stated her belief *"I'm a good communicator, I cross all professional boundaries".* As with Hannah, Hayley has to work with a number of professional groups within her organisation and again her profession isn't the dominant group. She has to deploy and rely on excellent and sensitive communication skills to ensure that her message is heard and adopted. *"Being good at engaging people"* is a key attribute that she feels makes her successful and accepted in many different forums.

Sarah works in a very large organisation and is responsible for a group of professionals who *"work in a range of teams"* across different Directorates and services *"so they all*

have different types of jobs". The group that she leads has a number of sub-specialities; this, alongside working across a diverse range of directorates and services has led, it appears, to the emergence of different sub-cultures. She stated *"it is different, and they think differently"* …… *"they have different values and different ways of thinking"*. As a consequence she acknowledged that a key aspect of her job was to both recognise and *"deal with a range of issues, a range of complexity"*. This has created a number of situations which she accepted *"can be tense I think sometimes"*. Sarah explained that she has worked in this environment for a number of years and so this wasn't exactly a new problem for her. She reflected that she works really hard to *"find ways of understanding where other people are coming from"*. She also felt that these particular skills assisted her in helping other people see alternative perspectives that they were perhaps blinded to.

Shaun works in a merged organisation that operates over a number of sites, each site serves a different community. Even though the merger took place a number of years ago, each site has its own history and its own particular issues. Shaun's role covers all sites and in order for him to be effective he believes he has to negotiate the differing organisational cultures and organisational politics as he travels around. Shaun discussed each site at length; he demonstrated that he really understood the intricacies of each place and of the differing approach that he would have to take in order to ensure that he was effective across the organisation. He stated *"you have to understand the contexts of these sites in this unique place don't you, and how they fit into the wider NHS, it is the uniqueness to each place in itself"*. Understanding the very different cultures within his work area and then working across boundaries to ensure that he got his way was a significant aspect of his leadership role. In addition Shaun

considered the deficiencies of his organisation and suggested moving people and functions to different parts of the organisation to perhaps mitigate the strengths of the local culture and enhance a whole organisational culture. In some ways he used the interview as an opportunity to discuss ideas. As a conclusion, he identified the risks associated with interfering with established culture but considered the importance of moving forward with a more united culture.

Working within and across organisational hierarchy was also identified as a key political skill by Jessica. She recalled how in the early days of her leadership roles within organisations, she would often struggle to understand and relay messages from her senior manager. Over time she realised that she had to develop a filtering system that allowed her to consider and understand both the message and the way that her manager wanted the message relayed. She felt this was a critical political skill that she could only develop through reflection and with experience of her line manager's approach. She initially believed that this was perhaps something unique to this particular line manager and organisation. As she moved to different organisations she continued to recognise, to a greater or lesser extent, that this concept did in fact repeat itself in all of the organisations that she worked in.

Schein (2010 p3) identified the intimate relationship between leadership and culture, indeed he suggests that leadership and culture are actually "two sides of the same coin". Schein believes that understanding the culture that exists within an organisation is important for everyone within the organisation as it helps people to understand how they should behave within it. He asserts, however, that this understanding is absolutely vital for leaders if they are to lead. Schein also identified the importance of professional cultures and described how these are often forged during periods of

apprenticeship or training. If this period involves emotional intensity, then professional culture becomes deep, embedded and established. He states that even if people work in areas outside of their original professional group, they will maintain their cultural identity and practices. For example, a nurse will always identify with a nursing culture despite not working in a nursing role or even in an organisation that employs nurses. The nature and type of apprenticeship that the majority of professions which contribute to the health and social care sector have undertaken will, it is proposed, lead to a very clear professional culture and identity. These cultures, however, are very diverse and people will see the world through a number of unique lenses. It is the successful leader's job to be able to effectively interpret and work with competing and disparate views of the world. In addition Schein identifies that if culture becomes maladapted, it is the leader's role to find a way to challenge and change this culture. It would seem that participants had clearly developed a cultural understanding of their world with many competing lenses and differing views of the truth. It appears that they have identified ways of working with, or around, the different obstacles that have been placed in their way. Understanding, working with and leading multiple organisational and professional cultures perhaps requires what Nohria and Khurana (2010) might describe as crucial political skills.

Chapter Conclusions

Being effective as a leader can at times be a very difficult, almost impossible job that requires a balance of what appears to be a number of difficult contradictions. Leaders it would appear, have to be strong and stubborn with clear views and clear boundaries, but be flexible and fluid in the application of them. They need a strong sense of morality and the ability and will to challenge effectively and honestly but in ways that

are subtle and don't adversely affect the motivation of their followers. They have to be

resilient enough to deal with criticism yet sensitive enough to continue to be perceived

as caring human beings. They have to appear calm in all circumstances yet maintain

authenticity and be genuine, not flaky. Finally, in addition to this they have to be able

to act politically and be able to understand and deal effectively with a number of

different organisational and professional cultures that exist in the complex health and

social care organisational world. It would appear that being an effective leader is a

series of complicated contradictions and to always get this balance right is, it seems,

very tough.

Chapter 7 Being Visionary

Introduction to Being Visionary

 The final theme that emerged from analysis of the data suggests that leaders need to see more than just the situation that confronts them each day. It is, of course, perfectly acceptable to live in the moment. The exhausting metaphorical daily fires that seem to take up so much time do need to be fought and extinguished, and people who take leadership roles are without doubt perceived to be extremely busy people (Mintzberg 2013). In order, however, to be prepared and perhaps more importantly, to prepare followers for the incoming tide of inevitable organisational change, leaders need to take a much wider view. They need to understand how they, their services and their teams fit into a complicated and somewhat uncertain future health and social care world. Bass and Bass (2008 p629) describe visionary leaders as people who develop future facing goals that not only look to the future but also importantly have meaning to their followers. They suggest that visionary leaders are able to provide "a road map to the future" and this map has an emotional resonance to its followers.

This chapter follows a similar format to Chapters 5 and 6. A range of concepts emerged from the initial analysis of the data, these were merged into four sub-themes that were considered to have a relevance and have contributed to the development of the Being Visionary theme. The four sub-themes have been given the labels Being Creative, Being a Learner, Being Understanding, and Being Far-sighted. Each sub-theme will be considered using a mainly narrative approach enhanced by supporting literature. The text within this chapter will elucidate the participants' experience of concepts that they identified and which were, through analysis, included within this theme.

Fig 11 Being Visionary Theme and Sub-themes

Being Visionary - Being Creative

Creativity and leadership have been closely associated within leadership literature for some time. Participants within this study echoed this, and the concept of working creatively with followers did emerge in a number of ways during the interviews. As with other concepts within this study, a simple and commonly accepted definition of creativity is, it appears, difficult to find. For example, Runco (2014 pxi) states in the prefix to his book on creativity that "Creativity is an important and fascinating topic of study, but difficult to define". For the purpose of this sub-theme, however, the definition of creativity that has been utilised identified creativity as the production of novel and appropriate ideas, but ideas that are adaptable and within the constraints of organisational resources (Sternberg 1999). Coupling creativity with available organisational resources appears to be a significantly important issue for leaders that work within the resources constrained health and social care world. Managers and leaders often describe the importance of embracing and nurturing creativity in their

organisations (Caniëls, Rietzschel 2015). It is, it would seem, the application of these concepts in practice by individual leaders that might make a difference.

Tom focused on creating the right environment that he felt would allow creativity to flourish. He wanted to be a *"creative force that pulls people together"*. Tom believed that people will naturally act in creative ways if they are provided with a work environment that is welcoming of individuals and individuality. To this end he stated that it was his belief that allowing people to be themselves *"and be expressive"* led to an environment that embraced their creativity. Tom mentioned the word creativity a number of times in a variety of contexts throughout the interview. He appeared to really value this aspect of his personality and wanted to allow it to flourish both in himself and in others. He discussed the perceived constraints of being a responsible manager who had clear organisational expectations of behaviour placed on him. In some ways it appeared that he felt a little conflicted and he perhaps seemed to have a desire to rebel against the constraining conventional behaviour that he perceived was expected from him and to break free from this. If he could be unleashed from the shackles that he perceived were restraining him he would be a wonderful creative force within his organisation. Research findings seem to provide support to Tom in his desire for freedom to be the creative leader who endowed creativity in their followers; Mathisen et al (2012 p369) identified that "leaders who directly expose their creativity among their employees will inspire their employees and in such a manner promote creativity in their organization". However in the organisation where he currently works, Tom perceived his creative bent would not be universally endorsed by senior colleagues.

Isabel valued her creativity and believed it was a real asset in her approach to leading

people. She had previously concluded that really listening to followers was a significant

facet of her approach to leadership. In the context of being creative, she explained

how she would spend time with her followers, listening as they discussed their

concerns and problems. Isabel believed the strength of her approach was to then think

creatively *"on her feet to conceptualising the problem and then to reflect it back"* to

followers so that they could begin to creatively explore the issues together. Underlying

this approach was a firm belief that she was working with people to make them better

at completing tasks for themselves. She concluded *"it is certainly not about spoon-*

feeding people, it's about working with them to get round whatever the obstacles are".

Sarah recognised the importance of leading creatively; she identified that in her role

she had to deal each day with *"a range of problems and a range of complexity".* Sarah

is an experienced leader and over time she has dealt with numerous problems. She

identified that initially she would look to her experience in efforts to resolve problems.

She has recognised more and more that the issues she has to deal with are increasingly

complex and increasingly unique. In such situations it is difficult to rely on what has

gone before, instead she described *"taking a deep breath, look at something, analyse it,*

and come up with creative solutions". Sarah believes creativity is a key attribute in her

approach to leadership. She encourages this in the people she leads by *"being open to*

ideas, flexible, and not fazed by things". Once again Sarah considered the example that

she sets as being pivotal in guiding the way other people within her team behave.

Hayley identified that she had developed a reputation as a good problem solver; as a

consequence other members of the organisation come to her to talk through their

concerns and problems and to look for solutions. She felt that actually, her key skill

was to be a good communicator and to be able to communicate across boundaries. It was also identified that she valued knowledgeable people and being knowledgeable herself. It appears that members of her organisation at all levels would have issues and problems which they wanted to discuss. They would choose Hayley because she had both excellent listening and communicating skills, and in addition, she was knowledgeable about the service. Her role indicated a level of expertise in her professional area but it also appeared to be indicative of her whole approach to life, indeed, as suggested above, colleagues with different levels of expertise and from different professions value her expert input. Hayley also discussed how she perceived her work to *"be fun"*. Through dialogue, she felt that people often resolved their own problems, she didn't feel she particularly created their solutions but just helped others to find their own way of resolving issues. To conclude, the creative qualities that it would appear that Hayley has are enhanced by her knowledge, her ability to communicate effectively at all levels and by her positivity.

Drucker described the complexities of the world that managers and leaders are currently operating within. He suggested "we are in one of these great historical periods that occur every 200 or 300 years when people don't understand the world anymore and the past is not sufficient to explain the future" (Cameron and Quinn 2011 p1). Previously, approaches to creativity may have been viewed with suspicion in organisations because often, problems and the solutions to problems were well known. As a consequence, therefore, structure and order constrained organisational life. Tom might feel that his organisation hasn't moved beyond this point or at least hasn't moved as far as he would like it to. What seems clear, however, is that in the complex health and social care world with so many wicked problems emerging, elements of

creativity within the workplace are both encouraged and increasingly essential. Whilst none of the questions in the interview explicitly referred to or contained the word creativity a range of participants described how they how see the importance of embracing and leading creativity into the future.

Ambile et al (2003) discuss what they consider to be a common myth; that creativity only resides in those considered to be a genius. Their research investigated how people work in organisations; it identified that workers often report having intense, rich and varied working lives. They concluded by debunking the genius myth; everyone, given the right conditions can work creatively. It is therefore, by default, a vital leadership role to create these optimum conditions. In support of this Mathisen et al (2012 p369) stated that "supportive, inspirational, and non controlling leadership promotes employee creativity". These, it would appear, are some of the qualities that have been identified by participants within this study.

Being Visionary - Being a Learner

A selection criterion for the recruitment of participants onto this study was that they had completed or were studying for a Doctorate in Professional Studies, (or that they are in academic roles that teach leadership). It is therefore perhaps not entirely surprising that among the issues which emerged from the data, continuing to learn was an important facet for them in their leadership roles. This of course is acknowledged as a limitation of the study; however, the concepts which the participants described seemed to indicate something more than a desire to achieve higher level academic qualifications. It seemed to indicate that the participants had an appreciation of the importance of lifelong learning. Regardless as to whether this was done formally or informally, to attain qualifications and certificates or simply for the

joy of it, continuing to learn appeared to be fundamental to the way in which they led. After a great deal of consideration, therefore, it was believed to be a sub-theme that should be included in this study.

A number of participants particularly identified the importance of an open and positive attitude to learning which they believed would inspire followers to also adopt. Rebecca considered that often leaders are too busy to keep learning about their world; this she felt was a mistake.

Kate reflected on workers in her organisations; she recognised that everyone is an individual, and that *"everybody works at a different level and a different speed and comes to terms with things very differently".* In her area (and perhaps in the wider health and social care service) there are often ways of operating that have been in place for a long time but perhaps no longer really meet the needs of the service user. She said *"you can sit down with users of health services, what they want is maybe completely different to health professionals".* Kate described a frustration in this and real desire to learn from the experiences of service users in order to redesign her service to meet their needs. She identified it was absolutely key to learn about the needs of the users and then to help her workers learn how to adapt their services to meet this service user led need. She identified a desire to cultivate a culture and process of continual learning in both herself and her staff, and then of adapting services as a consequence of this learning to meet emerging need. She described a continual striving to *"find new ways of working".*

Charlotte works in an environment that requires structure and process control to ensure that key targets are achieved. She also described the importance in her field of continually learning about issues that are arising across the global health community.

Her role would include modelling the implications of a specific disease profile on local communities and adapting and planning to deal with such eventualities. She highlighted the importance of balance between the adherence to structured processes and the need to be able to think creatively and imaginatively. Charlotte believed that knowledge was absolutely vital to her leadership role. She reflected that knowledgeable leaders had inspired her and given her confidence. She also reflected that leaders who listen and allow others to develop their views and concepts through discussion and debate also inspire her. So in her world, she concluded that tasks have to be completed, but people have to be free and encouraged to question, to learn and fundamentally to apply their learning in practice. She reflected that she is "*not protective if someone comes along and says I know better, I say ok show me*". Charlotte identified that her success as a leader was a consequence of continually striving to learn new things and then applying them in practice to improve the services that she is responsible for. She stated *"I'm very much a person who wants knowledge myself, if I'm bored the thing I will do is go and learn something and see if there are better ways of doing things "*.

Hayley discussed a national programme which she leads that is considering ways of developing a new advanced practitioner role. She described the level of complex technical knowledge that she had to accrue in order to *"lead the debate about issues that she cares about".* She carried out this role in addition to her normal job and described how she is *"conscientious and committed to learning"* in order to develop this key area. When questioned further about her capacity to do this in addition to her full time role, alongside significant study commitments as she completes the Professional Doctorate Programme, she described how she *"likes new knowledge and*

finds it exciting". She enjoyed learning new things and confirmed that she finds *"it fun".*

She felt somewhat surprised that others didn't do this. Hayley wants the people that

share her profession to have a passion for learning and she always seeks to be a role

model. In her view this passion involves leading new developments and initiatives

whilst continually learning new things; she also believes this creates a great degree of

job satisfaction.

Isabel works in a senior role; she is perhaps considered an expert in her professional

area and is employed to provide expert knowledge to the practitioners that share her

profession. Isabel acknowledged that *"she has a huge amount to learn"*. This wasn't

perceived as a statement grounded in false modesty, but almost an attitude to life. She

admitted that in her field she had gained a lot of knowledge and people do look to her

for advice and information. Rather than be perceived as an all knowing expert, she

considers that she acts almost like a conduit for learning. She is able, because of her

role, to co-ordinate knowledge from others and cascade this new learning and new

ways of working and thinking to others. It is through the experiences of others and

through debate and discussion that she continually learns. She described the

organisation as almost a playground that *"gives her the environment and the context to*

allow her to fulfil what she does".

Sarah stated that she is always looking for ways to improve her services, although she

didn't want to be perceived as a critical, negative person who was never satisfied with

what anyone had done. She did identify strongly with an appreciative inquiry approach

and felt that there would always be ways of doing things better. Within this she felt

that she could always do better herself. She particularly identified an attitude of

openness to learning. Sarah, as she stated many times in her interview, believed that a

key facet of leadership was to be a role model to others. She believed that if she could demonstrate an ongoing appreciation of, and openness to learning, others that followed her would do the same.

Mohamed described the changing and challenging nature of his profession, he reflected on his experience of inter-professional working and concluded that in inter-professional teams it isn't really possible for one person to know everything. He applied this to his current leadership role and described how learning from others is vitally important to him. He re-iterated that it isn't possible to know everything but feels it is so important to be open to learning and open to change, whilst in relation to other people he suggested he had *"learned quite a lot and I always say I am learning from others"*. Again, as with Sarah, it was an attitude and openness to learning he felt was so important.

Hannah described her role in her organisation. Nationally there are very few organisations that have followed the model that her organisation has and have a person of her profession working at a senior level. She described her role as that of *"a pioneer"* and identified so many aspects of the work that someone in her role could undertake but that currently there are no established practices, processes and cultures to do so. As a consequence, every day she is learning how to behave, how to act and how to fit in; this in addition to the new technical skills that she has had to acquire. Each new step that she takes is a learning experience and this learning has to be consolidated, evaluated and then cascaded to the few other pioneers that exist across the country. To succeed in this environment requires an attitude and approach that is both open to and values learning.

Rebecca suggested that often leaders in organisations *"suffer from chronic busyness"* and as a consequence they fail to *"learn the context"* that they are operating within. They often sacrifice the time needed to think deeply about their own unique context. This, she felt, was a great mistake that good leaders avoid and Rebecca felt it important that they work out how to dedicate time to learn and understand their changing world. She reflected that often it is not deemed to be appropriate to sit with your eyes closed, simply thinking *"whereas, in fact that might just be the most valuable thing you can do at that point".* Rebecca also considered a leader's attitude to training followers. She reflected that when times get difficult, training is often the first thing to be sacrificed. This might have little detrimental effect if this is only a short term issue, but if training or developing others is always the first thing to be sacrificed then the culture of the organisation begins to be affected and followers begin to believe that the organisation is not interested in their individual progress and aspirations. Training becomes perhaps a little tokenistic as workers complete mandatory training that ensures *"people have the skills where they can survive in the current turmoil".* Fundamentally this didn't consider what Rebecca called the *"desired future state".* Rebecca believed that successful leaders are aware of what they will need if the organisation is to perform in the desired future state. A pivotal part of this is the identification of the learning needs of people who will contribute to this future situation. The successful leader will consider *"what skills, abilities, attitudes, behaviours and all the rest of it people will have In order to be successful in that desired future state".* Rebecca struggled with the term training as this wasn't what she intended, she concluded *"it's not just about training, it's about almost getting people in condition"* to deal with the future challenges that they and the organisation will face in the future. It is *"actually giving people those skills that they might need".* Rebecca

explored this notion further and considered how leaders inculcate this approach. She concluded that in order to get people ready for the future state you have to teach them to think; she suggested *"actually giving people the opportunity to grow their cognitive capacity, to grow their ability to think, is actually a crucial part of any leader's role"*.

Fullan (2011) considered research by Dweck that identified two opposing mindsets. One mindset is described as fixed, the other as growth. People that have a fixed mindset believe that both intelligence and ability are fixed and are therefore not able to be challenged or changed. In this context life is a series of successes or failures with any setback being considered as failure. Taking risks therefore involves the risk of failure and people with a fixed mindset may avoid taking risks in order to avoid the risk of failure. They get satisfaction from repeating what they now perceive as easy tasks and by doing the things which they believe they have already conquered. People in leadership roles that have a fixed mindset will not want to be wrong as being wrong is perceived as failing. Fullan (2011 p115) concludes that "it is easy to see why they don't learn much that is new because learning involves risk and even certainty of some failure". Fullan (2011) discusses how people with this growth mindset believe that they can get better by trying things out and by challenging themselves; they aren't discouraged by failure as they don't really perceive that they are failing, only that they are learning. "Risk and effort are worth the possibility of failing because you might learn something" (Fullan 2011 p115). It would appear that a growth mindset has been described by participants in this study.

Two aspects emerged from this sub-theme that looked to have a congruence with other parts of the study. Participants demonstrated that they had a desire to continue

to learn; if they stop learning they became less effective in their leadership roles. The other aspect suggested that leaders should demonstrate a passion to help other people to learn and to enjoy the benefits of their learning. In effect, there are perhaps both learning aspects and teaching aspects to leadership. Participants would appear to clearly exhibit a growth mindset, and not only in their own lives but in a desire for their followers to adopt this approach. Fullan (2011) provides support for the development of this concept and suggests that there is clear evidence that it can be cultivated in all people; this of course includes those that have adopted a fixed mindset. It appears that the participants have embraced a growth mindset that they display within all aspects of their life.

Being Visionary - Being Understanding

The literature review identified that leaders have to develop an understanding of the context that surrounds them and into which their leadership role and their organisation depends. At an earlier part of this study it became clear that the concept of honesty had different meanings depending upon the context or situation. The same issue arose within the identification of this sub-theme. Within this sub-theme Being Understanding relates to developing an understanding of the strategic context that the organisation finds itself in, rather than understanding the needs of individual followers.

The final sub-theme has been given the title of Being Far-sighted and considered how strategic intent and vision are interpreted and relayed to followers. Clearly these two sub-themes are interlinked and sit next to each other within the study; however, this sub-theme considered how effective leaders develop an understanding of where their organisation fits in the wider health and social care world. This is perhaps the stage before strategy formulation. Developing an understanding of the context that health

and social care organisations operate within is increasingly being identified as a significant aspect of successful organisations. Participants identified how they developed this understanding and, within this study, it felt worthy and important enough to be considered as a sub-theme in its own right, rather than be attached to a rather lengthy final sub-theme.

Isabel reflected on her role which included the development of national policy and guidance. She explained how it is relatively straightforward to write documents, but for these documents to be effective, they have to be grounded in the reality of practice. Unless front-line implications of its implementation have been considered, documents will not really be successfully adopted by practitioners. Isabel believed that she developed this understanding by being with and working with front-line practitioners. She stated that she was at her most comfortable when working with practitioners. She said she would *"far rather be with staff and work with staff and it's only by actually being on the wards, being in the community, working hands-on with staff, face to face with their patients that I actually find out anything about them and what their issues are and what their problems are and I work them through".* She also identified the importance of actually understanding the processes that drive the organisation, the issues that practitioners face each day. Again without this level of detailed understanding, she felt any change might be ill-considered and resisted by followers.

Lucy considered her emerging role in her organisation and the leadership journey she had been on before arriving at her current location. She reflected that although she had been in her current role for some time it was only fairly recently that she felt that she was really getting to understand the business. As a consequence she described an increasing level of self confidence and increasing levels of competence; she stated *"I*

feel like I increasingly know what I'm doing". Exploring this concept in a little more depth Lucy explained that she had arrived at her current employer with a credible reputation from a previous role. She had been expected to be effective from her first day and was given little time to embed herself in the organisation. She felt she was *"always running to catch up".* It had taken some time to actually feel that she fitted into the organisation, during which time she perhaps hadn't been as effective as she could have been. She believed, and reflected, that if she could have this time again she would have ensured that she was given time to really understand the organisation and its context from the inside. This investment of time would, she believed, have helped her to be far more effective from a much earlier stage.

Rebecca developed this area; she believed that effective leaders have developed the ability to listen at *"a fairly deep level"* to a range of things. She identified the importance of listening to staff, but this was only part of understanding the complex picture that leaders and organisations operate in. Rebecca also felt it important to listen to what *"the market is telling you and to what the context is telling you".* She added that leaders must also remember and consider the hard won lessons that arise from the history of the organisation. She considered that good leaders are sensitive to and, most importantly, able to respond and react to these changing factors. In her view, many leaders do not take the time to develop an understanding of this complex multi-layered context and as a consequence are too slow to react to changes. They are, therefore, left behind by those who have developed this understanding. She stated that *"because of the fast moving nature of the context, the ability to anticipate involves picking up signs and signals very early and that's what I mean by listening in this context".* Rebecca concluded by saying that *"it's about being sensitive to the*

environment that surrounds you and actually using that responsiveness to anticipate what's going on". Rebecca also identified the ongoing nature of this understanding and identified that many good ideas are considered and developed at a specific point in time. They were obviously good ideas within this context and time, however, time and context sometimes change and often a once good initiative becomes redundant in a future world. It is the leader's role to understand and adapt to the changing context, but also to work sensitively with followers in order to develop their understanding of the changed context and also, therefore, adapt or change their good ideas.

Being Visionary - Being Far-sighted

Being Far-sighted can be defined as "the ability to predict what will happen or will be needed in the future" (Oxford Dictionary 2012 p685). Bass and Bass (2008) describe how far-sighted leaders are sensitive to, and therefore take advantage of, emerging opportunities. They suggest that most people can perhaps think of the near future, maybe a year ahead, but few can think of how the world will look in ten or twenty years. Bass and Bass (2008) describe how successful leaders have also developed the critically important cognitive skills that enable them to communicate and transmit these ideas to followers in ways that mean something to their followers. Taylor et al (2014) describes how visionary leaders are able to develop and then merge their own vision with that of the goals and aspirations of their followers. It is, however, the communication of this vision that is of significant importance in this process. Indeed, they suggest that when people don't respond, it tends to be because the vision has not been communicated properly in the first place and as a consequence followers struggle to understand the direction that is being proposed. A number of participants

recognised the importance to their leadership roles of developing skills in this area; analyses of their comments are included in the section below.

Four participants identified the importance of incorporating a wider view of the world when looking at their vision of the future. They all recognised the importance of communicating this vision in ways that followers can understand.

Kate believed that a key attribute of her leadership approach was to have a vision for the future of her service. She discussed her strong passion for developing her service and viewed the organisation in which she worked as a vehicle to help achieve her vision. Throughout the interview, Kate re-iterated the importance to her of providing the very best service to the vulnerable people that her organisation existed to serve. As a consequence, she was always looking for ways to improve the service. She stated *"I can see the art of possibility, that what can be done and more, I'm very much a strategic thinker".* A key part of this and a significant aspect of her role, was to always be *"horizon scanning"* through this she was able to *"challenge"* existing practice by being able to "*bring the outside in".* She explained how some people in her organisation had been in the same roles for some time and had become somewhat stuck in their ways. Through exploration of what others around the world had achieved, alongside her knowledge of local context, need and organisational limitations, she was able to develop and articulate what she perceived to be an externally validated vision of what her service could and should do to meet emerging local needs in the future. A part of this vision was to help influence external commissioners, but in addition, she was able to challenge existing practice and perhaps influence cultural norms in her teams by describing her view of the future for her service. By developing her concept of *"intelligent kindness"* she explained how she would work with people's strengths to

help them see and adopt her vision. Kate explored the difference between management and leadership. She identified management aspects by asserting that employees in her organisation have to follow policy and procedures; they have to adhere to rules. They have no choice; if they wish to remain employed and indeed registered with a relevant health or social care professional body (like the Nursing and Midwifery Council), they have to comply with rules, regulations, policy and procedures. They don't, however, have to follow or believe in her vision. This, Kate suggests, is an *"individual choice*, *but you hope you can inspire people to move in one direction, so you're trying to create momentum and a movement".* Many people have described the difference between management and leadership, an early definition from Rost (1991) would seem to epitomise Kate's view. Rost suggests relationships within management approaches are unidirectional and based on authority, whilst leadership relationships are considered to be multidirectional and involve the influencing and development of common goals and visions. Kate believed that the managerial aspects of her role are important; in recognition of this she stated *"you have to standardise practice".* A managerial approach, she felt, would contribute to an effective and perhaps efficient organisation, but this management dominated approach would not lead to the development of a service that was focused on the emerging needs of service users. As a consequence, she believed that her service (working with the third sector) would not survive in the longer term if it didn't have a strong vision for how it will operate and continue to meet the needs of its clients in the future.

Kate also described how easy it is in an interview to discuss inspiring her followers, but the day to day reality is much more challenging. She believed *"that it can be difficult*

because everybody works at a different level and a different speed and come to terms with things very differently, so you've got to work with them to help them understand".

Sarah described her far-sighted leaders as *"clear thinkers",* and described how these people would be able to sit with a group of people and clearly describe a different scenario or perhaps articulate things from a different perspective that would *"make everyone think".* Sarah explained how they would gently steer people in what she described as *"the right direction"* and in the process *"empower this creative force in people".* Their action, she felt *"pulled people together, and made them really enjoy the job".* When questioned further regarding how this was done, she described how followers were made to feel valued by a leader who was highly regarded for her knowledge and skill. In addition she possessed an intellect that allowed her to think clearly. She would often trust others and, most importantly, she would publicly demonstrate and articulate this trust. She would also inspire others to trust and believe in her. Taylor et al (2014 p568) suggest that far-sighted leaders also have the cognitive ability to display such behaviours as "confidence, pro-social power and organisational capabilities" which convince followers (that they, the followers) have the knowledge, skills and abilities to deliver the shared vision described by the leader. It would appear that Sarah's 'real world' applied example would give support to the Taylor et al (2014) position.

Sarah then reflected on her own leadership and stated that she considers it to be in *"a privileged position".* She described becoming involved in and leading a series of national developments within her profession. This gives her the opportunity to *"meet people at all levels and forums"* who are in the process of developing creative and innovative solutions to the many complex problems her profession faces. She feels

that she is able to bring these ideas back into her organisation. Sarah is able to recognise both "*local and national perspective*" and through her leading role, she has developed a cross cutting vision for her service that integrates both national and local priorities. Sarah considers that her "*privileged position*" allows her to influence the future direction of her profession and her service at both a national and local level. In relation to the communication of this vision Sarah has progressed 'through the ranks' of her profession and she remembers how she felt when she had just qualified and begun work. She also insists on spending time with workers at different levels in the organisation so that she understands their day to day roles and pressure, stating "*I can support particular grades of staff in different ways*". This understanding helps her to adjust the way she communicates her vision so that it is relevant and aligns with the issues which different teams face.

Building on comments that were included in the 'Being a Learner' sub-theme, Charlotte had reflected upon how she had a passion for developing knowledge about aspects of her service at a global and national level. She believed that it was important for her to "*understand what is happening*". She was then able to align her local service within a bigger picture. She suggested that she would "*see where we are going and point them in the right direction*". As with Sarah and Kate, Charlotte identified the importance of ensuring that an outside perspective informed the internal vision she developed and communicated to others. She stated "*I can understand what is happening, not just within the unit, but with-out the unit*" "*and I can point them in the right direction they need to go as well*". Charlotte considered that she was an easy going person and felt this was important in the way in which the vision was communicated and interpreted. She said "*you've got a vision and you're approachable*"

to people to talk to you about that vision". She felt too many leaders talk through their vision with their staff teams instead of talking to their staff teams about their vision. By being approachable and easy going she believed that members of her team would come and discuss aspects that troubled them, she could explain how she had arrived at her conclusion but also adjust her vision if she felt this was important.

Sarah, Kate and Charlotte all suggest that being far-sighted involves the combining of both local and national perspectives. Perhaps this has a parallel with the concepts of the Roman God Janus in that to develop their vision they have to look in at least two directions.

Hannah had identified that she considered her role as that of a pioneer. She identified that she was working in a role which was at the forefront of a changing and demanding sector. As such, it was very clear that she had to have a vision for how she wished her service to develop. She acknowledged that there were many complexities within her role and the environment in which she worked, indeed there were a number of people who were opposed to her role altogether. Working within this context Hannah had to maintain a clear far-sighted view of how she believed that her service and her role would develop. In a similar way to other participants, Hannah felt it important to network with other pioneers across the country to ensure that her vision was aligned with how other pioneers were developing their roles. Again it was felt to be very important to always be aware of a bigger picture when developing a local vision.

A skill that Isabel believed she had only recently discovered was an ability to *"conceptualize things and taking things that are quite complex ideas and communicate them to other people".* She believes she is particularly good at talking with people at a level they understand, and describes how she believes that at *"some level she helps*

other people to kind of come to terms with their own thoughts and their own confusion". She has experience of leaders who talk to people or at people without particular regard for if the person that they are talking to can understand their concepts. Often people in leadership roles have been thinking and working on a particular idea for some time, in effect they have had the opportunity to work through *"their own confusions".* Isabel finds it particularly difficult when she finds that this time and opportunity isn't afforded to followers who are *"briefed"* on a particular situation and therefore expected to understand and follow the brief. Again Isabel's ideas have resonance with the Taylor et al (2014) view that followers often fail to understand what is being communicated to them. It also accords with Heath and Heath's (2010) concept that if followers are to do something different, leaders need to exert influence not only on the environment but also on their hearts and minds. Isabel appears to describe a skill that allows her to communicate effectively, but also a great desire to ensure that her message is actually fully understood by her followers.

Lucy looked at this concept by perhaps considering it through a different lens. For Lucy, far-sighted leadership was embedded in her aspiration to be *"a game changer".* Lucy believed that the most successful leaders are the ones who *"help people to think differently about something".* She explored this further and concluded that leaders *"help people to think differently about themselves"* and that *"they change the way people think about themselves and their world".* Lucy continued by suggesting that change can be on many levels "*it's from micro-level to a macro-level"***.** She explained that people often expect grand changes from leaders, but in reality, effective leaders work with people on all sorts of levels, and it is perhaps a combination of micro-changes that make the biggest overall difference. Lucy added that she didn't think it

possible to change people who were not open to the challenge of change. Perhaps it is through a series of micro-changes that followers begin to believe and see themselves differently. Lucy felt that a far-sighted leader creates the right environment for change and individual growth, but only through self-awareness and self-exploration can followers begin to adapt and grow. She suggested that this journey can often be a hard one, but that effective far-sighted leadership is being able to see the best that people can become and then helping them to achieve this. Lucy's views seem to resonate with ideas that are included in both transformational and adaptive leadership concepts. Burns (1978) suggested that transformational leaders are able to inspire and stimulate their followers so that together they achieve far more than they initially believed possible. During this transformational process followers develop their own leadership capacity. Heifetz el al (2009) describes a component of an adaptive leader as being able to give the work back to the people. They suggest that leaders are often expected to take on all problems and therefore take these problems off the shoulders of others. Heifetz et al (2009) believe that this approach does not actually resolve long term problems and can create dependency and a lack of leadership. They suggest that pushing the work back to the team, even if this is uncomfortable, will lead to the development of leadership capacity. Lucy described *"changing the way that people think"* but also considered it to be the leader's job to only facilitate the opportunities to grow. The follower would have to work hard in order to develop their self-awareness and self-reflection and, in partnership with the leader, consider their own opportunities for growth.

Chapter conclusion

This chapter considered a range of concepts that contributed to the theme's title of Being Visionary. This is the third theme identified in this study and is thought to be an important component of effective leadership. It considered that in order to be visionary, leaders need to embrace and develop a range of concepts. The first sub-theme identified the importance of working creatively in modern organisations and of leading and inspiring creativity in others. The second sub-theme considered the importance of continued learning for leaders as they explore their ever changing environment. Leaders that have perhaps forgotten to learn are, it is felt, in danger of becoming extinct and their service at risk of being decommissioned. The approach and attitude to learning chosen by the leader is also vital so that followers themselves are empowered to learn and develop not only new technical skills but also the capacity and capability to think and to adapt their approach to ensure survival in a changing world. The third and fourth sub-themes appear to be very closely related. The third sub-theme described the importance of the leader continually developing an understanding of the context that their services operate within. The fourth and final sub-theme suggests that being far-sighted, looking to the future and developing a clear vision of what their service should look like, after developing this understanding of context, is significantly important. Equally importantly, it was identified in this theme that leaders need to develop the cognitive skill to effectively communicate their message to followers in ways that are particularly relevant to them and in ways that they can make sense of and understand.

Chapter 8 Concluding Discussion

Introduction

The Concluding Discussion chapter considers significant issues that emerged within the study and seemed to be particularly important across all of the three findings chapters.

The Commonalities and Complexities of Being Human and Defining Leadership

The first chapter of the findings section was given the title of Being Human. This initially seemed a straightforward and almost common sense definition of the issues that had been identified within the chapter. A scoping search, using the University library gateway, was carried out in an attempt to provide a straightforward, academically suitable definition of what Being Human actually means. The search term generated over six million articles of one kind or another. This theme was intended to elucidate a complex area, with a simple two word title, thereby attempting to establish its simple credentials at the start of the chapter. It was suggested it was perhaps a little ironic that the title of this first theme generated such a huge amount of information, which when explored, was perhaps even more complex than the leadership concept it sought to partially explain. Perhaps, however, after reflection this wasn't as surprising or ironic as it first appeared and maybe this helps demonstrate why defining leadership has been so problematic. As stated in the earlier literature review a number of authors have described the concept of leadership as intangible and have commented on the difficulties of agreeing a common definition. As examples Nohria and Khurana (2010 p5) stated that leadership is an "elusive subject that is difficult to define let alone study", while Simkins (2005 p10) identified that a definition of leadership has "so far proved elusive". Hernandez et al (2011) believed many of the

160

approaches that have been developed do add something to our understanding of this complex subject. It is, however, still the difficulties in agreeing a definition that have led to the development of so many disparate approaches. Grint (2010) even postulated that a lack of consensus about leadership definitions could lead to a conclusion that the concept itself had become contested.

Bass and Bass (2008) argue that as our understanding of leadership is based upon the unique experiences we have as we travel through our lives, our understanding of it will be unique to each of us. They describe how the early influences in our life such as our parents, our school etc. provide the unique building blocks of our own distinctive leadership model. They identify that as our human experiences are unique, so perhaps is our construction of what good, effective leadership is. Northouse's (2015) ideas concur with Bass and Bass; he adds that leadership fascinates people. It is, however, only when they begin to explore this complex and multi-faceted concept that they develop their own understanding of what it is and this understanding, as a consequence of the uniqueness of their individual experiences, is very subjective.

Of the three themes that emerged from the data during this study, the issues that are explored within the Being Human theme generated the most discussion. The concepts discussed within this chapter were unique to the individuals and the narrative provided insight into their interpretation of what being human actually means to them. Given these ideas and the importance given by participants in this study to human factors within leadership, it is perhaps not particularly surprising that the ambiguity of leadership definitions sits alongside the complexity of the concepts involved in what it means to be human.

Timmons et al (2015 p5), building on Chomsky's concept that a verifiable view of being human will never be agreed, concluded that "humans are likely to remain a mystery to themselves". To extend this to leadership, human factors have been identified within this study as being important to effective leadership. The concept of being human will, it appears, continue to remain mysterious; therefore, a commonly accepted definition of leadership might also remain enigmatic.

As suggested by the leadership equation, before emerging leaders can begin to explore and understand the wider concepts of leadership, of what their followers need, of the common goals that bind them to their followers and of the uniqueness of their context, they perhaps need to dedicate time and energy to exploring the mystery of themselves and this, it is hoped, may lead to a little bit of self discovery.

It is acknowledged that participants demonstrated different degrees of empathy with the themes discussed in the Being Human chapter. Each of them did, however, contribute to this area and all recognised in some way the importance of Being Human when taking a leadership role.

Leadership models

As perhaps would be expected within such a widely researched field, a number of ideas and concepts resonated with leadership models and leadership literature. There are many models and theories that are intended to help people understand their own view of leadership. Interestingly, none of the participants actually identified with or even alluded to a particular leadership concept or model such as, for example, transformational leadership. This is a widely discussed concept, particularly in health services leadership dialogues and study participants, at the levels at which they work,

would in all probability, have been exposed to it, yet it wasn't mentioned. A criterion for the recruitment of participants onto this study was that they were undertaking the Professional Doctorate programme. Part of this programme requires that students explore and understand their leadership roles; as such participants would have been exposed to a range of leadership theories. In addition, a number of participants described how they specifically enjoyed learning new things, for example, Hayley suggested learning new things *"is fun"* and Charlotte stated that she *"will go and learn something and see if there are better ways of doing things".* These comments support the belief that the participants would, at some point, have explored leadership theories and it was believed that they would have been able to articulate how they applied these concepts to their practice. Yet in this study, not one participant mentioned any specific leadership theory.

This may have been a consequence of the introductory statement about the number of leadership models. It may have been the design of the questioning format that didn't specifically ask if participants preferred a particular approach. It may be, however, that leadership models don't neatly fit into the real world lived experience of the participants and therefore don't readily come to mind when being asked to discuss the practical qualities of leaders. As Naylor et al (2015 p6) point out, "the literature is awash with definitions of leadership styles - transformation, collaborative, shared and distributive to name but a few". None appear to provide the required silver bullet; none appear to have found Simpkins's (2005 p10) "holy grail". If this is the case, it may be that the approach which many authors take in attempting to corral leadership into carefully designed cages has, as Crainer suggested (Mullins 2007 p363), created a "minefield of misunderstanding" that practitioners, therefore, seek to avoid. Carter

(2008) identified a number of leadership research studies that did not appear to benefit practitioners; this perhaps supported Gill and Johnson's (2002) idea of scepticism within practitioner communities who do not perceive that research takes place or has relevance to their real world. Perhaps, therefore, the usefulness of some leadership models revolves around gaining an academic understanding of the subject instead of being of particular practical relevance and application to practitioners.

Communication

An issue that resonated across the three themes discussed in the findings chapters was the need for leaders to actually demonstrate and communicate to followers whatever it is that the theme suggested. It simply isn't enough to hold a particular view, value or perspective and expect followers to understand. This message must be transmitted openly and clearly to followers in ways that they can interpret and understand. It would seem that the communication of information is a vital aspect of leadership. Some perceptions of leadership might involve leaders making impassioned and inspirational speeches that clearly portray such messages. It is clear within this study that this isn't necessarily a requirement. Indeed this approach at times caused distrust amongst some study participants. The leader must, however, ensure that they communicate effectively with their followers in order to relay their messages. It is suggested that they should do so by utilising a medium that would be congruent with their style and their approach. This, it is felt, will enhance authenticity and genuineness which will lead to the formation of trusting, credible leader/follower relationships (Kouzes, Posner 2011). As suggested earlier, leaders must develop their understanding of themselves as leaders within this particular context. They must understand their

communication strengths and perhaps also consider areas that they need to develop. To do otherwise will make them appear inauthentic.

A number of participants considered that they should act as role models to their followers and clearly in this context, in order to be effective, actions must accompany and be congruent with words.

Inauthentic authenticity

The study exposed an interesting contradiction. It became clear that followers want their leaders to be human beings, to be strong and to be visionary. Followers needed their leader to demonstrate a range of qualities that were associated with these themes. As examples participants identified that leaders need to be self-aware, they need to demonstrate and show emotions, they need to have a sense of humour, they have to be trustworthy, they need to be strong and not flaky, they need to be confident, they need to have a clear view of a future direction and they need to appear calm at all times. Importantly they need to be perceived as genuine, authentic people.

Waite et al (2015 p284) discusses a leadership concept called authentic leadership. They detail the attributes authentic leaders have to demonstrate and include "genuineness, empathy, respect, trustworthiness, reliability, and believability" in the successful application of this approach. Laschinger and Smith (2013) identified that although still a relatively new concept within leadership literature, with a genesis in the 1990s, a number of studies identified its relevance and success in nursing leadership. It would appear that authentic leadership is gaining popularity and momentum in the health and social care sector. Garner et al (2005) describe four aspects of this approach. The first aspect is that leaders have to know both themselves

and what they believe in. The second aspect involves a consistency and transparency between what they say they value and the way that they behave. The third aspect considers the development of positive attributes like optimism, hope and resilience both in themselves and their followers. The final, fourth aspect considers that they are widely regarded as people that have a high level of integrity. It would seem that a number of participants discussed ideas that would certainly resonate with the attributes or aspects of this concept.

Authentic leadership does appear to strongly correlate with the positive aspects of themes identified by this study. In reality, however, being human includes experiencing a wide range of emotions and not all of them can be described as positive. Frederickson (2009 p136) discuses positivity but acknowledges that negative emotions are a fundamental part of life and that forced positivity becomes "Pollyanna with a forced clown smile painted on your face, you lose touch with reality, in time you drive others away". It is clear that leaders should demonstrate a range of emotions. The dichotomy or dilemma that this study identifies is that followers require their leaders to demonstrate a range of emotions. In reality, however, followers don't appear to want their leader to display less positive emotions that might lead them to question their leader's credibility. This in turn might damage the trust that followers need to place in their leader (Kouze, Posner 2011). For example Sarah explained at various sections of the interview that she should be honest, genuine, trustworthy, have a sense of humour, be resilient. She also described feeling very exposed and as a consequence she had to be constantly aware of her behaviour and of making unguarded comments. She had to appear calm and confident even if she was nervous and she desperately didn't want to appear *"flaky"*. The positive qualities that Sarah

and others describe would accord with the concept of authentic leadership. However, the avoidance of demonstrating more negative emotions might lead to what Garner et al (2005 p17) call inauthentic or even pseudo-authentic leadership. Inauthentic leadership is defined as when leaders are required to operate in ways that they do not feel at ease or comfortable with and pseudo-authentic is when leaders present themselves as authentic "for dramaturgical purposes". It seems a strange contradiction that followers like authentic leadership but when leaders are truly authentic (and perhaps display some of their less than positive human qualities) there is a perceived risk that followers' trust in their leader is negatively affected. It would seem incredibly disappointing to conclude that followers actually want pseudo-authentic leadership; that leadership is really only an act, a performance played out by inauthentic actors in front of their follower audience.

Meager and MacLachan (2014) identify emotional regulation as a key attribute that underpins great leadership. They specify emotional regulation rather than emotional stability as they perceive the term stability indicates a static or fixed construct. Leaders, they suggest, need to access emotional responses that are appropriate to the situation that is being faced. Leaders need to demonstrate a range of emotions; however, if they have too much of what they describe as "survival chemicals running through their bodies and minds" they will either underreact or overreact to situations (Meager, MacLachan 2014 p7). Leaders who are able to demonstrate emotional regulation could be angry without the perception that they had personally attacked someone, could shed a tear without appearing flaky, or express real joy in a joint success. Meager and MacLachan (2014) believe that experiencing emotions helps leaders to make the right decisions and to develop good instincts. Emotional regulation i.e. expressing a full

range of emotions but demonstrating a level of regulation and control is a fundamental requirement of good leadership. Sheard et al (2013) describe a similar concept and suggest leaders should develop mastery over their emotional responses. Meager and MacLachan (2014) conclude that skills-based leadership development programmes will never help future leaders develop this attribute. They suggest a need for programmes that develop the leader holistically as a person so that they (as a number of participants identified) can understand how and why they, and others with whom they interact tick.

The concept of honesty was identified in two chapters. In the Being Human chapter the concept of honesty was linked to integrity, to developing trust and credibility. An aspect of the Being Tough chapter also utilised the concept of honesty. It is suggested, however, that having an honest conversation in this context was actually a euphemism to describe a difficult or challenging conversation. It is explicitly clear that participants identified the need to have difficult conversations when necessary. Effective leadership is clearly far more than just being nice to people. Perhaps leaders within health and social care don't want to be considered as aggressive. They perhaps don't believe this approach is the right to way to develop a high quality caring environment that successful health and social care organisations strive so hard to inculcate. Some participants described a 'management culture' as a challenging and aggressive feature of the workplace. They identify the need to work with colleagues to jointly develop common goals. They recognise that occasionally, some more wayward colleagues might stray away from an agreed path and need to be clearly directed back. To maximise effectiveness of their followers and to therefore more effectively and efficiently achieve common goals, the sensitive way that challenge is delivered is

important to these participants. Aspects of macho management so often evident in boardrooms and in the ways that managers operate (Sheard et al 2013) is not thought, by these participants, to be an effective way to get things done. This study is based within the health and social care sector and this sensitivity may be an aspect of leadership that only has relevance to environments that need to deliver care as a fundamental operational component. As identified in research by Ely and Meyerson (2008), however, the adoption of a more consensual, compassionate and caring approach to leadership in the perhaps macho offshore oilrig work environment led to a reduction in errors and accidents. This facet, therefore, described as significantly important by participants that work across the health and social care sector, could be adopted across a number of other sectors. What has to be stressed is that it is not challenge itself that is contested, this is essential in all organisations; it is the considered and compassionate approach to delivering this challenge, described as having honest conversations that perhaps should replace approaches that are described as macho management.

Introduction

It is considered an important feature of research projects to reflect on the research

journey; to consider how the varied aspects of the project design actually worked in

practice. Whilst this reflective process is considered good practice for all research

projects and all researchers, it would seem especially important within qualitative

projects that have, as stated earlier, required research designers to make decisions

based on myriad choices. Reflection focused on the Critical Interpretive Synthesis

Literature Review, the Appreciative Inquiry Methodology the Semi-structured

Interview method and the Thematic Analysis Approach to Data Analysis. This chapter

then considered research ambiguity and what are thought to be the limitations of this

study.

Reflecting on Critical Interpretive Synthesis approach to The Literature Review

The literature review sought to use a method that allowed for the synthesis of a

diverse body of literature. The Critical Interpretive Synthesis model appeared to do this.

The mental image created by Eakin and Mykhalovskiy's (2003 p190) "more like a

compass than an anchor" was to some extent liberating. The literature review should

feel more like an exploration into an exciting world of new literature, rather than an

anchor whose primary purpose is to actually restrict or stop movement. A

fundamental aim of the literature review was, however, to produce a replicable

literature review that could be a clear map that might help others to find their way.

This approach does not produce an explicitly clear map; the sampling techniques could

permit others to follow a slightly different path and this felt uncomfortable. Flemming

(2010) adapted Dixon Woods et al concept and developed a much more systematic CIS

approach. This perhaps follows a process that would appear to be more easily replicable by others. To re-use the anchor analogy, Flemming's adaptation is perhaps more like an anchor than a compass. This anchor, however, has a very long chain that will still allow for a liberating exploration of the world of literature, but will produce a review that is easier to map and therefore replicate. During the planning stage the CIS approach was identified and considered as an appropriate instrument for the review of this diverse field of literature. At this design decision point it was decided to adopt the original Dixon-Woods et al (2006) model. The literature review, with the identification of the Leadership Equation, was felt to offer an extremely valuable, perhaps even seminal contribution to the study and contributed to meeting two of the objectives within the research question. In this context it was successful. As suggested above a clear replicable map for others to follow was perhaps not achieved quite so well. Flemming's (2010) adaption might have been a really useful addition to this CIS model.

Reflecting on the Appreciative Inquiry Methodology

Methodology is a vital component of all research projects; during the design phase Appreciative Inquiry was identified as an appropriate methodology that would support the exploration of this research question. The researcher had little experience of this methodology prior to the study although he had some exposure to solution focused work (which has a similarity to AI) from an earlier phase in his career. In some respect this design decision might be considered a riskier option than more established mainstream approaches. What was particularly attractive about this approach is its positive focus of establishing what does work and the absence of the deficit dialogue "why doesn't it work" that is present in many research designs. A criticism of AI is that this positive approach leads to a lack of criticality. An analogy, however, considered

the emergence of shadows when a spotlight is shone on an item. This suggested that AI approaches are able to identify areas of deficiency. Paucity, however, isn't the focus of the study although it clearly might emerge. This certainly appeared to be the case within this study. A number of participants considered and compared their experiences of excellent leadership with their experiences of poor leadership; from this they were able to describe the shadows, but fundamentally this was a component of a positive dialogue. In interviews that asked intelligent, articulate, research knowledgeable leaders (Easterby-Smith et al 2012) about how they lead, the AI methodology seemed eminently suitable and certainly appeared to lead to the collection of some extremely useful data.

Reflecting on the Interviews

The semi-structure interview format provides an opportunity to generate, through a conversational approach, rich data (Kvale, Brinkman 2015). The researcher had in earlier parts of his career been involved in social work and in person-centred counselling; as such he concluded that he had extensive experience of active listening in interviews. This experience appeared to provide a good fit with the research design and therefore seemed to be an ideal vehicle for gathering data. The interviews took place according to the schedule and the researcher's personal reflection at the time suggested a degree of ambivalence to the richness of the findings. The process of completing the interviews appeared to be satisfactory. Interviews seemed to flow, participants talked, ethical issues didn't emerge, and participants seemed to be happy with both the process and with their contributions, so all appeared to be ok. There was, however, no Eureka moment, the researcher had not heard or even perceived at this point in time that there was richness to the data. As the analysis process progressed

and the researcher became immersed in the data, it became clearly apparent that there was an amazing depth to participants' contributions. The creativity, the use of language, the depth of thinking, all given freely with very little preparation and thinking time was found to be truly inspiring. The interesting point is that this was completely absent from the researcher's interpretation of the interviews at the point of completion. There may be a number of reasons for this. It could be that the unfamiliarity and pressure of the research interview interfered with active listening. It may be a focus on the adherence to ethical and research protocols or perhaps the fixation on the flashing 'recording' light on the digital recording device could be considered mitigating factors. In reality and after extensive reflection it is believed that this wasn't an exceptional situation and the richness identified within interviews in this study may be apparent in normal day to day conversations. Ambile et al (2003) analysed daily diary entries from research participants, their conclusion that participants have rich and intense daily lives might offer support to this assertion. A point of real interest in relation to my future practice is to try and understand how to develop listening skills that allow me to hear some of this richness amongst the confusion and noise of everyday conversations. The skill is to demonstrate balance and normality in listening. It is thought that conversations may become a rather intense affair if every word is analysed and examined for its richness and hidden depth. Perhaps after a short period of time having a chat with this researcher might be an activity to be avoided. Schein (2013 p19) introduced the concept of "humble inquiry"; he suggests it goes beyond simple questioning and listening to answers. Leaders who apply this approach demonstrate an "attitude of interest and curiosity" in followers; as such they convey a deep desire to develop a really positive, open relationship with their followers. It is perhaps humble inquiry that needs to be developed.

Reflecting on Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase thematic analysis process was adapted to include Easterly-Smith et al's (2012) reflection stage.

The first phase of the model suggested that the researcher should become immersed in the data. This phase involved reading, re-reading and listening to the recorded interviews across the whole data set. Ideally the researcher would have benefited from transcribing the interviews himself. After a great deal of consideration and reflection following an earlier transcription experience, a pragmatic analysis that balanced the available time and depth of data immersion concluded that a professional transcription service would be a worthwhile compromise.

The structure of the model suggested almost a sequential approach would be followed. In reality this just didn't happen, the immersion phase lasted throughout and beyond the whole thematic analysis exercise. Indeed it appeared that as the word count for the research project increased so did the immersion and understanding of the data. Even Braun and Clarke (2006 p86), who introduced the six phases, described a "constant moving back and forward between the entire data set". Tracey (2012) suggests that moving in and out of the data, iterating and reiterating understanding, connecting themes and ideas as they are identified is at the heart of this approach to analysis.

The second stage was a reflective stage. Easterby-Smith et al (2012) consider it easy to become overawed by the amount of rich data, leading to what may seem an impossible task of attempting to interpret and make sense of it all. This stage, therefore, provided an opportunity to step away from the data. As a part time

researcher with other professional commitments this planned stage was actually enforced by other operational duties. There was a sense of being overwhelmed, but stepping away from the data at this stage for a period of time did not provide the relief, fresh insight or the new perspective that it was suggested it would. It didn't ease feelings of being overwhelmed; it perhaps exacerbated them as additional time had to be taken to re-engage with the data after the enforced break. This reflective pause, although laudable in theory, did not prove practically beneficial for this researcher.

The third stage was a coding stage and involved a return to the detail of the data in order to begin the process of identifying and coding concepts. Braun and Clarke (2006 p80) state "the process starts when the analyst begins to notice, and look for, patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data. "This is a critical stage which in practice felt somewhat laborious. The pragmatic, compromise decision to employ professional transcription services perhaps had implications here and although a great amount of time had been deployed during the first phase, it became apparent that the researcher wasn't immersed enough. This was perhaps the hardest phase in the process. Eventually after extensive reading, re-reading and listening to the interviews, ninety six codes were identified.

The fourth stage involved searching for themes within the generated codes. The fifth stage again involved reflection and a review of the codes and themes to ensure congruence within the data codes and themes and the sixth stage involved defining and naming the themes. Although distinct phases, these three stages appeared to fit seamlessly together. It wasn't until towards the end of this part of the exercise that the richness of participants' contributions began to materialise.

The seventh stage involved a final review and the writing up of the findings. As suggested above, travelling in and out of the data continued throughout this phase. Braun and Clarke (2006 p86) comment that "writing is an integral part of analysis"; this certainly applied in this study, the writing stage was a pivotal part of the analysis, it helped define and refine complex concepts, and through iteration and reiteration, a new level of understanding was reached.

The exercise of thematic analysis was a fascinating experience; however, it was not explicitly clear that anything useful had emerged until after quite an extensive investment of both time and energy. The advice of the supervision team was to trust and be true to the process that had been initially identified during the design stage. This required absolute faith in their skills and their advice, without this, insecurity regarding the value of the time investment and the worth of the subsequent research findings might have led to a debilitating crisis of confidence. This process was far messier than the straightforward flow chart suggested in Fig 6. Fig 12 shows the actual process of moving between the data phase as the project developed, Fig 13 is an illustration of the importance of the relationship between the researcher and the supervision team, without such leadership it would have been very easy to abandon the project at this stage.

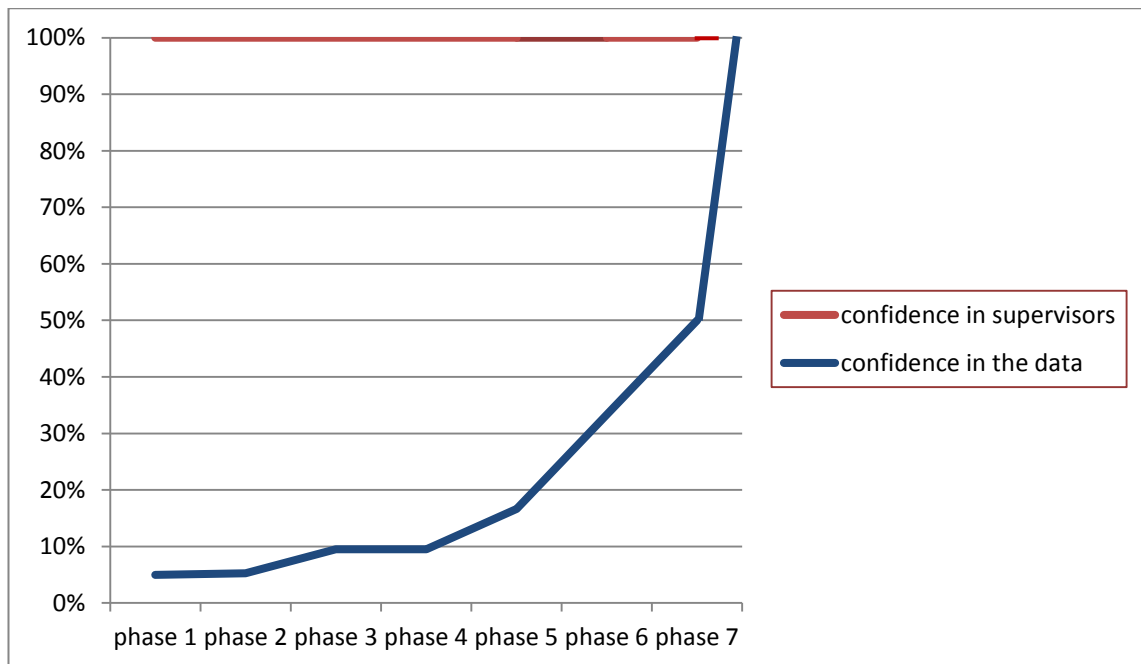Fig 12 The Messiness of the Data Analysis Phase

Fig 13 The Researcher's confidence in Data and confidence in Supervisory Team's advice during the Data Analysis phases

Research Ambiguity

A common frustration that occurred during the write up phase relates to the simple definitions of sub-themes. As described in Chapter's 5, 6 and 7, what appeared to be relatively simple, common sense definitions of sub-themes proved extremely difficult to pin down when actually attempting to identify an academically acceptable definition. What transpired during this phase is that ambiguity does appear to exist across all sciences, even hard sciences. Runco (2014 p389) considered this in relation to creativity theory and asserts that ambiguity is "not any more dramatic than that which you find in physics, chemistry, and biology". Indeed he suggests that ambiguity is at the heart of most research and has advantages in creating debate and further exploration of these issues leading to the development of greater understanding of a concept. So whilst multiple definitions might create initial confusion, it is suggested that this confusion should become a comfortable place in which to exist. As stated in

the design stage chapter of this thesis, this is qualitative research that is attempting to offer a view of the world, not the only view of the world and therefore, a level of ambiguity should sit comfortably within it.

Limitations of the study

As suggested in chapter 2, the design of qualitative research projects based in messy real world organisations are often said to be a series of compromises (Edmondson, McManus 2007, Gray 2009). As such, strengths could be considered by some that hold different epistemological positions as weaknesses and weaknesses as strengths. This is a qualitative study based upon the analysed contributions of twelve leaders that work within health and social care sector organisations in a specific geographical area. It is feasible that a different group of participants might have led the study to a different conclusion. It is also feasible that a larger sample size may have identified different points. This design did consider data saturation with an initial sample size of nine and a stopping criterion of three additional interviews. Mason's (2010) research indicated that nothing new really emerges after six interviews; the design of this study did therefore include a degree of insurance to ensure saturation was achieved. In addition Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that the longer the researcher is immersed in the data the more they will see. They add that saturation is achieved when discovering something new is actually counter productive and the new thing really doesn't add to the existing findings. Straus and Corbin's position had particular resonance within the Being Human Chapter. This was a lengthy process and, as a consequence of the uniqueness of the being human concept, it was difficult to conclude that a saturation point had been reached.   It is also a consideration that the findings and conclusion of the project may only apply to organisations that exist within the geographical area in

which the participants work; a study based in another geographical area might have identified different findings. This is acknowledged by the researcher although, in mitigation, the defined geographical area was rather large area and did include both rural and urban populations. As a final point this study considered contributions from participants who work in health or social care organisations. It didn't exclusively specify one particular sector or even part of a sector. There is a risk that practitioners that work in social care, in the acute sector or in primary care, may choose not to recognise the findings of the study as it didn't focus exclusively on their unique sector. These points are recognised as areas that could be considered as weaknesses within the study, as discussed by Bluhm et al (2011), diversity in this field of research is considered a strength and the congruency between aspects of the design was carefully considered. The study deliberately set out to include health and social care professionals. Integration of health and social care services is a key future agenda and the study aim was to reflect the issues that future leaders will face. It is difficult to see a future that doesn't include integrated services. It is therefore believed that findings from this study should continue to have a relevance for practitioners as the integration agenda rolls forward.

Final Conclusions

The chapter draws together the final concluding thoughts concerning the study; it considers the implications for practice and includes a range of recommendations.

The research question 'what do health and social care leaders perceive is required of leadership in contemporary and future organisations?' led to a study that generated some fascinating insights into how current leaders in health and social care organisations perceive they will be required to lead in the future. Participants recognised a changing workplace and the emergence of wicked issues which will certainly generate challenges and will require innovative and creative thinking from engaged workplace communities. Participants identified the ways in which leaders will need to behave to inculcate this environment.

What is clear is that prescribed leadership models don't seem to have resonance or perhaps relevance for these participants. As a consequence, the finding from this research would suggest that extensive teaching of fashionable leadership models on academic leadership programmes is not the best use of participants' time. It is believed there is still a place for models of leadership in leadership development programmes; these perhaps help leaders situate themselves in a particular landscape. However, participants in this study did not readily identify with any particular approach. The first recommendation for practice is, therefore, that programme designers responsible for leadership development programmes review their provision with the aim of reducing the time spent teaching different leadership theories.

1. **Leadership theories and models are given less of a precedent in leadership development programme.**

It is perhaps a contradiction that leaders are given privileged positions and empowered to lead, but their leadership role is then constrained by an expectation of how they should behave. This perhaps creates inauthentic leaders who are not able to carry the trust of their followers. A future place could perhaps be envisioned for leaders who are self-aware and have developed the confidence to be themselves, to know their strengths, to know their followers, to be aware of what binds leader and follower together and to understand how this fits into their unique part of the world. A second recommendation for practice is the propagation of the leadership equations as a vehicle to help leaders understand the differing aspects of their unique approach. This could be delivered via academic leadership programmes or by self-reflection exercises in organisations.

2.   The Leadership Equation is propagated as a tool to help leaders consider the differing aspect of their leadership approach.

It has to be stipulated that the leadership equation is not considered to be a new model of leadership; it is not seeking to tell leaders how to lead. It is a conceptualisation of what individual leaders should consider in order for them to maximise their effectiveness.

Building on the concept described above and with acknowledgement of Isabel's and Tom's commitment to be true to their values and resist organisational pressure to conform to expected ways of behaving. A third recommendation is that a primary purpose of leadership development programmes should be a focus on identification of individual strengths, and a fourth recommendation is that leaders should be encouraged and empowered to confidently demonstrate their own unique approach.

3. **Leadership development programmes should focus on developing self-awareness of the unique attributes that individual leaders hold.**

4. **Leadership development programme should lead to the empowerment of leaders so they are confident in their attributes and the validity of their approaches.**

The research design aimed to ensure that participants were able to reflect on their own leadership roles, they were also encouraged to reflect on the attributes of leaders that had inspired them. Participants seemed to readily identify the human qualities (or otherwise) of the leaders that had influenced them. It took a little more debate and discussion for participants to describe their own approach. This seemed to be a particular feature of issues that contributed to the Being Human theme, but didn't seem to be particularly problematic during discussion of issues that contributed to the other two themes. Perhaps this area is more personal, more sensitive and more subjective. This may, however, have implications for leadership development programmes. If this aspect is considered to have importance in leadership development programme design, it is clearly very important that attention is given to exploring the very personal 'being human' characteristics of leaders. Debate on these very personal issues in group settings may be difficult to initiate and detailed consideration needs to be given to elucidate a 'safe' right approach that will not only allow students the opportunity to honestly explore areas of personal mastery (Sheard et al 2013), but also perhaps consider development plans for the areas that are not so advanced. A fifth recommendation is therefore.

5. **Leadership development programme designers explore the right vehicle and approach for creating a safe environment to allow exploration, emergence and development of the being human characteristics of leaders.**

These recommendations could lead to the development of leaders who no longer feel the need to conform to organisational approaches that don't particularly suit them and perhaps expose them to suggestions of inauthenticity. It could lead to the development of leaders that are open, brave, empowered and empowering. To leaders who are energised and able to challenge their followers to deliver far more than they believe they ever could.

As a final thought Tom suggested that leadership happens over time. It is clear that to develop the depth and quality of the relationships described in this study, to empower people to take on (and be confident about the risks associated with) the wicked issues that are facing our health and social care community requires strong, trusting relationships with credible, authentic leaders. Yet in times of intense difficulty it would seem that new leadership teams are sometimes parachuted into an organisation that is perceived to be failing with a brief to sort it out. Leadership teams in these situations are often described as interim and have only short term appointments. How then, can they and the people that are expected to follow them, be expected to resolve complex and often embedded problems that may have become wicked issues. How can they be expected to develop true leadership roles in such a short time? In short, from a leadership perspective, and based on the contributions of participants of this study, this is not possible. Interim management teams may have an immediate short term effect, but true leadership, it is abundantly clear, takes the gift of time and often, it

would seem interim leaders with short turnaround times are simply not provided with the benefit of this gift. Based upon the findings of this study, this is perhaps an approach that might provide a short respite or transition from one state to another, but in reality this will, if it is not explicitly and carefully controlled, consolidate failure instead providing a new future direction.

Post Script

This project was a part of a Professional Doctorate programme that has, at its heart, the need for professional relevancy within whatever field the researcher ventures into. An objective that has been embedded into the researcher's mind throughout this long journey has been to complete something that has relevance to a leadership practitioner community that tends to resist research findings (Gill, Johnson 2002. Carter 2008). It was, therefore a constant concern that the study would not only need to be academically rigorous, but also practically relevant to the health and social care leadership community in which it is based. Towards the end of the write up phase an opportunity was taken to become part of a management team within a social care part of an organisation. Through a range of contributing adverse circumstances the researcher was quickly, but temporarily, promoted to lead the department. In addition, the department had suffered a really difficult year that culminated in poor performance that had been given public exposure through external scrutiny and audit, and poor morale and motivation within the staff team. This had become a very different experience from the one that had been anticipated, and the study findings became a constant companion throughout this period of time. In effect it could be considered that the researcher was field-testing his findings. Aspects of the three

findings chapters all had practical 'real world' relevance to this particular experience and three brief examples of how this manifested itself into practice are included below.

Being Visionary.

A number of competing national agendas were impacting upon the future of the department, it was really important that attention was given to important reports and documents so that a direction could be established. The difficulty appeared to be identifying time to read and comprehend these documents in the busy world of day to day operations. Rebecca reported that managers often suffer from *"chronic busyness"* and that this can paralyse proper planning. It was very easy to become chronically busy and to feel that through this activity people were having their needs met and a good job was being delivered. In the longer term, however, this would have led to a directionless department or perhaps a department that vacillates between competing opinions and directions. With these concerns in mind, time was taken to understand agendas and formulate a strategic direction for the department.

Being Human

A significant finding within the Being Human chapter was the concept of inauthentic authenticity, the importance of the need to be authentic but perhaps not display negative emotions. A range of situations contributed to feelings that were far from positive and that would, perhaps, in previous roles have led to either outbursts of anger or ineffective passivity. The importance of demonstrating mastery over emotions (Sheard et al 2013) was considered to be very important; within this context expressing emotions both positive and negative, but remaining in control of these emotions to ensure a proportionate response to situations was adopted. In this regard

it was, of course, important to show joy when things were being achieved, it was also

ok to be annoyed when important tasks were not completed on time as long as all

responses were balanced and proportionate.

Being Tough

Findings indicated that having honest conversations was essential to successful

leadership. A number of challenging, difficult but honest conversations were required.

At times it may be that the timing of a conversation wasn't right or that the issue to be

discussed was perhaps petty, of course these are important considerations, but it

became apparent that these were almost excuses for not having these difficult

conversations. With this reflection, difficult conversations did take place. It was

interesting to reflect that the more honest conversations that were had the easier they

were to have and the more accepting of the conversation the recipient was. Equally,

the more that honest conversations took place with a range of people, the more

accepting the department as a whole was of the need for honest conversation; in

effect the organisation's culture began to change.

Report word count 51, 236.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Literature Quality Check Framework

type of evidence	year	title	Contribution	aim	methodologically explicit	each step justified	relevancy to this project least 1-5most	Overall Contribution least 1- 5 most
research paper ALIMO-METCALF, AND B. ALBAN-METCALF, J.	2005	Leadership: time for a new direction *Leadership*	Lit review new paradigm, 3500 people research paper developing a transformational approach	/	explicit grounded theory approach	yes	5	5
research paper grounded theory ALIMO-METCALF, AND ALBAN-METCALF, J	2006	More (good) Leaders for the public sector	Paper discussed the development of a uk/nhs model of transformational leadership	/	very clear	yes	5	5
literature review AMAGOH	2009	Leadership development and leadership effectiveness	clarify approaches to developing leaders within organisations	/	not that explicit	no	3	4
Grey Literature ANDERSON, L, MALBY, B, MERVYN, K, THORPE, R	2009	The Health Foundation's position statement on effective leadership development interventions	a range of perspective covered with this paper good contribution overall good distributed leadership findings considers leader/leadership	/	mixed method literature review, focus group, Delphi survey, Data analysis	yes	4	5
conceptual paper ALLIO, R, J.	2009	Leadership the five big ideas. *Strategy and leadership*	conceptual paper no right way to lead	/	no	no	5	4

206

Literature review AVOLIO, B.J	2007	Promoting more integrative strategies for leadership theory building	excellent history of how concepts of leadership have developed	/	no	no	5	4
Expert opinion BASS &BASS	2008	The Bass handbook of Leadership, Theory, research and managerial Applications	detailed history celebrated and much quoted author	/	no	no	2	1
Expert Opinion BENNIS, W. AND NUNUS, B.	2003	*Leader, Strategies for Taking Charge*	Renown authors very readable academically credible design	/	no	no	2	1
Expert Opinion BOLMAN, L.G. AND DEAL, T.E.	1991 2008	*Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership*	Really useful classic text book good for developing overall understanding	/	no	no	3	3
Research paper CLARK, N.	2012	Evaluating Leadership training and development	looks to develop a 5 stage model for leadership development, excellence relevance to leadership equation model extremely useful in next stage	/	yes	yes	5	5
Research paper CURRIE, G. LOCKETT, A.	2011	Distributing Leadership in Health and Social Care: Concertive, Conjoint or Collective?	evaluating models of distributed leadership, good for understanding complexities of DL approach	/	yes	yes	3	2
Research Paper FLEISHMAN, MUMFORD	1991	Taxonomic efforts in the description of leader	Identifies a number of models of leadership develops	/	yes	yes	4	4

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, ZACCARO LEVIN KOROTKIN HEIN		behaviour: a synthesis and functional interpretation	understanding of organisations and leadership old but very good					
Research paper- GRAEN G,B. UHL-BIEN, M.	1995	Relationship-Based Approach To Leadership Development Of Leader-Member Exchange (Lmx) Theory Of Leadership Over 25 Years: Applying A Multi-Level Multi-Domain Perspective	Very good paper exploring contingency situational models	/	yes	yes	4	3
Expert Opinion GRINT K	2010	Leadership a very short introduction	considers the leadership debate overall	/	no	no	3	2
Literature review HARTLEY J,M. MARTIN J BENNINTON, J.	2008	Leadership In Healthcare A Review Of The Literature For Health Care Professionals, Managers And Researcher	very good paper providing overview of leadership approaches with the NHS	/	yes	yes	5	4
Expert Opinion HASLAM A, S. REICHER S,D. PLATOW M,J.	2011	*The New Psychology Of Leadership, Identity Influence And Power*	reviews old concepts and history of leadership before moving onto a new approach	/	no	no	5	4
Research paper HERNANDE	2011	The Loci And Mechanism	History of leadership research plotted	/	yes	no	5	4

		s Of Leadership: Exploring A More Comprehensive View Of Leadership Theory	onto a new model that the authors develop good relevance					
Research Paper HOTHO, S. AND DOWLING, M.	2010	Revisiting leadership developme nt: the participant perspective	Exploring leadership development programmes advocate for a more experiential approach excellent	/	yes	yes	4	4
Research Paper JUDGE, T, A. BONO. J,E.	2000	Five factor model of personality and transforma tional leadership	Good introduction to transformational approaches	/	yes	yes	4	4
Research Paper MANN, R, D	1959	A review of the relationshi p between personality and performanc e in small groups	Old but seminal paper referring to trait theory	/	yes	yes	3	3
Research Paper RAY K, W. GOPPELT, J.	2011	Understand ing the effects of leadership developme nt on the creation of organisatio n culture change: a research approach	linking leader/ leadership development to the importance of change in organisations	/	yes	yes	3	3
conceptual paper ROWE	2006	non defining leadership	limited interesting contribution to definitions of leadership debate	/	limited	Conce ptual paper	1	1
Research Paper SIMKINS, T.	2005	Leadership in Education:	Excellent paper considering the what work	/	yes excellent	yes	5	5

		'What Works' or 'What Makes Sense'?	argument and it relevance or not to leadership very good					
research paper SOUTAR G RIDLEY S	2008	Looking for Leaders a conjoint analysis	looking at a conjoint approach to leadership qualities and attributes	/	Qualitative approach utilising conjoined analysis	yes	4	3
Grey Literature TURNBULL-JAMES, K.	2011	Leadership in context Lessons from new leadership theory and current leadership development practice	excellent paper clarifies views on commonality of leadership concepts	/	no	no	5	4
Research Papers VARDIMAN ,P, D. HOUGHTON, J,D. JINKERSON, D,L.	2006	Environmental leadership development Toward a contextual model of leader selection and effectiveness	Consideration of how leaders are selected for development how the organisational culture can promote or inhibit different types of leaders emerging	/	yes	yes	2	2

Appendix 2 Interview guide and questions

Researcher interview Guide

The Leadership space has become increasingly complex, increasingly contested and increasingly noisy are we transactional transformational or compassionate with so many different approaches and module (850) it is becoming hard to understand what leadership is. Reviewing the literature has led me to conclude that actually there are in reality only 4 components of most leadership models and they are
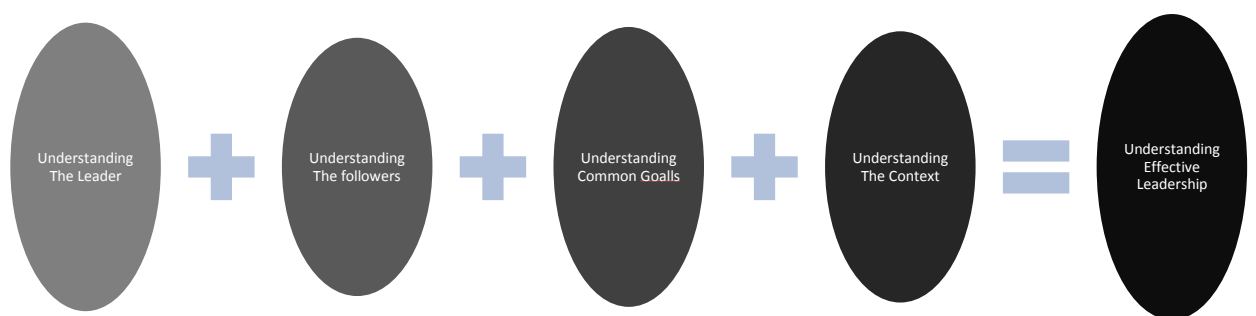
Health and Social care Organisations are considered to be increasingly complex. Leaders of the future will have to deal with a number of wicked problems.

Appreciative inquiry was developing in the 80's with the belief that most approaches to research considered a deficit dialogue i.e. what is wrong, this approach turns that on its head and asks you to think about what is right

This study is about using the leadership equation and appreciative inquiry to consider what it is that future leaders will do to be successful. There are no wrong answers to these questions I am interested in your perception of the elements of the leadership equation.

An adaptation of appreciative inquiry by Grant and Humphreys suggest that appreciative interviews should be about

 1) Appreciating- valuing the best of what there is

2) Envisioning- what might be? (Grant and Humphries 2006)

this is the format that the interview will take.

Understanding the leader

The equation suggests that leaders need to understand themselves, what they can offer; please can you consider what it is about you that make you a good leader

In an ideal world can you envision what a great leader might do.

Understanding the follower

Leaders need to understand what their followers need

Can you talk through how you meet the needs of your follower?

Can you think about how you might do it in an ideal world

Understanding Common Goals

It is suggested that there is a need to understand common goals How do you ensure that people in your organisation understand common goals

Can you think of an ideal way to do this

Understanding the context

Again it is suggested that for leaders to be successful they need to understand the context that they are working within.

What do you do to develop an understanding of the context in which your organisation operates

What would be the ideal way of doing this

Sheffield Hallam University

Participant information sheet

Study title:	**Exploration Of A New Conceptualisation Of Leadership, Utilising An Appreciative Inquiry Approach**
Chief investigator	**Dave Johnson**
Telephone number	**0114 225 5932**

Study Sponsor: **Sheffield Hallam University**

I would like to invite you to take part in my research study. Before you decide I would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear.

Leadership is said to be pivotal to the future of health and social care organisations, yet with so many differing version of what leadership means practitioners may become confused with regard to how they should behave as they are exposed to the latest leadership fad.

This study, as a part of a Doctorate in Professional Studies programme, is seeking to explore a new conceptualisation of leadership

Participant name:	

You will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep

1. What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to consider a new way of thinking about leadership.

This study is a part of a Doctorate in Professional studies programme

2. Why have I been invited?

You have been invited to contribute because you are in a leadership role and have had the opportunity through your own journey on the Professional Doctorate Programme or within your day to day work, to have considered and reflected upon leadership

3. Do I have to take part?

Your decision to take part in this study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or you can withdraw from the study at any time. Your refusal to participate or wish to withdraw would not influence in any way your progress on your education course

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you participate in the study you will be asked to take part in a semi-structure interview that utilised an Appreciative inquiry methodology. The interview will be arranged to take place at a time that is convenient for you and can be undertaken face to face, over the telephone or via Skype. Pilot interviews suggest that the interview will take no longer than 1 hour

5. Expenses and payments

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

6. What will I have to do?

If you agree to take part in the study we will ask you to do the following things.

A new conceptualisation of leadership has emerged during a review of literature. Utilising this model and the strengths based, Appreciative Inquiry methodology, a series of questions will be asked regarding your perception of how future leadership will need to lead in order to be successful in organisations of the future.

8. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Obviously you will be giving an hour of your precious time

Additionally you have been selected as it is believed that you have had the opportunity to consider the way in which you lead. There is a risk that this is not the case or that you may not wish to discuss your own particular style or approach. The interview format has been designed to be an empowering, positive process; clearly there is a risk that you may not find it to be so

10. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

This is an opportunity to articulate your thoughts on your own particular way of leading. You might never have actually discussed this before. The relational constructionist design is intended to help the co-construction of an articulation of leadership. This might be helpful in clarifying for yourself what you mean by leadership within your own organisations.

If you have any queries or questions please contact:

11. What if there is a problem or I want to complain?

Dave Johnson

David.Johnson@shu.ac.uk

0114 225 5932

Sheffield Hallam University, Faculty of Health and Wellbeing

Alternatively, you can contact my supervisors:

Professor Frances Gordon

f.gordon@shu.ac.uk

Lee Pollard

If you would rather contact an independent person, you can contact Peter Allmark (Chair Faculty Research Ethics Committee) p.allmark@shu.ac.uk**; 0114 225 5727**

12. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

The interview will be recorded on a portable digital recorder and then written up word for word. The researcher will check that the recording and the written transcript are the same. The digital file and the transcript will be kept on a password-protected computer. After saving onto the computer, the file on the portable digital recorder will be erased.

Identifying details will be taken out of any final report and any publication so people reading these will not be able to identify you, the organisation or the geographical area that you work in.

The written transcripts will have all links to you removed at the end of the study and will then be kept for as long as they might be useful in future research.

The documents relating to the administration of this research, such as the consent form you sign to take part, will be kept in a folder called a site file or project file. This is locked away securely. The folder might be checked by people in authority who want to make sure that researchers are following the correct procedures. These people will not pass on your details to anyone else. The documents will be destroyed seven years after the end of the study.

13. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The study is a part of a student's Doctorate in Professional studies programme. The study is intended to meet the learning outcomes of the programme.

The study is also intended to help leadership practitioners and curriculum designers develop a new understanding of leadership, as such the researcher may seek to publish findings in a variety academic and grey literature journals

14. Who is sponsoring the study?

The sponsor of the study has the duty to ensure that it runs properly and that it is insured. In this study, the sponsor is Sheffield Hallam University.

15. Who has reviewed this study?

All research based at Sheffield Hallam University is looked at by a group of people called a Research Ethics Committee. This Committee is run by Sheffield Hallam University but its members are not connected to the research they examine. The Research Ethics Committee has reviewed this study and given a favourable opinion.

16. Further information and contact details

Dave Johnson

David.johnson@shu.ac.uk

0114 225 5932

Sheffield Hallam University

Participant consent form

Study title:	Exploration Of A New Conceptualisation Of Leadership, Utilising An Appreciative Inquiry Approach
Chief investigator	Dave Johnson
Telephone number	0114 225 5932

Participant name	

	Please read the following statements and put your initials in the box to show that you have read and understood them and that you agree with them	Please initial each box
1	I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated date for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
2	I understand that my involvement in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without give any reason and without my legal rights being affected.	
3	I agree to take part in this study	

To be filled in by the participant

I agree to take part in the above study

Your name   **Date**   **Signature**

To be filled in by the person obtaining consent

I confirm that I have explained the nature, purposes and possible effects of this research study to the person whose name is printed above.

Name of investigator   **Date**   **Signature**

Filing instructions

1 copy to the participant

1 original in the Project or Site file

1 copy in the medical notes (if applicable)

centre for
health and
social care
research

20.02.2014

Dear Dave Johnson

This letter relates to your research proposal

EXPLORATION OF A NEW CONCEPTUALISATION OF LEADERSHIP, UTILISING AN
APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY APPROACH

This proposal was submitted to the Faculty Research Ethics Committee for
ethics and scientific review. It has been reviewed by two independent
reviewers and has been passed as satisfactory. The comments of the
reviewers are enclosed. You will need to ensure you have all other necessary
permission in place before proceeding, for example, from the Research
Governance office of any sites outside the University where your research
will take place. This letter can be used as evidence that the proposal has
been reviewed ethically and scientifically within Sheffield Hallam University.

Good luck with your project.

Peter Allmark

Peter Allmark
Chair Faculty Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Health and Well-being
Sheffield Hallam University
32 Collegiate Crescent
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