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Emotional Intelligence Among Nigerian Construction Project Leaders During Periods of Uncertainty

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Ibrahim Hassan Mashi

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

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by

Ibrahim Hassan Mashi

MS, Liverpool University, England, United Kingdom, 2015

BS, Bayero University Kano, Nigeria, 2005

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

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Abstract

Some construction project leaders in Nigeria have exhibited leadership ineffectiveness during periods of uncertainty due to a lack of emotional intelligence (EI) engagement. This has led to poor performance of construction projects in Nigeria. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. Fifteen participants involving construction project leaders were selected through purposeful sampling from five construction firms in Abuja, Nigeria. The target participants were specifically chosen for their expertise and experience to ensure that the information created is relevant and high-quality. Mayer and Salovey's four-branch model of emotional intelligence, Goleman's emotional intelligence quadrant, and Fiedler's contingency model of leadership model provided the conceptual frameworks for the study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, reports from partner organizations, and the researcher's reflective field notes. The data were analyzed through thematic content analysis and triangulated with information from the existing literature. The findings revealed themes noting that project leaders should observe the emotions of their subordinates, be conscious of how their behaviors affect their subordinates, be empathetic in their decision-making, and coach their subordinates to develop their own EI. The practice of these themes by organizational leaders could foster policy changes in organizations, thus leading to positive social change.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to God Almighty, who gave me the strength, courage, and perseverance to go through this doctoral journey. Also, I dedicate this study to my late father, Alh. Hassan Mashi and Mother, Hajia Hadiza Hassan Mashi. Finally, I dedicate this study to my mentor, Attahiru Bala Usman.

Thank you for your never-ending love and support throughout my life.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Researchers are increasingly interested in using EI to understand leadership competence development that could ultimately lead to effective project leadership management (Fianko et al., 2020). In this study, I explored how emotional intelligence (EI) enhances leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. The construction industry in Nigeria remains pivotal to the socio-economic development of the country (Ogunde et al., 2017). The responsibility for the quality of project performance and the success of construction projects lies in the capacity of construction project leaders (Berssaneti & Carvalho, 2015). Research outcomes have indicated that the application of EI during periods of uncertainty can play a significant role in improving leadership effectiveness by developing others and managing diversity of challenges through demonstrating empathy and relationship building that enhances employee performance (Cote, 2017; Emerole et al., 2018; Gardenswartz et al., 2010). I explored the engagement of EI towards enhancing effective leadership among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. Leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders is fundamental to strengthening successful project implementation and management in Nigeria (Ugoani, 2019).

I provided an overview of the study in this chapter and the potential positive social implication. I also presented the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the research question that guides the activities of the study. This chapter presents the conceptual framework upon which the study is premised and

the nature, significance, and limitations of the study. Finally, I defined some terms used in the study, stated the study's assumptions and gave a general summary of the chapter.

Background of the Study

Construction projects suffer a 56% failure rate in Nigeria (Ogunde et al., 2017). Accordingly, leadership ineffectiveness remains a key factor contributing to construction project failures, among other issues (Ahmed & Anantatmula, 2017). Nigeria's dynamic and complex nature of business activities makes leadership a challenge, especially in managing resources, meeting project targets, and project quality delivery. Ogunde et al. (2017) asserted the crucial importance of management skills required in practicing construction leadership management. Research results have indicated the value of EI as a leadership trait and skill contributing to project success (Fianko et al., 2020).

The early theories and concepts of EI were associated with social intelligence works (Ugoani, 2021). Hilgard (1980) stated that EI works in three ways: perception, consequence, and stimuli. Perception consists of functions such as human memory, reasoning, judgment, and thought. Consequence consists of emotions, moods, evaluations, and other feelings. Stimuli are related to the personality, which includes biological needs or learned goal-seeking behaviors. There is a growing interest among researchers regarding using EI to understand leadership competence development, which could ultimately lead to effective project leadership management (Fianko et al., 2020). This highlights the relevance of EI as a possible means of leadership effectiveness development; the higher the level of EI of individuals, the better their ability to process information, leading to better thinking and behavior. In this study, I explored the

engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty.

Goleman (1998) has been acknowledged for bringing the theory of EI to its academic highpoint. He categorized EI as self-awareness, self-management, empathy, relationships, communication, and personal styles. Mayer et al. (2008) expressed that EI involves how emotions and information relating to stimuli change thinking and behavior. They further posited that EI is an ability that can be learned and that learning how to use EI has the potency to enhance leadership effectiveness and improve organizational performance. However, some individuals have a greater capacity than others to carry out sophisticated information processing about emotions, which enables them to use this information to guide their thinking and behavior.

Mayer et al. (2008) extended their ideas to develop a four-branch ability model of EI. The model is described as the Mayer-Salovey model, which divides EL into four branches of skills related to EI. The four-branch Mayer-Salovey model includes perception, regulation of emotions, effective use of emotions, and ability to manage emotions. The use of perception and regulation of emotions explains how people can perceive emotions in others and use such feelings to relate to them. The other two branches, effective use of emotions and ability to manage emotions, are concerned with how leaders use such feelings to plan and manage their followers. These skills in the Mayer-Salovey four-branch model could enhance leadership effectiveness if appropriately developed. In this study, I applied these models to examine how the EI of

project leaders of construction projects could be developed and their effectiveness improved.

Many studies have linked EI with leadership effectiveness (Kerr et al., 2016; Sadri, 2012). Research investigations have revealed that EI could be learned as a skill to enhance the leadership effectiveness of leaders (McCleskey, 2014; Nabih et al., 2016). According to Potts (2020), EI has become a subject of high significance for leaders to learn, use, and develop creative ways of dealing with varied situations to enhance their performance. The potential value of EI has prompted the need to research its utilization in times of uncertainty to develop project leaders' effectiveness in Nigeria. However, there is little empirical research that substantiates the efficacy of EI as a tool to enhance individual capacity in times of uncertainty, especially for leaders of construction projects in Nigeria (Ugoani, 2019). Studies on leadership ineffectiveness in the construction industry have focused on the lack of training among leaders (Omotayo, 2015), non-application of information management systems (Oyewobi et al., 2015; Ozumba & Shakantu, 2018), lack of adequate knowledge in project management (Ogunde et al., 2017; Onifade et al., 2017), and examining EI and leadership competence (Emerole et al., 2018). However, no study has specifically focused on exploring how engagement with EI enhances leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders during periods of uncertainty.

Problem Statement

Researchers have identified leadership ineffectiveness among construction project leaders as one of the factors hindering the success of construction projects in times of

uncertainty across Nigeria (Emerole et al., 2018; Ugoani, 2021). Ugoani (2021) noted

that leadership ineffectiveness among construction project leaders during periods of

uncertainty, such as political instability and economic and financial fragility, has led to

poor performance of construction projects in Nigeria. Although researchers have

investigated the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness, there is little

literature regarding how to engage EI as a potential tool for enhancing leadership

effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty

(Edelman & van Knippenberg, 2018; Lone & Lone, 2018; Obomanu, 2018).

Ugoani (2021) emphasized the lack of engagement of EI among construction

project leaders during periods of uncertainty as a critical factor of failure in construction

project delivery in Nigeria. The extent of the failure of construction projects in Nigeria

has become an issue of concern to academia (Shuaib & Davison, 2018). The social

problem is that the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic has created new leadership

challenges under uncertainty, particularly in construction project management in Nigeria

(Emerole et al., 2018). The specific research problem is that some construction project

leaders in Nigeria have exhibited leadership ineffectiveness during periods of uncertainty

due to a lack of engagement of EI. Consequently, the need to investigate leadership

ineffectiveness in project construction management during periods of uncertainty in

Nigeria has become apparent.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the

engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project

leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. Research findings have indicated that the engagement of EI during periods of uncertainty can significantly improve leadership effectiveness through developing others, demonstrating empathy, and relationship building, all of which improve employee performance (Emerole et al., 2018). Researchers have investigated the relationship between construction project leaders' effectiveness and EI using quantitative approaches (Potter et al., 2018). However, researchers have not qualitatively investigated how the use of EI during periods of uncertainty can enhance the effectiveness of construction project leaders in Nigeria. Therefore, the study explored the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. Leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders is fundamental in strengthening successful project implementation and management in Nigeria (Ugoani, 2021).

Research Question

RQ: How do construction project leaders in Nigeria perceive the engagement of emotional intelligence to enhance their effectiveness during periods of uncertainty?

Conceptual Framework

The key concepts of the study include EI, enhancing leadership effectiveness, construction project management, and leading in times of uncertainty. EI has been generally defined in literature as understanding how the consequences of our actions affect ourselves and the people around us (Mayer et al., 2016). The increased interest in EI in literature has shown that it is no longer a buzzword. Nabih et al. (2016) expressed that the concept of EI is rooted in early works on emotions and social intelligence.

Hilgard (1980) stated that EI works in three ways: perception, consequence, and stimuli.

Perception consists of functions such as human memory, reasoning, judgment, and

thought. Consequence consists of emotions, moods, evaluations, and other feelings.

Stimuli are related to the personality, which includes biological needs or learned goal-

seeking behaviors. These ideas were applied to understand how EI can be used for

leadership effectiveness and will be explained in more detail in the next chapter. The

theories and concepts that ground this study include a combination of Mayer and

Salovey's (1997) four-branch model of emotional intelligence, which states that four

branches of skills are related to EI and Goleman's (2019) EI quadrant. The other model in

this study is Fiedler's contingency model of leadership (Fiedler, 1964).

The logical connections between the frameworks above present an opportunity to

understand the traits and relationship between leadership effectiveness development and

EI. This understanding could potentially answer the research question when combined

with the findings from the interaction and experiences of the participants. Goleman's

work presented an EI quadrant model that included (a) the ability to perceive emotions in

oneself and others accurately, (b) the ability to use emotions to facilitate thinking, (c) the

potential to acknowledge emotions and how such is transmitted, and (d) the capacity to

facilitate the use of emotions towards attaining specific goals. The value of this

framework to the study is elaborated in Chapter 2.

Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four-branch model of EI states four branches of skills

related to EI. This idea was expanded to understand further how leadership could tap into

the potential of EI. The four branches of the Mayer-Salovey model include perception,

regulation of emotions, effective use of emotions, and ability to manage emotions. These

formed the basis for exploring leadership effectiveness in times of uncertainty among

construction project leaders in Nigeria.

Nature of the Study

In this study, I used a qualitative exploratory case study approach. The case study

approach is appropriate and suitable when the study focuses on understanding the

occurrence of a phenomenon (Brown, 2016; Yin, 2018). The case study approach is also

relevant to answer a 'how' or 'why' research question. In addition, this approach gives

the participants the platform to express their experiences on the phenomenon under study.

The study sought to explore the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness

among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. Therefore, a

method that allows for in-depth understanding by engaging participants with experiences

with the phenomenon is essential. Yin (2018) stated that using an exploratory case study

will enable the phenomenon of interest to be explored through multiple perspectives.

The sample population for the study was project leaders working in construction

companies in Abuja, Nigeria. It is assumed that these leaders may know and have been

using EI as part of their leadership approaches in project management. I worked with 15

project managers from five construction firms as participants in the study. Data were

collected by conducting semi-structured, face-to-face in-depth one-on-one interviews

using a digital recording device until data saturation was achieved (Guest et al., 2006;

Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The proposed participants were recruited using the

researcher's network of existing contacts of project leaders and the Nigerian Society of

Engineers (NSE) forum. I submitted a request to the NSE project managers' forum to obtain information about the construction firms and their leaders. In addition, secondary data were collated from the researcher's reflective field notes and partner organizations' project reports.

I analyzed the information obtained from the various interviews using content thematic analysis. I used NVivo software to help analyze the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2012), using content thematic analysis will provide an easy interpretation of the data from the individual perceptions on the phenomenon of study. The outcome of such analysis will result in the identification of codes, themes, and concepts that would add meaning to the data. The codes were obtained directly from the interview transcripts, while the themes were developed from the patterns that emerged from the codes. I reviewed the themes and compared them with information from my reflective notes and reports from the partner organizations. The themes gave meaning to the data, which, in turn, provided answers to the central research question.

Definitions

Business environment of Nigeria: This refers to the environment that is dynamic, complex, and beyond or outside the control of the business but has significant effects on business performance (Dickson, 2020).

Construction industry of Nigeria: The construction industry in Nigeria is a significant developmental aspect of the country's development in terms of services such as roads, buildings, bridges, and rails (Ogbu, 2018).

Construction projects: These refer to projects that focus on the development and maintenance of services, facilities, and systems that support the economic development of a city, state, or an entire country (Broniewicz & Ogrodnik, 2020).

Emotional intelligence: This refers to how people use their perceptions and emotions to understand and interpret the feelings and emotions of others to relate appropriately with them (Gaspar et al., 2021).

Leadership competence: Refers to a combined set of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavior that potentially contribute to superior performance (Weiszbrod, 2020).

Leadership creativity: This implies using creativity in leadership application to improve situations in the world around us (Sohmen, 2015).

Leadership effectiveness: Refers to the ability to successfully exercise personal influence by one or more people that results in accomplishing shared objectives in a way that satisfies those involved (Fianko et al., 2020).

Periods of uncertainty: This refers to highly challenging, complex, liquid, or changing times in the life cycle of a project or our society where the outcome of events cannot be predicted accurately (Parjoleanu, 2020).

Project leader: Refers to an individual or professional whose main assignment is to effectively lead their project team to ensure the successful and timely delivery of projects following the project scope (Aronson, 2018).

Assumptions

Assumption refers to issues regarding the research that appear to be real but cannot be proven (Shungu et al., 2014). In this study, bias is an aspect of the study that

was taken seriously; however, there is a limit to the quality control of information participants provided. This would ultimately affect the overall conclusion of the study. Hence, the assumption was that participants gave true information devoid of social desirability and bias (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). Another assumption was that the information provided by participants would be sufficient evidence to create knowledge and expand the understanding of EI for project leaders of construction projects. These assumptions were necessary because participants had free will to answer and interact during the interviews. This free will could potentially be a source of social desirability bias.

Scope and Delimitations

Giustina and Gianluca (2014) explained that the scope implies the extent, areas covered, and boundaries of a study. In this research, the boundaries were guided by the study's purpose. The challenges of project failure are felt across Nigeria. As such, the study addressed the specific research problem of how some construction project leaders in Nigeria have exhibited leadership ineffectiveness during periods of uncertainty due to a lack of engagement of EI. The study's scope was limited to project leaders based in Abuja, Nigeria. Further, the study focused solely on exploring EI engagement to enhance leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty.

The study specifically focused on how the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic affected the engagement of EI to enhance leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria. The study scope was delimited by the

geographical area of the participants' projects, Abuja. I used a descriptive process to present the findings, allowing other researchers to transfer the findings to different research settings or an extended group of participants.

Limitations

Brutus et al. (2013) defined limitations as constraints beyond the researcher's control that could potentially affect the research outcome. The limitation I experienced was the issue of time. The sense of urgency in accessing construction project leaders willing to provide their perception of the phenomenon of interest is beyond my control. I made efforts to start early to seek appointments for the interviews. As a researcher, I cannot determine or decide the pattern of responses provided by participants. In this case, I had an open mind in my dealings and always portrayed a positive mindset. Secondary data were collated from the researcher's reflective field notes and reports from the partner organizations. The researcher did not have control over how participants developed the tendency to present their responses in a fashion that may be favorable to them. However, there was an equal possibility for participants to be truthful in their responses.

Significance of the Study

The construction industry of Nigeria plays a significant role in the development of the economy and society, playing a contributory role that enhances the country's development (Olalusi & Otunola, 2012). The role of project leaders in ensuring project success is also important. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction

project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. The potential findings could

address critical areas of leadership development.

Significance to Practice

This study could potentially contribute to EI knowledge and address leadership

effectiveness. Considering the complexity of managing contemporary businesses, any

knowledge in EI gained by construction project leaders can enhance their leadership

capacities and performance, particularly during periods of uncertainty. Empirical studies

have noted the need to continuously seek creative ways EI could be used for leadership

effectiveness (Ackley, 2016; Goleman, 2019; Moon, 2021). The study may have

generated knowledge that could increase the practice and use of EI during periods of

uncertainty, particularly in construction project management in Nigeria. Currently, the

lack of information on the potential use of EI by project construction leaders may have

contributed to leadership ineffectiveness in the construction industry in Nigeria. Thus, the

study's outcome could initiate innovative processes and strategies that may improve the

skills and competencies of project leaders. In addition, higher rates of leadership

effectiveness could create positive social change through idea sharing and broadening the

framework for leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria.

Significance to Theory

The study may contribute to the theoretical development of EI in construction

project management. The study's findings could help generate information on the use of

EI to improve leadership effectiveness during periods of uncertainty, which is significant

to developing theory. EI has become significant in leadership development and

effectiveness; however, researchers have given less attention to how EI could be used to promote effective construction project management during periods of uncertainty. Consequently, there is less theory regarding EI within construction project management. Thus, using the conceptual framework for this study introduced new thinking about EI with hopes of adding to the literature on EI and construction project management.

Significance to Social Change

According to Brimhall and Saastamoinen (2020), positive social change involves promoting activities that could improve human lives and society. This study could potentially create positive social change for Nigerian society at large. There is a problem of project failure and abandonment in Nigeria, some of which researchers have attributed to ineffective construction project leadership (Emerole et al., 2018; Ugoani, 2021). Efforts are ongoing to seek to find ways to increase the success rate of projects. The study could potentially guide policymakers and leaders toward the needed approaches to continue developing the construction industry. The study's outcome has the potential to improve leadership competence and effectiveness in using EI in managing construction projects, thus leading to positive social change (Moon, 2021).

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Summary and Transition

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In this chapter, I provided the background and justifications for the study. The current challenges of construction projects in Nigeria have created the need to explore how EI can enhance leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. The construction industry in Nigeria remains pivotal to the country's socioeconomic development. The responsibility for the quality of

project performance and success of construction projects lies in the hands and capacity of construction project leaders. I used an exploratory case study to enable the phenomenon of interest to be explored through multiple perspectives (Yin, 2018). I also selected qualitative semi-structured interviews as the data collection method. The sample population for the study was project leaders working in construction companies in Abuja. I analyzed the information obtained from the various interviews using content thematic analysis. I also used NVivo software to analyze the data. In this chapter, I presented a combination of the Mayer et al. (2008) four-branch model of EI, Goleman's (2019) EI quadrant, and Fiedler's contingency model of leadership (Fiedler, 1964) as the theoretical frameworks grounding for the study. I also presented time as a key limitation of the study. In Chapter 2, I review the theoretical framework, theoretical background, and current literature related to EI and leadership effectiveness.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Construction projects suffer a 56% failure rate in Nigeria (Ogunde et al., 2017). Accordingly, leadership competence remains a key factor contributing to construction project failures, among other issues (Ahmed & Anantatmula, 2017). The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. The specific research problem is that some construction project leaders in Nigeria have exhibited leadership ineffectiveness during periods of uncertainty due to a lack of engagement in EI. Ugoani (2021) and Emerole et al. (2018) emphasized the lack of engagement of EI among construction project leaders during periods of uncertainty as a critical factor in failure in project delivery in Nigeria. Thus, this study may provide innovative and creative thinking around EI that can be developed to incorporate the ever-changing needs of leadership effectiveness in times of uncertainty in Nigeria.

This chapter includes empirical studies on leadership effectiveness and EI using qualitative approaches and studies related to the research methodology. This chapter also presents the literature search strategy and the corresponding databases and search engines used to gather relevant peer-reviewed literature relating to the research topic. I also presented the conceptual frameworks on which the current study is built. The conceptual frameworks provided the theoretical foundation for studying leadership effectiveness and EI.

Literature Search Strategy

I developed a search strategy to obtain peer-reviewed articles and journals for the study using keywords or a combination of appropriate and relevant words. I identified search terms using the Boolean system of 'AND' to obtain articles and 'NOT' to exclude materials that are unsuitable or required for the search. The databases used for the literature search included the following: ProQuest, Google Scholar, ABI/*INFORM Complete*, *EBSCO host, SAGE Premier*, and *Science Direct,* hosted in the Walden University Library. The use of these search engines helped me to obtain access to peer-reviewed journals that are relevant to the study. The words or combinations of words I used to search the literature include *emotional intelligence, leadership emotional intelligence, competence development, leadership effectiveness, leadership competence development, global uncertainties*, and *leadership development.* To improve the search, parentheses were used to prioritize search terms and/or keywords of more interest to the research, such as *emotional intelligence in times of uncertainty, qualitative study of emotional intelligence, and emotional intelligence in leadership.* I also used the quotation technique to search for articles that included specific phrases such as *emotional intelligence in construction project leaders, qualitative study of leadership emotional intelligence competence development, and leadership competence development in Nigeria.* The search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles published in the last 5 years in English. Official websites of organizations, regulatory bodies, government agencies, professional associations such as the Project Management Institute of Nigeria, and state bulletins from Nigeria's construction industry were used to review the literature.

Conceptual Framework

The main concepts of the study include EI, enhancing leadership effectiveness, construction project management, and leading in times of uncertainty. These researchable themes aided in operationalizing the literature review. Empirical studies on EI began with the work of Salovey and Mayer (1990). Salovey and Mayer presented a model on EI indicating four branches: perception, regulation of emotions, effective use of emotions, and ability to manage emotions. They explained EI as the ability to use one's feelings and emotions to understand other people's emotions and relate to them accordingly.

Goleman (1998) added that EI could be categorized by self-awareness, self-management, empathy, relationships, communication, and personal styles. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four-branch model of EI notes four branches of skills related to EI, which was expanded to understand further how leadership could tap into the potential of EI. The effect of EI on leadership effectiveness has been widely studied. There are five areas researchers have identified on EI that relate appropriately to leadership capability, motivation of oneself, self-awareness, building competency, ability to regulate oneself, and skills relating to social (Serrat, 2017). The ability of the leader to demonstrate these traits could be assessed through the display of empathy, motivation, and relational behaviors (Cote, 2017; Gardenswartz et al., 2010). According to Tanchai and Bunnag (2018), the essence of leadership is to motivate followers to carry out tasks towards attaining organizational goals. Thus, understanding how to use emotions to relate with others towards attaining specific goals is important for a leader.

The Fiedler (1964) contingency theory mentioned that leaders are task- or relationship-focused. It also mentioned that group effectiveness depends on an appropriate match between the leader's style and the demands of the situation (Peters & Wester, 2007). The concept of the contingency theory mentioned that the situational favorableness of a particular situation is dependent on three distinct factors, which include:

- Leader-member relations – the level of trust and confidence of team members in leaders and vice-versa;

- Task structure – the nature of the task to be completed, the amount of clarity of the task, and available knowledge to achieve a task;

- Leader's position power – the available power of the leader and how the power is used to enact punishment or reward.

The Fiedler contingency theory mentions that leadership effectiveness has been presented as contingent on whether or not a leadership style suits a particular situation. In this study, EI as a contributor to leadership effectiveness focused on leadership's intellectual, managerial, and emotional competencies that could lead to effectiveness. Gupta and Bajaj (2017) mentioned EI as a creative mechanism leader could use to gain effectiveness. They mentioned that EI as a source of creativity is paramount for today's leaders to deal with volatile, complex, and uncertain environments. Thus, there is a need to understand the role of EI in leadership effectiveness when managing projects, especially in times of uncertainty.

Literature Review

Managing projects remains a challenge project leaders continue to face. Nigeria is a developing country with a complex business environment and difficulties in construction project management. According to Akande (2018), numerous factors contribute to the complexity of doing business, such as political complexity, bureaucracy, poor procurement management, human resources management, and project leader capacity. The project leader's capacity is a crucial part of this study and further understanding EI's role. Despite numerous studies (Ruben, 2019; Schutte & Barkhuizen, 2016) on the role of EI in leadership, little research has been done exploring how project leaders could utilize EI to increase the effectiveness of how projects are managed in times of uncertainty. The integration of EI as a concept for leadership effective in managing projects during times of uncertainty shapes the framework of the current study.

Times of uncertainty present fresh challenges for leaders. The periods of uncertainty presented in this study were based on the COVID-19 pandemic period. This period of uncertainty presented new challenges that project leaders had yet to face; however, a fresh creative approach to mitigate the construction project challenges is paramount. Studies have shown that the appropriate use of EI in leadership and management can bring about positive changes within a system during periods of uncertainty (Kozlowski et al., 2016). According to Clark and Polesello (2017) and McCleskey (2014), constructive thinking in providing management solutions will help enhance leadership effectiveness. The COVID-19 global pandemic has added to the level of uncertainty in managing construction projects in Nigeria (Ikechukwu & Odimegwu,

2021). The major sources of uncertainties include the constant change in government policies, efforts to manage and control the effects of the pandemic, increased prices of materials as a result of increased supply chain challenges, and financial institutions having difficulties meeting up with obligations (Ikechukwu & Odimegwu, 2021).

The pandemic has affected many systems worldwide, including economic, financial, production, projects, and political platforms. Restrictions on the movement of people have further increased the burden of systems integrations. Bushuyev et al. (2020) highlighted the need to transform project management systems, programs, and project portfolios in the context of the pandemic. They mentioned that the basis of change in project management systems lies in changing the decision-making paradigm for the leadership of projects and programs. Hence, project and program managers' systems of knowledge and competencies come to the fore in project management. The need for a creative approach to leadership effectiveness is paramount.

History of Emotional Intelligence

The early works of EI are attributed to Thorndike in the 1920s, as many researchers viewed the works of Thorndike as the starting point of EI (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer et al., 2008; Nabih et al., 2016). Thorndike (1920) presented the division of intelligence into three broad classes of abilities. Thorndike's first class of intelligence involves understanding abstract, analytical, or verbal skills and symbolic thinking. The second class relates to mechanical, performance, and visual-spatial intelligence, which effectively controls your body and manipulates objects. Finally, the third class consists of social or practical intelligence, which involves communicating with people,

understanding, and performing social relations. Thorndike described intelligence as a phenomenon involving social interactions, regarded as social intelligence and human relations. Accordingly, this view of social intelligence became a turning point for considering social intelligence as an independent concept (Mayer et al., 2008).

According to Wechsler (1943), intelligence involves the ability of the individual to act rationally, reason, and respond to situations within the environment. Many researchers have contributed to studying EI (Cobb & Mayer, 2000; Gardner, 1983, 1999; Zeidner et al., 2011). EI is also defined in relation to perception, consequence, and stimuli (Hilgard, 1980; Nabih et al., 2016). While perception is related to human memory, reasoning, judgment, and thought, the consequence is connected to emotions, moods, and feelings; similarly, stimuli are related to the individual's behavior and personality. Gardner (1983) introduced the concept of multiple intelligence, expanded the view of intelligence, and noted the importance of interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities. The importance of interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities was further highlighted by Zeidner et al. (2011). They mentioned that interventions focusing on perceptions, understanding, expression, and emotion regulation are key to interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities.

A combination of Thorndike's (1920) personal intelligence, Wechsler's (1943) non-cognitive intelligence, and Gardner's multiple intelligence, Mayer's (2002) social intelligence have contributed to the development of EI (Cobb & Mayer, 2000). However, EI literature acknowledges Payne (1986) among the first works introducing EI as a mechanism for suppressing and expressing emotions to achieve creativity, fulfillment,

and problem-solving (Cobb & Mayer, 2000). Payne also highlighted the need to differentiate intellectual intelligence and EI.

EI has progressed and developed on two lines: the ability EI and trait EI. The advocates of the ability EI (cognitive-emotional ability) have defined EI as an interrelated set of emotion-related cognitive abilities that include the ability to perceive, appraise and express emotions and to use emotions to facilitate thought, understand emotion and regulate emotions in ourselves and others (Goleman, 2001; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The advocates of the trait EI focus on assessing people's perception of their emotional abilities and skills (Mavroveli & Sanchez-Ruiz, 2010). These assessments are conceptualized as a constellation of emotional perceptions measured through questionnaires and self-rating scales (Petrides et al., 2007). Both the ability EI and trait EI demonstrate that there is some possibility for the development of EI and the potential for EI to be used as a tool to enhance leadership capacity. These theories advocate the intelligent use of emotions for guiding behavior and potentially improving the competence of leaders and thinking in ways that enhance results. These ideas were used to understand how EI can be used for leadership and explained in more detail in sections of this chapter. In this study, the potential role of the knowledge of EI and personality provided a framework to study the means of enhancing the effectiveness of construction project leaders in managing projects in Nigeria.

Emotional Intelligence

Extant literature has mentioned that EI implies understanding how the consequences of our actions affect ourselves and the people around us (Mayer et al.,

2016). Many researchers have defined EI differently (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000; Goleman, 1998; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Salovey and Mayer (1990) expressed that EI is a form of social intelligence that includes the individual's ability to monitor and manage their feelings with others to act reasonably. Salovey and Mayer developed a Mayer-Salovey four-branch model of EI, which states that there are four branches of skills related to EI. They translated their definition into a framework of EI. The framework outlined the skills that characterize EI, including the ability to identify one's emotions and that of others, regulate such emotions, and take actions based on these emotions. Mayer and Salovey (1997) later revised their stance by presenting a revised definition of EI as the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions, access or generate feelings, and understand emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. This definition takes into consideration the need to think about feelings.

Goleman (1998) expressed EI as the capacity to manage our relationships with others by recognizing our feelings and those of others. In addition, Goleman posited that EI could be categorized by self-awareness, self-management, empathy, relationships, communication, and personal styles. Goleman theorized that the ability to recognize and regulate emotions could build upon one's intelligence quotient (IQ). IQ and EI are different competencies, but when integrated, the results may support superior performance (Goleman, 1998). Based on research and surveys within the business work environment, Goleman tied EI to success in the workplace. Cherniss (2010) expanded the successful application of EI in the workplace by identifying that success depends on IQ and personal qualities regulated by emotions. Altinay et al. (2012) suggested that

combining and separating intelligence and emotion might enhance processing and acting upon knowledge.

Studies have presented EI as an ability and skill set that can be learned, and some individuals have greater capacity than others to carry out sophisticated information processing about emotions and use this information as a guide for thinking and behavior (McCleskey, 2014; Nabih et al., 2016; Potts, 2020). The study of EI has also been expanded to involve creative ways of thinking and doing things that lead to improved performance and organizational productivity (Potts, 2020). This study investigated the potential role of EI in leadership and construction project management success in times of uncertainty. Although researchers have investigated the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness, there is very little research on engaging EI to enhance leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. This study may contribute to how EI could potentially enhance leadership effectiveness by exploring ways by which EI could enhance leadership skills. Hence, it is important to extend the understanding of the application of EI as a theory to develop a potential framework that could contribute to leadership development. Studies on leadership ineffectiveness in the construction industry have focused on indicating the lack of training among leaders (Omotayo, 2015), non-application of information management systems (Oyewobi et al., 2015; Ozumba & Shakantu, 2018), lack of adequate knowledge in project management (Ogunde et al., 2017; Onifade et al., 2017) and examining EI and leadership competence (Emerole et al., 2018). This potential of EI has created the need to study EI in times of uncertainty to strengthen construction project leaders' effectiveness

in Nigeria. However, little empirical research substantiates the efficacy of EI as a tool

that could enhance individual capacity, especially leaders of construction projects in

Nigeria, in ways that their skills could be enhanced to effectively lead in times of

uncertainty.

Models of Emotional Intelligence

Over the years, the literature on EI has presented the evolution of EI. However,

the concession remains that EI can be increased (Ackley, 2016; Goleman, 2001). EI is a

skill, an ability, and a powerful tool for leadership development (Mayer & Salovey, 1997;

Nabih et al., 2016; Potts, 2020). Generally, researchers have analyzed, criticized, and

compared four main EI models, which include:

- Salovey and Mayer's (1990) four-dimensional ability model

- Goleman's (1998) four-dimensional personality-based model

- Bar-On's (1997) five-dimensional trait-based model

- Dulewicz and Higgs' (1999, 2000) seven-dimensional personality-based model

Salovey and Mayer's Model

Salovey and Mayer (1990) have been credited as the first researchers to introduce

the first EI theoretical framework. The model tends to lean more on the 'the ability EI'

perspective than the' trait EI' perspective. The model is equally described as EI ability-

based model. It has been viewed as a subset of Gardner's (1983) concept of social

intelligence: a combination of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence emphasizing

the cognitive aspects of intelligence related to motivation, integrity, and interpersonal

interaction.

The model centers on four branches of thinking that divide the abilities and skills of EI into four areas: (a) perceive emotion – including being able to identify, appraise and express emotions within themselves and others; (b) communicate and regulate emotions - to aid thinking; (c) utilize emotion for resolution, motivation, creativity, and adaptation – analyzing emotions and awareness over time, and appreciate outcomes from emotion and discriminate between feelings; and (d) emotional self-management – a process that describes the personality of the individuals and their level of understanding of their social environment. The critics of Salovey and Mayer's model argue that the model is so broad with the expectation that everyone would be considered equal in intelligence (Eysenck, 2000; Locke, 2005). However, there is arguably a clear direction of what the model is suggesting. The four-branch concept could be narrowed into experiential and strategic EI (Mayer et al., 2008).

The Salovey and Mayer (1990) model presented emotion by integrating thinking and emotions and discussed the application of their model in the business world. The Salovey and Mayer model highlighted how all emotions, negative or positive, if used intelligently, could be a source of success in leading and serving people. The third and fourth areas of the Mayer and Salovey model of EI skills are termed 'Strategic Emotional Intelligence' (SEI) because they pertain to calculating and planning with information about the emotions of both leaders and followers (Mayer et al., 2008). This aspect of the model focuses on the potential of value creation that emotions could play in leading or managing in business. For instance, positive and negative emotions could affect leaders and followers differently. Therefore, knowing the right emotions to utilize at the right

time could lead to some level of preferred outcomes. This suggests that understanding the

role emotions play puts leaders in a position to know how to work with, rather than

against, both negative and positive emotions to assist each process in achieving the

desired outcome. Critics highlight the difficulties of understanding the dimensions of the

effect of EI - a way of assessing the importance of EI by comparing the sizes of the meta-

analytic effect of EI with the sizes of the effect of cognitive intelligence and personality

traits (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Locke, 2005). However, Emerole et al. (2018) have used

the mental ability introduced by Salovey and Mayer model to analyze and understand EI

among organizations, leaders, and performance. The Salovey and Mayer model remain

one of the most used models and the largest research presented in peer-reviewed journals

related to EI.

Goleman's Emotional Competence Model

Goleman's (1998) model conceptualized EI as a mixed trait-ability theoretical

approach. The model leans more on 'the trait EI' perspective rather than 'the ability EI'

perspective. It also emphasized the non-cognitive aspects of intelligence – a reflection of

personality and not the abilities associated with emotion and intelligence. According to

Goleman, EI is related to self-control and mood regulation, potentially preventing moods

and emotions from clouding a person's thinking. The model propagated EI as a mixture

of personality traits and emotional competencies and is more important than IQ for

success in life and leadership. The model initially used the term emotional quotient (EQ),

which has an emergence of 25 emotional and social competencies grouped into five

subsets: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-regulation, (c) motivation, (d) empathy, and (e) social

skills (see Table 1).

Table 1

Goleman's (1998) Emotional Competencies Framework

Personal competence	Social competence
Self-awareness	Empathy
Emotional self-awareness	Understanding of others
Accurate self-assessment	Leveraging diversity
Self-confidence	Political awareness
Self-regulation	Development of other
Self-control	Service orientation
Trustworthiness	Social skills
Conscientiousness	Influence
Adaptability	Communication
Innovativeness	Conflict management
Motivation	Leadership
Achievement drive	Change catalyst
Commitment	Building bonds
Initiative	Collaboration and cooperation
Optimism	Team capabilities

Critics of the model argued that there are many conflicting EI constructs, and listing

positive non-cognitive qualities as EI cannot be a valid concept given the multiplicity of

views (Matthews et al., 2012; Waterhouse, 2006). However, Goleman (2001) revised his

model and focused on personal and social competencies, which are concerned with the

management and regulation of EI-related competencies (see Table 2).

Table 2

Goleman's (2001) Emotional Competencies Framework

Self personal competence		Other social competence	
Self-awareness		Social awareness	
Emotional self-awareness		Empathy	

Recognition	Accurate self-assessment	Service orientation
	Self-confidence	Organizational awareness
	Self-management	Relationship-management
	Self-control	Developing others
	Initiative	Influencing others
	Conscientiousness	Effective communication
	Adaptability	Team conflict management
Regulation	Trustworthiness	Leadership
	Achievement drive	Change catalyst
		Bridging & building bonds
		Teamwork & collaboration
		Developing others
		Influencing others

The model views EI as a combination of personal and social competencies that can be learned within an individual's life span and could improve workplace performance. The grouping of competencies in the model is based on one's ability to determine internal and external emotions. Personal competence identifies how an individual manages internal emotions, while social competence identifies how a person manages or handles external relationships (Chang et al., 2012; Cherniss, 2010). Mishra and Das Mohapatra (2010) stressed that the development of self-awareness builds self-understanding, which enhances one's ability to use emotions to induce desirable results in others. In addition, the social component indicates that a person's emotions support leadership influence based on cultural, political, and power awareness, resulting in the ability to achieve superior job performance. The model introduces the need for leaders to have EI in their engagements. Cherniss (2010) suggested that emotional and social intelligence are constructs based on social skills, cultural awareness, values, and life experiences that contribute to people's performance and relationship management. Critics of the model have argued that the claims that EI determines real-world success have not

been validated (Waterhouse, 2006). However, numerous studies claim that understanding and managing emotions is a learned behavior and can contribute to successful outcomes in the workplace (Clarke, 2010).

Bar-On's Model

This model was developed as a conceptual and psychometric model of EI to predict various aspects of human behavior and performance. The theoretical framework explains EI, including the characteristics, skills required, and functionality for success in every endeavor. Critics of the model have argued that there is no correlation between intelligence and mood (Matthews et al., 2012; Waterhouse, 2006). However, the model highlights the need to accommodate a more comprehensive array of personal traits and social skills (Bar-On, 1997).

The Bar-On (1997) EI model includes five general skills areas. A significant aspect of the model is intrapersonal skills which involve the ability of the individual to become emotionally self-conscious, self-realization, and self-disciplined. These skills are internal abilities and behaviors that support an individual in managing and controlling emotions and coping with internal attitudes and inner processes. The second aspect examines EI with interpersonal skills and relationships, including social responsibility, interpersonal relationships, and empathy. The identified skills include emotional self-awareness, expression of feelings, and how to relate with others satisfactorily. The third aspect deals with adapting to one's environment, including the ability to solve a problem, learn how to be flexible, and self-testing. This part of the model highlights the need to effectively manage environmental, social, and personal changes by devising a coping

mechanism to cope with immediate situations, solve problems, and make decisions. The fourth aspect is centered on managing emotions and stress. These skills involve determining how effectively we understand and express ourselves and understand and relate to the daily demands of our dealings. Finally, the fifth area of the model emphasized the ability to maintain mood and happiness in decision-making.

Critics of the model have argued that this model is self-reporting and too broad to focus on key aspects that can be learned (Matthews et al., 2012; Waterhouse, 2006). However, the Bar-On model is widely used in EI literature and has contributed to defining human effectiveness from the social perspective and strengthening the discussion on general intelligence. In addition, the model provided an understanding of social intelligence and its usage in building interpersonal relationships.

Dulewicz and Higgs's Seven-Dimensional Personality-Based Model

This model emphasized that EI elements are personal rather than general. They argued that Salovey and Mayer's (1990) theoretical view of EI as an ability factor was short of the true nature of EI. The model was a product of their 7-year longitudinal study that explored and compared cognitive and EI competencies' contributions to work performance. The study observed the personality characteristics and personal competencies of a group of managers. Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) extended their definition of EI as 'being aware of and managing one's feelings, emotions, being sensitive to, and influencing others, sustaining one's motivation and balancing one's drive with intuitive, conscientious behaviors. The model identified seven personality dimensions which include:

- Self-awareness: understanding your feelings and how you exercise control over such feelings

- Emotional resilience: ability to remain strong and stable under tense conditions

- Motivation: ability to maintain success drive amid challenges

- Interpersonal sensibility: a feeling of empathy and closeness with other people

- Influence: the ability to exercise some form of authority on others

- Intuitiveness: ability to make informed decisions

- Conscientiousness: Understanding oneself and maintaining certain standards

Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) explored the contribution of emotional skills, intellectual skills, and managerial competencies to job performance. They concluded that 36% of organizational advancement was due to the contribution of their EI measures, compared to 27% for intellectual skills and 16% for managerial competency. Critics of these findings have argued the need for the study to be replicated in more diverse settings before it is ascertained that EI is a larger contributor to human performance (Waterhouse, 2006). However, the model remains useful because it highlights a multi-factorial array of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills, and facilitators that influence one's ability to recognize, understand and manage emotions, to relate with others, cope with daily demands, challenges, and pressures (Higgs & Dulewicz, 2014). In a later study, Higgs and Dulewicz (2016) examined the components of EI and their potential contribution to performance in a work context. The study also considered the feasibility of an individual being able to develop their level of EI. The conclusion showed that the

concept is both teachable and learnable and enhances expected work outcomes'

performance (Higgs & Dulewicz, 2016).

Perspective of Emotional Intelligence

Studies have indicated that EI is a multi-factorial array of interrelated emotional

and social competencies. Researchers have also presented EI from diverse perspectives,

including a recommendation of diverse approaches that could be implemented to improve

the use of EI, particularly the ability to think and make informed decisions (Mayer et al.,

2008). They argued that EI could take many forms depending on its presentation. Some

researchers have debated that EI could be a leadership development capacity (Black &

Venture, 2017). Others stressed that EI is a managerial component for managing diversity

(Kozlowski et al., 2016; Rahman et al., 2016). Some researchers have opined that EI is a

cultural element and knowledge-based (Cornett, 2018); EI as a leadership competence

tool (Ruben, 2019; Schutte & Barkhuizen, 2016); EI as a project management team

enhancer (Jamshed & Majeed, 2019; Rezvani et al., 2019), EI as a key attribute to

manage complexity in an organization (Clark & Polesello, 2017; Fitness & Curtis, 2005).

Smollan and Parry (2011) extended their work on EI and leadership to include the

functions of the followers. They added to the depth and diversity of the EI debate by

seeking evidence of how to change participants observed the ability of leaders to manage

their own emotions and to understand and deal with followers' emotions. The study

concluded that a leader's EI attributes trigger cognitive, affective, and behavioral

reactions in a meaningful way.

Thory (2016) presented EI from a human resource development perspective. The study aimed to understand how participants of EI development training alter their work tasks, relationships, behaviors, and mindsets and the reflective valuation of their work as a consequence of attending the EI training. Thory's study revealed that EI provides an ideal context to explore how individuals can be taught and how these teachings are applied. The study showed how EI training promotes learning in the workplace and enhances managers' capacity to shape their work through four interconnected sources of meaningfulness, including inner development, expressing one's full potential, unity with others, and serving others. The study showed that EI could serve as a training process to develop leadership and project managers (Thory, 2016).

The ethical perspective of EI was presented by Asim and Azmat (2016). They outlined the issue of the relationship between EI, morals, and virtues and queried if EI is morally neutral or has any effect on the ethical dimension of the organization. Gardner (1999) explained the intricacies of EI as an intelligence tool that is neither moral nor immoral. However, the study revealed that empathy and self-awareness are essential components that could be used to follow one's sense of purpose, meaning, and ethics to enhance and encourage ethical attitudes in organizations. Furthermore, the study explained that extensive exposure and training could develop the ability to become emotionally intelligent, supporting the idea that EI can be developed through training. The study also revealed that people with high EI perform better as it enables them to balance their emotions to handle difficult situations effectively and are less likely to practice problematic and negative behaviors.

Rezvani et al.'s (2019) study presented EI as a workplace performance enhancer. This perspective of EI, as represented by Rezvani et al., explored the complexity of the relationship between EI and team performance. Knowledge of the relationship between EI and performance has led to different conclusions within each perspective. At the same time, Cherniss (2010) suggested that mixed EI, as a version of trait-based EI (personality), has more predictability than ability-based EI concerning performance. Rezvani et al.'s study showed that trust and conflict in teams mediate the direct relationship of team EI on team performance. They expressed that EI could be used to manage individual emotions, whether positive or negative, towards solving problems in organizations in a way that would lead to improved performance of teams. Accordingly, EI has been presented as a tool to enhance better team relationships (Bartunek et al., 2011). They added that managing emotions serve the project team by facilitating knowledge transfer between team members.

The literature on EI has presented a diverse perspective of EI. Critics of EI have generally viewed the diverse perspectives as a major weakness of the theory (Cherniss, 2010; Eysenck, 2000; Locke, 2005). However, supporters (Potts, 2020; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) of EI have put forward that the existence of several theoretical viewpoints does not indicate a weakness but rather the robustness and dynamism of the field. Consequently, the scope of the study focused on EI from a leadership competence perspective and how EI can be used in construction project management. This perspective was chosen for the study to answer the research question and contribute to the

knowledge gap on the role of EI in enhancing the effectiveness of construction project leaders for project success in Nigeria.

Project Management

According to the Project Management Institute (PMI, 2021), project management is applying processes, methods, skills, knowledge, and experience to achieve specific project objectives according to the project acceptance criteria with agreed parameters. Samset and Volden (2016) expressed that the management process involves a manager's ability to initiate and successfully execute a plan. Therefore, the responsibility for project success rests on the leaders of the project (PMI, 2021). Maqbool et al. (2017) opined that the consensus is that a project's success rate depends on the project leaders' ability to cultivate the teams' skills needed to develop trust and communicate among all project stakeholders. Further, the ability to command resources effectively contributes to the project's success. Maqbool et al. examined the relationship and impact of construction project managers on project success. They found that, although various factors influence the project's success, project leaders play a significant role. The study further found project leaders with high EI ensure higher success in projects than their counterparts.

Lee (2019) posited that project success measures project leadership and stakeholders' satisfaction. The study summarized Berssaneti and Carvalho's (2015) and Shenhar et al.'s (2001) idea of project success involving stakeholders' satisfaction, efficiency, customer impact, project team impact, business success, and preparation for the future. The idea of achieving success in projects is arguably the role of project leadership (Adeleke et al., 2019). Therefore, it is paramount that the leader exhibits the

competencies required for successful project leadership to overcome the increased

challenges projects face. These challenges include large capital investment, widely

dispersed project participants, stringent quality standards, escalating cost, environmental

shock, increasing stakeholders' power, advancement in information and communication

technology, and insecurities (Akewushola et al., 2012; Ikechukwu & Odimegwu, 2021).

The global pandemic has added to the level of uncertainty in managing infrastructure

projects in Nigeria (Ikechukwu & Odimegwu, 2021). The major sources of uncertainties

include a constant change in government policies, increased prices of materials, and

financial institutions having difficulties meeting obligations (Ikechukwu & Odimegwu,

2021). Therefore, project management in Nigeria is not exempted from the challenges

most infrastructure projects face across the developing world. In this study, EI was

examined to understand its role in enhancing the effectiveness of construction project

leaders in Nigeria.

Project Management: A Nigerian Perspective

In Nigeria, governments often commission infrastructure projects and attract

political interest and public attention (Maqbool et al., 2017). In most cases, the

stakeholders' influence is consequent upon the considerable cost, long time frame, and

direct impact these projects can have on their community and environment. Delay is a

common issue across Nigeria, especially in construction projects (Mukhtar et al., 2017).

Unegbu et al. (2020) added that the poor performance of construction projects could be

traced to poor utilization of project management best practices, project performance

measures, and critical success factors that constitute the vast components that influence

construction projects. Chang et al. (2012) noted that the allocation of resources and control of resources remain key components of the success of projects.

Nigeria is a developing country with complexities in construction project management. According to Akande (2018), numerous factors, such as political complexity, bureaucracy, poor procurement management, human resources management, and project leaders' capacities, contribute to business complexity. On the other hand, Wagner and Walstad (2019) pointed out that leadership effectiveness and efficiency contribute to projects' success or failure. This, by extension, highlights the need for project leaders to develop their capacity continuously and for researchers to keep searching for creative ways to improve the effectiveness of project leaders. In this study, I explored the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty.

Adeleke et al. (2019) highlighted the role of political, environmental, and economic factors as sources of uncertainties in managing projects in Nigeria. They expressed the influence of environmental variables such as safety, community perception, legal acceptability, and political and social impact on projects as sources of high uncertainties. The derivatives of political factors that affect the level of uncertainties for projects in Nigeria mentioned in the study included discriminatory legislature, covering tax regimes, riots, strikes, civil unrest, wars, terrorism, invasions, and religious turmoil. The economic factors mentioned in the study included inflation, deflation, exchange rate, and importation charges. Adeleke et al. further highlighted that poor management and the shortage of leadership workforce were conceived to be some of the major problems

confronting the development of projects in Nigeria. More recent researchers have attempted to address the uncertainties presented by the current global COVID-19 pandemic (Ikechukwu & Odimegwu, 2021; Ogunnusi et al., 2020; Osuizugbo, 2021).

Ikechukwu and Odimegwu (2021) explored the implications of the COVID-19 outbreak on the construction and property development sector in the southeastern region of Nigeria. The researchers discovered that many projects were shut down following the government's directives, which led to economic hardship, inflation, and difficulty accessing funds, ultimately affecting work projects' flow and progress. Ogunnusi et al. (2020) work shared similar findings. They sought to understand the disruptions and responses in the construction industry amid the COVID-19 threat. The study found disruptions in transportation (for both workers and materials), project abandonment, delay in construction activities, high cost of construction materials, reduction in working hours per day, lack of funding, and workforce shortage were the major disruptions in the construction industry. Osuizugbo (2021) added that COVID-19 resulted in some challenges in workflow and supply chain disruption, new policy issues, workers' anxiety, and the issue of force majeure in standard forms of construction contracts.

On the other hand, the pandemic has helped to bring about innovative and diverse ways in modern procurement planning, the use of technology in an exemplary manner, and unique design considerations. These uncertainties have added to the need for construction project leaders to seek new creative ways to sustain and develop competencies (Osuizugbo, 2021). This study investigated the role of EI in developing leadership effectiveness.

Emotional Intelligence and Project Management

The works of Sunindijo et al. (2007) and Preston et al. (2015) have contributed to the relevance of EI in project management success. Extant literature has identified various competencies that enhance project success. For example, Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) noted that emotional competence accounts for 36% of project leadership performance. Consequently, many researchers have investigated the relevance of EI, and project management has been investigated in terms of leadership style. Preston et al. integrated the idea of EI dimensions (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) with project leadership in a project management context (visionary, coaching, affiliates, democratic, pacesetting, and commanding). Preston et al. identified and summarized the relevance of EI and leadership styles in modern project management phases. They outlined the positive and negative outcomes of each leadership style, provided examples of those styles in use, and predicted which style would be appropriate in relevant phases of the project (see Table 3).

Preston et al. (2015) found that the structure of projects having fixed dates and end dates often shapes projects to be more task-oriented than people-oriented. They further added that EI competencies in a leader are crucial to bridge the gap between the task-oriented and people-oriented focus of projects. El Khatib et al. (2021) explored the correlation between EI and project success in a related study. The study found that project leaders' EI positively correlates with the likelihood of a project succeeding. The study highlighted that the key attributes of EI in project management included self-awareness, the capability to regulate emotions, motivation, possession of social skills,

and empathy. In the study, communication and leadership influence were key factors in implementing EI in project management.

Table 3

Summary of Various Leadership Styles From Preston et al. (2015)

	Commanding	Visionary	Affiliative	Democratic	Pacesetting	Coaching
The leader's modus operandi	Demands immediate compliance	Mobilizes people toward a vision	Creates harmony and builds emotional bonds	Forges consensus through participation	Sets high standards for performance	Develops people for the future
Underlying emotional intelligence competencies	Drive to achieve, initiative, self-control	Self-confidence, empathy, change catalyst	Empathy, building relationship, communication	Collaboration, team leadership, communication	Conscientiousness, drive to achieve, initiative	Developing others, empathy, self-awareness
When the style works best	In a crisis, to kick start a turnaround, or with problem employees	When changes require a new vision, or when a clear direction is needed	To heal rifts in a team or to motivate people during stressful circumstances	To build buy-in or consensus, or to get input from valuable employees	To get quick results from s highly motivated and competent team	To help an employee improve performance or develop long-term strength
Overall impact on climate	Negative	Most strongly positive	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive

Note. From "The relevance of emotional intelligence in project leadership." Preston et al. (2015). Journal of Information Technology and Economic Development, 6(1), p. 24. (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333485769_The_Relevance_of_Emotional_Intelligence_in_Project_Leadership)

Studies have presented EI as a leadership competence in its own right and showed that EI affected the leadership behavior of the project leader (Alvarenga et al., 2020; El Khatib et al., 2021; Sunindijo et al., 2007). Sunindijo et al. (2007) posited that project leaders with higher EI tend to generate delegating, open communication, proactive

behavior, and leadership styles that can bring positive outcomes to the organization.

Emotional intelligence has been presented as the people-orientation segment of the need

to manage and lead projects (Preston et al., 2015; Sunindijo et al., 2007). According to

Alvarenga et al. (2020), project management involves intense interpersonal relationships,

mainly leading a team and liaison between the project team and the sponsor. Hence,

effective project leadership could require practical interpersonal skills.

  The Project Manager PrepCast (2021) presented a paper on how EI quotients

could shape project management knowledge areas. The authors argued that EI

components remain relevant in project management activities on various levels. For

instance, in the scope management of projects, EI comes in where the leader can

anticipate challenges early and address them accordingly. They added that project

management's human resource management component was perhaps the most obvious

area to apply EI; in conflict resolution, negotiation, and building good working

relationships with team members. The Project Manager PrepCast emphasized integration

management as an added component that exhibited the relevance of EI and project

management. Accordingly, EI is the thread that ties together all working relationships

with all stakeholders (Project Manager PrepCast, 2021). The basis of how information is

presented, how to work with team members with challenges, and how to choose to

communicate are important aspects of the EI relationship. The authors added that EI is at

the core of everything and how soft and technical skills support one another (Project

Manager PrepCast, 2021). Another important area of project management mentioned that

demands high-level EI is risk management. The higher the EI levels of the project leader,

the less of a threat to the risk associated with projects because of the ability to prioritize risks and get all the team members on board (Project Manager PrepCast, 2021).

The risk management issue in a project is critical, especially with the current level of environmental uncertainty created by the current COVID-19 pandemic. Risk management in project execution is always associated with uncertainties because certain risk factors, such as poor labor productivity, shortage of equipment, delay, cost overrun, and time overrun, are attributed to project delivery (Moon, 2021). Moon explored the relevance of the theory of EI in risked-based decision-making while comparing various leadership styles. The study found the role of EI in filtering deleterious internal biases and confirmed EI's presence as a success factor in leadership and decision-making. The study revealed that often, risk decisions are replete with assumptions and biases, leading to incorrect decisions. It is, therefore, necessary for leaders to make decisions using unbiased considerations in dealing with organizational risks. Moon highlighted that EI could be used to regulate emotions for effective decision-making, resulting in less irrational and less biased decisions. Moon concluded that the major impact of EI on intelligent risk decisions is the ability to overcome biases, challenge assumptions, understand the situational context in risk terms, and understand organizational and social contexts.

Moon (2021) conducted a preliminary inquiry into the nature of the interaction between EI and risk management in projects to conclude. As a continuum, there is a need to target research specifics such as how EI can be developed as competencies in construction project leaders to understand the situational context in risk terms, avert and

minimize risk, understand the organizational and social context of projects as well as

contribute to the success of infrastructural projects in Nigeria. Therefore, the idea of EI as

a project management tool remains relevant. However, no empirical studies highlight

how EI can be used in developed competencies to develop the effectiveness of

construction project leaders and enhance the success levels of projects.

Leadership

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.), *leadership* is defined as

guiding, conducting, proceeding, or being foremost among a group. They added that

leadership is the process of developing ideas, and vision, living by values that support

those ideas and vision, influencing people or groups to embrace their behaviors, and

making decisions about human and other resources to achieve organizational goals. These

definitions highlight a broad spectrum of how leadership creates values through vision,

ideas, behaviors, and decision-making to achieve goals. Chemers (2002) extended the

definition to include social influence. Chemers defined leadership as a process of social

influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in accomplishing a

common task. The literature has defined leadership from different perspectives, including

competency/ trait, social, behavioral, contingency, transformational, and transactional

(Madlock, 2018; Uzohue et al., 2016). Due to leadership's complex and diverse nature, a

specific and widely accepted definition of leadership does not exist. However, across

works of literature, the definitions have focused on leadership as a combination of

intrapersonal factors (thoughts and emotions) and interpersonal factors (attractions,

communication, influence) of process and ability that shapes how resources are managed in ways that achieve goals (Madlock, 2018).

Developing managerial effectiveness of intrapersonal elements such as thoughts and emotions and interpersonal factors such as communication in attaining successful leadership is a key component of this study. According to Tanchai and Bunnag (2018), the essence of leadership is to motivate followers to carry out tasks towards attaining organizational goals. Therefore, the key aspect of leadership competence has to be developed to ensure organizational success. Furthermore, leadership effectiveness involves the application of the appropriate leadership style based on the situation (Simmons et al., 2017).

Uzohue et al. (2016) explained that leadership style refers to the method adopted by a leader in a particular situation to achieve group goals and objectives. Many researchers have presented the role of leadership style in effective leadership (Goleman, 1998, 2019; Moon, 2021). Moon (2021) expressed that the leader's experience and competence influence the approach toward situations. Researchers have generally emphasized five leadership styles which include:

1. Authoritarian leadership style – a demanding and controlling style. Chiang et al. (2021) explained that authoritarian leaders are more likely to create a team climate of emotional suppression, which induces a higher level of emotional exhaustion that potentially impacts the team's performance.

2. Participative leadership style - a style that allows each member to participate in the decision-making process in a democratic way (Zoccoli, 2021). Adiguzel et al.

(2020) expressed that participative leadership has an important feature that motivates and directs employees in achieving organizational goals.

3. Delegative leadership style – Sharma and Singh (2013) mentioned that this style focuses on delegating initiative to team members. They also posited that the style significantly impacts employee productivity if the team members are competent, take responsibility, and prefer engaging in individual work.

4. Transactional leadership style – According to Berkovich and Eyal (2021), this leadership style promotes compliance by followers through rewards and punishment. This leadership style is a short-term strategy that could keep followers motivated.

5. Transformational leadership style – According to Warrilow (2012), this style causes change in individuals and social systems. It enhances followers' motivation, morale, and performance through various mechanisms.

Odumeru and Ogbonna (2013) summarized diverse forms of leadership styles. They emphasized that the literature on leadership has made reasonable attempts to explain the nature and effect of leadership styles. However, the strength or weakness of chosen styles is influenced by situational variables on leadership outcomes within the context of the style. They concluded that all leadership styles provide value, and none should be ignored. Mumford et al. (2017) expressed that factors such as acquired skills, residual knowledge, and the known style of the leader could determine the leadership style that could display at the time. Therefore, there is a need to understand the styles of leadership that could contribute to developing leadership competencies.

Leadership Theories

The literature has diverse schools of thought that explain leadership (Adiguzel et al., 2020; Berkovich & Eyal, 2021; Mumford et al., 2017; Warrilow, 2012; Zoccoli, 2021). Several leadership theories have been propounded, particularly in the 20th century. Some leadership theories include contingency theory, great man theory, situational theory, transformational theory, transactional theory, and behavioral theory. These theories are vast in their approaches to explanation. However, there is a consensus in the literature that the progression of thinking has developed a belief that leadership is a flexible developmental process continuously seeking new ways to grow (Mango, 2018; Swanwick, 2017). In the interest of the current study, only two leadership theories (transformational leadership theory and situational leadership theory) were elaborated upon because they have a good representation of the context of the research.

Transformational Leadership Theory

This paradigm of leadership was conceptualized by James MacGregor Burns (1978). Burns noted that transformational leaders (TL) lead by stimulating and inspiring followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their leadership capacities. There has been development in leadership research. The perspective shifted from behavioral and trait theories to more ability-based approaches, such as a leader's ability to respond to circumstances at the right time in the right manner (Carasco-Saul et al., 2015; Kim & Kim, 2017). Transformational leadership has been presented in the literature as a combination of leadership activities that could contribute to leadership effectiveness (Hunt & Fitzgerald, 2013; Ugoani et al., 2015). TL has been

described as leaders who encourage followers to increase their intellectual confidence, actively work on challenging and achieving higher performance, and pursue learning and development (Li et al., 2016; Ugoani et al., 2015). Critics of the theory have argued that the nature of TL is ambiguous and creates room for followers to be manipulated by leaders, and there are chances that they lose more than they gain (Bass & Riggio, 2014; Lee, 2014). However, TL is gaining momentum in literature, with many researchers contributing to expanding its knowledge.

According to Bass and Riggio (2014), TL fosters capacity development and brings higher levels of personal commitment amongst followers to achieve organizational objectives. Bass and Riggio (2014) stated that TL becomes operational when leaders can motivate and inspire their followers towards actions that would lead to organizational success. The literature explained similar opinions regarding the dimensions of TL (Carasco-Saul et al., 2015; Hunt & Fitzgerald, 2013; Ugoani et al., 2015). Four dimensions of TL are presented in the literature, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Carasco-Saul et al., 2015; Hay, 2006; Ugoani et al., 2015).

1. Idealized influence – this dimension highlights that a leader can influence followers only when they practice what they preach (Ugoani et al., 2015). In this dimension, the leader acts as a role model that followers seek to emulate. Hence, winning the trust and respect of followers through actions. In this case, the use of power by leaders is aimed at influencing followers to strive for the organization's common goals. In this dimension, influence is gained through actions.

2. Inspirational motivation – in this dimension, the capacity to motivate followers to follow the organization's vision is paramount. Influence is sustained by promoting a consistent vision, mission, and values to followers to motivate them. In addition, leaders in this dimension provide followers with a sense of meaning and challenge to motivate and promote work performance (Hay, 2006).

3. Intellectual stimulation – in this dimension, innovation and creativity is the focus. Leaders arouse and change followers' awareness of problems and their capacity to solve them by encouraging innovation and creativity. The leaders encourage new ideas from their followers and never criticize them publicly for the mistakes committed by them (Carasco-Saul et al., 2015)

4. Individual consideration involves treating followers as individuals and providing for their specific needs (Carasco-Saul et al., 2015). Influence is gained by leaders acting as mentors and rewarding followers for their creativity and innovation differently according to their talents and knowledge. It is worth mentioning that researchers have highlighted the need to view the above dimensions of TL as interdependent elements that co-exist and should be blended in ways that yield performance beyond expectations (Hay, 2006; Ugoani et al., 2015).

Situational Leadership Theory

Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard originated the situational leadership theory. Hersey and Blanchard (1969) expounded that situational leadership (SL) is where a leader adapts their leadership style to suit the current work environment or needs of a team. Some scholars, such as Bosse et al. (2017) and Thompson and Glasø (2018), have

enumerated certain factors that necessitate the display of SL, including: (a) task behavior, (b) relationship behavior, and (c) followers' commitment. However, Hersey and Blanchard (1969) identified four situations and the behavioral styles an SL can adapt depending on the situation:

1. Telling – some teams require a high level of supervision to be successful. In this style, the leader provides the team with close supervision and constant guidance. The leader makes all the decision and then communicate them to the team.

2. Selling – this leadership style is used when a team or employee is unmotivated to perform tasks or job duties. In this situation, the leader must be flexible and regularly adjust their leadership style to suit the current situation.

3. Participating – this style is commonly used when a team is competent in a particular task but does not have the willingness or confidence to complete it. The leader is expected to allow followers to participate in decision-making.

4. Delegating – this is when a team is efficient and effective at their jobs and requires little guidance. The leader is required to delegate the task to those members who are capable of working independently.

Al-Khamaiseh et al. (2020) opined that the SL model has no single best style. However, the ability to advance, adaptability to situations, and transformation of leadership style between the model scope of task and relationship orientation are fundamental. According to Meier (2016), the model focuses on how the leader relates with their subordinates, not just the leader's skills or how they are expected to respond to situations, but more importantly, the ability to advance. Al-Khamaiseh et al. highlighted

that SL is grounded in contingency theory, which focuses on how leaders shape their

behavior to match current and potential future situations.

The literature on contingency theory highlighted that leaders are expected to be in

positions to respond and react to situations as they arise or develop. Advocates of the

contingency theory mentioned that leadership style is the primary factor for defining

subordinate competence and commitment that shapes the behavior used by leaders

(Meier, 2016). The literature further mentioned that in SL, leaders focus their response to

outcomes based on situations. There is an expectation for leaders to advance in their

abilities continuously. This is very peculiar to the dynamic and complex Nigerian

business environment, which provides various sources of challenging situations,

including social, political, cultural, technological, and unpredicted issues (Nwachukwu &

Vu, 2020). Therefore, the application of SL in this study is relevant. Al-Khamaiseh et al.

(2020) emphasized that SL is the ability of a leader to change their leadership style. In

this study, leadership is determined by how a leader assesses their ability to advance and

respond to a situation or challenge rather than the leader's charisma when communicating

with followers (McCleskey, 2014).

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

Over the years, studies on EI have examined different directions with multiple

contributions and inputs from many scholars (Mayer et al., 2008). The literature has

presented numerous works highlighting the relationship between EI and leadership (Lee,

2019; Lubbadeh, 2020; Shamshad & Khan, 2020). The findings have been mixed,

challenging the scientific rigor of EI-related propositions and arguing that EI is

conceptually incoherent among various definitions (Antonakis, 2009; Matthews et al., 2012). Goleman (1998) propagated the idea of linking EI with leadership. The study by Goleman showed evidence linking EI in the leadership of large companies with profitability. The author highlighted that by developing the level and perception of EI in their leaders, an organization would function better and be more successful. Berkovich and Eyal (2021) noted that important components of EI are positively associated with transformational leadership. Antonakis (2009), on the other hand, argued that there is no proof that EI contributes to TL behavior. The literature has yielded inconsistent results about the relationship between EI and leadership, thus generating a debate between the proponents and skeptics.

EI has become prominent in promoting leadership effectiveness and competence in organizational management (Matthews et al., 2012). Matthews et al. (2012) examined various fundamental challenges to establishing EI as a major individual difference factor, including cross-cultural issues from a Western philosophical perspective. They then examined EI as a personal quality distinct from general intelligence and personality. Matthews et al. noted that in EI research, a narrowly defined but conceptually coherent research domain might be a more productive strategy than seeking to define an all-embracing general EI. They advocated a 'multipolar' conception of EI that discriminate temperament, information processing, emotion regulation, and acquired skills. Skeptics argued that the extent to which EI, as a construct derived largely from Western psychology, could be universally applicable remains unclear (Durlak et al., 2011). The current research acknowledged the need to provide a precise approach to understanding

and conducting research on EI and leadership by focusing on leadership effectiveness development via EI. The cross-cultural dimension was addressed from a developing world perspective with a particular interest in the Nigerian construction industry.

Nabih et al. (2016) undertook studies on EI from the standpoint of developing countries. The research location was the Middle East, Egypt in particular, and the study was performed on only one organization. Hence, the generalization of the research result is difficult because it was based on a single case study. Leary et al. (2009) provided similar findings emphasizing that leaders with EI skills and competence demonstrate greater effectiveness and productivity than others with less EI skills. Edelman and van Knippenberg (2018) elaborated on the relationship between EI and leadership. In their study, two significant questions were presented. The first question was whether EI as a concept is concerned with the rationality of individual intelligence. The second question seeks to understand how EI as a tool could be used to influence leadership effectiveness. The study was conducted with 84 leaders of various organizations and how they respond to the emotions of their subordinates. The findings revealed that leaders in organizations respond instantaneously and differently to subordinates' emotional behaviors.

Mayer et al. (2008) emphasized that EI can be learned to enhance individual leadership effectiveness. The idea of EI as an ability that could be learned has been supported by numerous studies (Ackley, 2016; Akram et al., 2016; Emerole et al., 2018). Akram et al. explored the potential role of EI in the personal development of organizational employees and to find out the scope of EI for personal development. The study was qualitative, combining the case study method and interviews with 17 software

engineers in Pakistan. The study revealed that EI played a crucial role in the personal development of individuals. Though the study was limited to one organization, the outcome highlighted the relevance of training leaders in EI to enhance employees' performance in organizations. The study was also significant since it presented the perspective of EI from the viewpoint of developing nations. This summation was supported by Ackley (2016), which concluded that EI as a concept is not stagnant based on experiences but is ever-evolving in how it is developed and translated into the development of individuals and organizations at large.

Knight et al. (2020) noted the need to create a new kind of leader to meet the needs of the 21st century. They described the qualities and characteristics of leaders, then focused on developing these leaders through coaching processes. They developed a methodology that codifies the development of leaders, which they termed transpersonal leaders, allowing for the replication of the program by training other professionals. The study acknowledged the importance of developing awareness of the usefulness of EI in leadership development. Kerr et al. (2016) explored EI and performance cohesion in three different studies. In their first study, they focused on establishing a correlation between EI and transformational leadership traits and how such a relationship affects a team's performance in an organization. The findings revealed that emotional behavior is correlated with team performance. The second study interviewed team leaders about their EI and leadership behavior and the potential influence on cohesion and performance. The study revealed that there was a benefit and some cohesion in performance. The third study supported the findings of the first and second. Though the study was conducted in

the UK, it highlighted the need for leaders to continuously adopt ways to improve, emphasizing the importance of effective leader behaviors and EI for team member cohesion and performance.

The works of Ruben (2019) have highlighted the need for leaders to be competent in using EI. The expectation remains for the leaders to apply some self-awareness and awareness of their decisions. However, EI has been put forward as a component of leadership that could be improved. Chrusciel (2006) and Serrat (2017) supported the idea that EI is a competence that could be developed and learned through the training of leaders. Knight et al. (2020) explained that the contemporary complex business environment requires that organizational leaders always be prepared for uncertainties. Consequently, continuous empirical investigations need to be conducted using EI to assess and measure leadership performance and effectiveness. The leader's effectiveness could be gauged by their ability to guide and empower their members in ways that promote success (Goleman, 2019).

Iuscu et al. (2012) described EI as the ability or capacity to perceive, evaluate, understand, and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of other people. The idea of the current study remains to develop the capacity to perceive and evaluate one's emotions in ways that contribute to success. This arguably falls on the premise that leaders should have the expected competencies to recognize their emotions and act upon them rationally (Iuscu et al., 2012). The work further mentioned that EI had become essential in how present-day leaders cope with everyday challenges. Iuscu et al. further mentioned that EI improves a leader's capacity for excellent performance in carrying out

increasingly more complex and difficult tasks. The works of Gaubatz and Ensminger

(2017), Issah and Zimmerman (2016), and Iuscu et al. highlighted the increasing

relevance of EI both for personal and institutional development. Hence, the principles of

EI offer a new way of comprehending and evaluating people's behavior, aptitudes, skills,

and potential leadership styles. Although most of the studies were conducted from a

Western philosophy perspective, developing EI as a competence that increases the

capacity of leaders to lead more effectively is worth investigating from a dynamic and

developing world perspective.

Emotional Intelligence in Nigeria

Studies on EI in Nigeria are gaining momentum, with numerous researchers

presenting and applying the concept differently. Some researchers have presented EI

from a health sector perspective (Mshellia et al., 2016), and others from a banking sector

perspective (Roland & Olalekan, 2020). Some researchers have also presented EI from a

management excellence perspective, where EI is essential to leadership (Ugoani, 2019).

The studies share similarities in applying the concepts of EI from a Nigerian perspective

related to the peculiarities of cultural differences, multi-ethnicity, and the religious

diversity of Nigeria as a developing and emerging economy. For instance, in a study by

Ugoani, political awareness was highlighted as necessary for EI performance. EI helps

management accurately read and understand key power relationships and the forces that

shape the views and actions of customers and competitors. Ugoani conducted an

exploratory research design and used descriptive and statistical regression methods to

analyze data from 210 respondents in the banking sector. The study's purpose involved

evaluating the relationship between EI and organizational excellence. The outcome of the study revealed that EI facilitates organizational excellence.

Gunu and Oladepo (2014) studied the impact of EI on employees' performance and organizational commitment using the manufacturing sector in Nigeria as a case study. The study adopted a descriptive design, using randomly administered questionnaires from 120 respondents to collect data that supported the study's conclusion. The study used regression analysis to reveal a significant relationship between employees' EI, organizational commitment, and performance. The study pointed out that EI competencies could play a role in enhancing the performance of employees. While the research showed a significant relationship between EI, organizational commitment, and employee performance, it does not offer guidance on how the competencies of EI can be developed or enhanced in ways that improve performance. The study also could not establish a relationship between managers' EI and employees' organizational commitment.

Jimoh et al. (2012) conducted a study from a public sector perspective. The study aimed to determine the influence of leadership styles and EI on the job performance of local government workers in Nigeria. A survey research design was used to collect data from 256 randomly selected respondents in the public sector. The result illustrated that EI and leadership style, when combined, significantly predicted job performance. They further highlighted that' two dimensions of EI: self-emotions appraisal and use of emotion were significant in job performance. They recommended that EI training be incorporated into the local government system to improve the EI abilities of workers.

However, the study did not highlight how or what EI competencies require training. Akinwamide (2019) examined the consultant's EI skills performance in Nigeria's real estate consultancy service. Akinwande used structured questionnaires with 207 responses purposefully administered. The data collected were rated on a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using exploratory factor analysis to determine factor structure. The findings showed that critical factors such as empathy, skill, self–awareness, and management skills influence EI.

Akinwamide (2019) presented four factors groups' skills: empathy skills, self-awareness and management skills, social skills, and motivational skills, which identified potential EI competencies that contribute to success in real estate consultancy services in Nigeria. The first factor identified in the study is empathy skills with seven variable clusters (Akinwamide, 2019). These are as follows:

- How to identify and achieve clients' satisfaction;

- Keeping clients informed about matters of concern to them;

- Sensing clients' emotions and understanding their perspective;

- Good at cultivating and maintaining a web of relationships;

- Competency in promoting cooperation and building team;

- Propensity to bolster abilities through feedback and guidance; and

- Ability to solve conflicts and improve the quality of services.

The second factor identified is self-awareness and management skills. There are eight variables, including the following:

- Understanding organizational politics to make decisions;

- Readiness to seize opportunities;

- Ability to manage oneself and responsibility;

- Keep disruptive positions and impulses under control;

- Adjusting to the changing situation and overcoming obstacles;

- Meeting internal standards of excellence;

- Realistic evaluation of a person's strengths and limitations; and

- Having a strong and positive sense of self-worth.

The third factor is social skills. In this factor, Akinwamide (2019) identified four variables. These are (a) having a strong and positive sense of self-worth, (b) consistent display of honesty and integrity, (c) listening and sending a clear message, and (d) changing and inspiring with a compelling vision.

According to Akinwamide (2019), the fourth factor is motivational skills. Three variables were identified. These are the ability to manage oneself and responsibility, understanding your position emotionally, and wielding a range of persuasive tactics.

The linkages between EI, leadership, and the construction industry in Nigeria are yet to be fully studied. The literature has presented that EI has a significant positive impact on leadership and the relevance of EI to personal and institutional development. It offers new ways of understanding influence through emotions. Although researchers have investigated the relevance of EI, there is very little literature on the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. Studies on leadership ineffectiveness in the construction industry have primarily focused on the lack of training among leaders (Omotayo, 2015), non-

application of information management systems (Oyewobi et al., 2015; Ozumba & Shakantu, 2018), and lack of adequate knowledge in project management (Ogunde et al., 2017; Onifade et al., 2017). It is necessary to examine how construction project leaders could utilize EI competence to enhance effectiveness in the construction industry.

Abubakar et al. (2021) noted the dynamism of the construction industry. They emphasized the paradigm shift, like skills and competencies needed for survival in the construction industry. The study highlighted a gradual shift in the industry from a knowledge-based to a competency-based competitive industry. The study adopted a quantitative research approach with questionnaires distributed and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to provide evidence that self-confidence, qualitative reasoning, and self-awareness were the most relevant competencies for survival in the construction industry.

Researchers have indicated the uses of EI in leadership development (Akram et al., 2016; Collins et al., 2012; Dolev & Leshem, 2017). They have also mentioned multiple facets of EI (Chrusciel, 2006; Serrat, 2017). The key attributes of leadership competence have been focused on intellectual, managerial, and emotional competencies and influence, motivation, and conscientiousness. It is important to extend the scope of EI theory in understanding the influence that appropriate leadership styles can have on a situation (Dolev & Leshem, 2017). This study focused on using EI to improve leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty (Chrusciel, 2006; Edelman & van Knippenberg, 2018; Nabih et al., 2016).

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, I presented the literature search strategy, the historical background, and the emergence of EI models (Bar-On, 1997; Dulewicz & Higgs, 1999, 2000; Goleman, 1998; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). I also presented an exhaustive review of literature on the knowledge and analysis of current studies on EI, project management from a Nigerian perspective, leadership theories, the integration of EI and leadership from a Nigerian perspective, and various theories associated with EI. The literature review has shown that EI in Nigeria is gaining momentum, with numerous researchers presenting and applying the concept differently. The studies reviewed have presented EI from health perspectives, banking sector perspectives, and managerial sector perspectives. However, there is a need to expand the studies on EI from a leadership and construction project perspective in times of uncertainty. The literature review provided specific insight into the dynamism of the construction industry in Nigeria and the consequent impact of project leadership on the success of projects.

The literature presented also emphasized a paradigm shift from a knowledge-based to a competency-based competitive industry. EI has acquired an essential role in the way leaders cope with everyday challenges and shapes the nature of skills and competencies needed for survival in the construction industry. EI has been presented as a competence that could contribute to leadership development. The literature review has shown that EI can be learned and could enhance leadership effectiveness. EI as a concept is not stagnant based on experiences but is ever evolving on how it is developed and translated into the development of individuals and organizations. Consequently, this

study may add to the literature on how construction project leaders in Nigeria could use

EI competency during periods of uncertainty to enhance their effectiveness in project

management, thus, contributing to positive social change. The next chapter presents the

methodology of the research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. Studies have shown that engaging EI during periods of uncertainty can significantly improve leadership effectiveness, such as developing others, demonstrating empathy, and relationship building that improves employee performance (Emerole et al., 2018). Researchers have investigated the relationship between construction project leaders' effectiveness and EI using quantitative approaches (Potter et al., 2018); however, researchers have not qualitatively investigated how the use of EI during uncertainty can enhance leadership effectiveness for construction project leaders in Nigeria. This study explored the perception of construction project leaders in Nigeria on the engagement of EI to enhance effective leadership. Leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders is fundamental for successful project implementation and management in Nigeria (Ugoani, 2021).

In this chapter, I present the research design and rationale for the study. The role of the researcher, the research methodology, the participant selection logic, and the instrumentation are discussed. I also present the participant recruitment procedures, data collection techniques, data analysis strategy, and ethical considerations. I state the central research question, content validity, the process of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of the study.

Research Design and Rationale

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), a research question sets the stage for how the methods and procedures of the study will unfold. This suggests that a good research question should be able to direct and guide the efforts of the research activities in an integrated way. The central research question that guided the study is as follows: How do construction project leaders in Nigeria perceive the engagement of EI to enhance their effectiveness during periods of uncertainty? The study's focus is the role of EI in leadership effectiveness and construction project successes in Abuja, Nigeria. The focal points of the study included EI, enhancing leadership effectiveness, project management, and leading in times of uncertainty. The logical connections between the concepts allowed a better understanding of the traits and relationship between leadership effectiveness enhancement and EI. This understanding could potentially answer the research question when combined with the findings from the interaction and experiences of the participants. I used a qualitative exploratory case study approach for this study. The case study approach is appropriate and suitable when the study focuses on understanding the occurrence of a phenomenon (Brown, 2016; Yin, 2018). The case study approach is also relevant to answer a 'how' or 'why' research question.

The qualitative approach was used for this study because the quantitative method cannot provide the type of answer required. The quantitative method is relevant for studies dealing with testing theories and relationship variables (Kumar, 2019). In contrast, the qualitative approach will allow participants to share their individual experiences on the phenomenon under investigation (Yin, 2017). The quantitative method

is not required for this study since there is no need to analyze or measure numbers (Brannen, 2017). The mixed method is unsuitable because it requires both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Therefore, a method that allows the study to gain in-depth understanding by engaging participants that have lived experience of the phenomenon is essential. Yin (2018) mentioned that an exploratory case study would enable the phenomenon of interest to be explored through multiple perspectives. Researchers implementing the case study approach will facilitate an in-depth investigation of the population related to the phenomenon of interest.

I used a qualitative exploratory case study as the research design. I chose this design because it was appropriate for the study since I sought to have an understanding or interpretation of a phenomenon from the perceptions and experiences of the participants rather than the prediction of specific phenomena or to generate and test a theory (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Yin, 2017). I collected data directly from project leaders in the construction industry based on their day-to-day work experiences.

Other designs, such as ethnography, narrative case study, grounded theory, and phenomenology, were unsuitable for this study. For instance, the narrative case study focuses on participants' personal life experiences and stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). On the other hand, ethnographic research requires the researcher to adapt to the target audiences to understand the cultures, challenges, motivations, and settings that occur (Lewis, 2015). The grounded theory focuses on the methodical construction of theory by discovering behavioral patterns that influence group social interactions (Lewis, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Finally, the rationale was from the level of engagement and

interaction with the participants I sought. Using a qualitative exploratory case study

approach could provide the opportunity to get firsthand information on how EI could play

a role in project leadership effectiveness improvement in Nigeria because it provides the

possibility for rapport with the respondents (Yin, 2017).

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is described as part of the study's

methodology and instrument (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The researcher serves as the

instrument for both data collection and interpretation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). My role in

the research is that of an observer-participant, the data collection instrument, and

ensuring all ethical considerations were observed. Additionally, my role was to ensure

adherence to the requirements of the Walden University guidelines for the successful

completion of the research. I conducted interviews with participants, made observations

during interviews, recorded the interviews, transcribed the interviews, developed the

required themes, and reviewed other materials provided by the participants.

As a project leader in the construction industry, I reflected on my personal biases

regarding my experiences, field knowledge, and opinions. This reflection brought to the

forefront the potential sources of bias and subjectivity. In all my interactions with the

participants, I worked to keep an open mind. Rigor and validity in a qualitative study are

attained where the researcher's subjectivity is maintained by projecting the views and

expressions of the participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The research participants were

leaders of various construction projects, and none were with an organization I work or

have worked for before. Therefore, there was no conflict of interest due to professional

relationships with the participants. I adopted and followed Walden University's

Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines strictly throughout the study.

Methodology

I used a qualitative exploratory case study approach to gain an in-depth

understanding of EI's role in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction

project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. The case study approach is

appropriate and suitable when the study focuses on understanding the occurrence of a

phenomenon (Brown, 2016; Yin, 2018). The case study approach is also relevant to

answer a 'how' or 'why' research question. Using a qualitative exploratory case study

also enables participants to share their experiences on the subject of investigation. Denzin

(2017) and Yin (2017) explained that using a case study approach is fundamental to

establishing a construct. Yin (2018) stated that using an exploratory case study will

enable the phenomenon of interest to be explored through multiple perspectives.

Researchers implementing the case study approach will facilitate an in-depth

investigation of the population related to the phenomenon of interest.

I used purposeful sampling to select the study participants. The participants were

construction project leaders engaged in construction firms in Abuja, Nigeria, who

volunteered for the study. The participants were sourced using the researcher's network

of existing contacts of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) project leaders and

potential snowball sampling, which involves participants making referrals to recruit other

participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). I wrote a letter to NSE and

associated organizations that served as an invitation to take part in the research. I worked

with 15 project managers from five construction firms as participants in the study.

Data were collected from multiple sources, including semi-structured interviews,

reports from partner organizations, and the researcher's reflective field notes. I developed

standard open-ended interview questions that were reviewed and approved by my Chair.

The interview questions were developed in line with the purpose of the study and formed

part of the interview guide. The reports from partner organizations served as useful

instruments for triangulation with responses from participants. The reports included

project progress reports and annual performance reports. The reflective field notes refer

to the documentation of my observations during the interviews. I documented verbal

cues, personal emotions, and reactions that participants displayed. I recorded all

interviews with participants using a mobile digital recording device. Interviews were

conducted with project leaders in the Nigerian construction industry to capture the

participants' perceptions (Guest et al., 2006; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The participants

were sourced from members of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), Abuja chapter.

Participant Selection Logic

The participants for the study were construction project leaders engaged in

construction firms in Abuja, Nigeria, who volunteered for the study. According to Patton

(2015), the study population is the entire group the researcher refers to, while the sample

is the specific group from which data will be collected. In this study, the population was

comprised of project leaders in Nigeria, while the specific sample sizes were project

leaders of construction projects in the federal capital city (FCT). These samples were

chosen purposefully to ensure that data were collected from the right sources. The target

participants were specifically chosen for their expertise and experience to ensure that the

information gleaned is relevant and high-quality. I selected participants through

purposeful sampling, a technique in which the researcher relies on their judgment when

choosing population members to participate in the study (Maxwell, 2013; Suri, 2011).

Project leaders were chosen for the study because they are responsible for designing the

processes and methods for project success. Therefore, they should be knowledgeable

about the need for EI. The study interview locations were at the offices or locations of the

participants' choice.

Participants for the study were volunteers willing to share their knowledge and

experiences on leadership and EI through semi-structured interviews. The inclusion

criteria were designed to select the participants based on experience purposefully, the

scale of the project they were leading, the number of followers, and the project's location.

The inclusion criteria required for the participants were as follows:

- Ability to communicate in English

- Must be adult 18 years and above

- Must have worked in the construction industry for over 5 years with at least 2
  years of leadership experience

- Must be a project leader

- Must be a resident of Abuja

- Must have existing experience in leadership enhancement

I gathered information about the participants from my internal network before writing to the management of their organizations through emails to inform them about the potential interviews and obtain their permission for the individual to participate in the research process. I also asked participants for recommendations on other potential participants. Finally, I cross-checked the list to ensure that the participants met the selection criteria. I then sent a letter of invitation (Appendix A) and a consent form for the involvement of potential participants. Due to the COVID-19 protocols, the participants were allowed to choose their preferred interview options, such as Zoom or other video conferencing channels. Once the willingness to participate was confirmed, evidenced by consent to participate, I contacted the participants to agree on an interview date and time.

Guest et al. (2006) suggested that 12-15 participants can adequately provide data saturation. Data saturation is significant in qualitative research to enable the researcher to obtain quality data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Baker et al. (2012) posited that data saturation signifies the point during data collection where no additional significant information would be required. In support of the sample size and saturation, Mason (2010) mentioned that researchers should have a range that represents the point of diminishing return to a qualitative sample. At this point, any additional information will no longer make any new meaning to the data.

I worked with 15 project managers from five construction firms as participants in the study. Project managers were chosen for this study because they are directly responsible for providing first-level management and contact with construction

employees and, therefore, are knowledgeable about EI. The 15 participants arguably

provided the opportunity for diverse data that supported the study's conclusion. The

information gathered from the 15 participants provided enough data as sufficient

evidence to support the study's conclusion.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation suggests the process adopted by a researcher in collecting

multiple sources of data (Saldana, 2016). Collecting data from various sources is relevant

because it complements the other and helps validate the credibility of the data (Yin,

2017). I used three data sources in this study: a semi-structured interview, reports from

partner organizations, and my reflective field notes. According to Boyce and Neale

(2006), an interview is a guided conversation between the researcher and the respondent.

Boyce and Neale (2006) expressed that interviews involve the interaction between an

interviewer and an interviewee to obtain information from the interviewee's perspective.

The key feature of the interview is the interactive conversation between the people

involved. This conversation can be goal-driven to extract answers to specific questions in

a structured, controlled, and potentially flexible manner.

Jacob and Furgerson (2012) mentioned that the essential features of interviewing

in research include the structure, flexibility, and interactive nature of the communication.

Jacob and Furgerson expressed that the benefit of an interview is that it allows the

research participants to share information in their own words. This could also be a pitfall

because the freedom of how the respondents answer the questions could lead to social

desirability bias – a tendency to present reality to align with what is perceived as socially

acceptable (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). Yin (2017) purported that it takes a lot of effort and time to prepare interview processes, and in most cases, there is no guarantee that the respondents will respond with complete honesty.

The instrument must be developed in line with the purpose of the study and should be premised on the conceptual framework (Maxwell, 2013). Also, the interviews must be guided to provide answers to the research question (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Appendix B contains the interview questions for this study. In qualitative research, the researcher and participants are involved in the interviews to provide meaning to the research outcome (Maxwell, 2013). The interview protocol (Appendix C) provided an opportunity to answer the research question to achieve the study's goal. The concept of the interview guide was to create an opportunity for the participants to express their views and experiences, which gave me enough data to support the conclusion and answer the study's research question.

Jacob and Furgerson (2012) provided a protocol for conducting a successful interview. They included consideration of a topic of interest, the need for the research to guide your questions, the use of script from the beginning to the end of the interview, and the questions should be open-ended. They also advised starting with the basics, beginning with easy-to-answer questions, and then moving on to more challenging questions. The phrase 'tell me about' is a great way to start the question; the question should be big and expansive. The list of considerations also included the use of prompts, the need to make an on-the-spot revision of the interview questions, the interview should not be long, the need to practice with a friend or colleague, to set up a shorter second interview for clarity

on responses and to ask any question missed after transcription of the interview (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

Before the commencement of the interviews, I sent consent forms to selected participants to fill out and return to confirm their voluntary participation. I also notified participants of the interview protocols, including using an audio recorder to record the interviews. Ravitch and Carl (2016) mentioned that the interview guide is a key element. The interview guide directs the flow of interaction and directs the conversation. The interview guide also acts as the tool used to extract participants' experiences and answer the questions. The interview guide allows for close interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Ravitch and Carl (2016) posited that an interview guide enables the researcher to ask questions and further ask follow-up questions, invites the participants to provide as much information as possible for the researcher's analysis and allows participants to confirm the researcher's understanding of their response. The interviews were face-to-face as that was the participants' preference. Face-to-face interviews enable the interviewer and interviewees to have close interaction and discussion. Face-to-face interviews also enable the interviewer to observe the verbal cues and behavioral patterns of interviewees (Opdenakker, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Such observations are recorded on the researcher's reflective field notes for reference during the interpretation of data. The interview questions were open-ended to stimulate deeper discussion (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The questions were aimed at understanding the respondent's perceptions regarding how they give meaning to EI. The idea of the

questions was derived using the interview protocol proposed in the works of Jacob and Furgerson (2012).

According to Smith and Smith (2018), '*how*´ and '*what'* questions should be considered rather than *'why'* when developing qualitative research questions. This provides the opportunity to obtain in-depth information on the subject matter of the study. The questions were designed with openness to allow for fresh ideas and free-flowing conversation. The interview guide was tested with two experts on qualitative methodology to validate the content: Professor Abdullahi Adamu, an agronomist, a researcher and senior lecturer with Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria, and Professor Shehu Danjuma, an organizational development expert, a researcher and senior lecturer with Musa Yar'Adua University, Katsina, Nigeria, to review and establish alignment with the research question and conceptual frameworks.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The study was conducted using semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the participants, reviewed published industry documents, observations, and reflective field notes. I commenced data collection after I obtained Walden University's IRB approval. The approvals were attached and sent to the prospective participants to inform them of the study and request them to be potential participants. The first step in the recruitment process was identifying participants that could answer the developed interview questions. As a member of the NSE, engineers are engaged in various construction projects in Abuja, Nigeria. The application for participant recruitment was made on the NSE forum. When participants were insufficient, the alternative recruitment plan was using my

networks and snowballing selection technique: a referral process that allows research participants to recruit other participants for the study (Patton, 2002).

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with project leaders leading construction projects in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Published reports were sourced from libraries and the official websites of partner organizations. Field notes were collected at the point of contact with participants. Participants for the study were volunteers willing to share their knowledge and experiences on leadership and EI through semi-structured interviews. I was responsible for collecting data, recording data as well as analyzing the data. I used an audio recorder to record the interviews.

The interview duration was between 15-35 minutes. Participants were allowed to choose a convenient date, time, and location within their offices for their interviews. All interviews were done face-to-face as that was the preferred method by participants. Rubin and Rubin (2012) and Castillo-Montoya (2016) outlined the interview stages to include the interviewer introducing themselves, introducing the topic, obtaining permission to record, and taking notes. Others are to present the purpose of the research, what the researcher is planning to do with the information, appreciate the interviewee for agreeing to contribute to the research, and provide reassurance of the adopted process (Guest et al., 2006; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Rubin and Rubin expressed that interviewers should demonstrate respect for interviewees during interviews. Also, the interviews should begin with simple questions before progressing to difficult ones (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Reflexivity was used to obtain information from the field notes and observations concerning responses from the interviews, such as recording non-verbal cues. Ravitch

and Carl (2016) noted that the recording of non-verbal cues displayed by interviewees has been documented as relevant clues in understanding the disposition of participants on the matter of study. Follow-up questions were asked to assure the interviewees knew the interviewer understood what they said to support the participants' disposition. The transcribed data was stored in password-protected devices to prevent unauthorized persons from gaining access to the data.

The interview and data collection process remained open so that participants could have the opportunity to exit at any time they felt uncomfortable proceeding with the process. I established participants' confidence in the study through a debriefing session. Collins et al. (2012) explained that debriefing is a process whereby a researcher shares the study outcomes with participants to establish the study's credibility. In the debriefing session, the participants were assured of anonymity by ensuring that the name of the projects was not mentioned and numeric interview response numbers only identified the participants. Also, efforts were made to ensure that no names were identified during the interview process. Handling participants was done using the expected ethical standards of The Walden University IRB expectations. The study did not need to deal with vulnerable members of society. Participants were notified that their engagement in the study was voluntary. In the case of a follow-up interview, the procedures were repeated and followed again.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis signifies the analytical procedures employed during research that leads to understanding the information obtained from the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The steps involve transcribing the data and selecting codes, themes, and patterns that give a researcher meaning to the data. In data analysis, the information collected from various sources is reviewed and interpreted to give meaning to the data. The data analysis procedure should provide answers to the research question. The interview transcript, field notes, and other data were the text that was analyzed to provide meaning to the information and answer the research question.

Researchers have identified various forms of data analysis, including thematic content analysis, grounded theory, and sociolinguistic methods (Smith & Firth, 2011). Thematic content analysis is used when the research interprets participants' responses (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The grounded theory is mainly used when the research outcome is planned toward developing a theory. Sociolinguistics is used when the procedure involves exploring the interpretation of certain definitive language and providing meaning to a discourse (Smith & Firth, 2011). In this study, I used thematic content analysis for the data analysis. Using thematic content analysis enabled me to review, interpret and make meaning to the data from the participant's responses. I searched for codes from the transcribed data and aggregated codes to form themes. From the themes, I identified patterns that provided meaning to the data. Doing this ensured that subjectivity was maintained to avoid biases. One key weakness of content thematic analysis in qualitative data interpretation is bias (Attride-Stirling, 2001). To avoid misinterpretation of the data, I ensured that the codes were developed from the participants' direct quotes. I was mindful of the procedure to ensure I did not get too close to the data and make expected judgments rather than interpret it as it was. I avoided my prior knowledge and

understanding of the phenomenon of study to guide my judgment and interpretation of the data. I was also aware of the possibility of presuming the outcome of the interpretation of the data.

I ensured that appropriate procedures were observed and implemented to achieve the integrity of the study. I use Otter speech-to-text application to transcribe the data and NVivo to analyze the data. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis (QDA) software with features to electronically analyze transcribed data and generate codes and themes (Pat Research, 2020). Using NVivo helped reduce the time that manual coding procedures may take (Pat Research, 2020). However, using QDA in analyzing data has also been known to have certain limitations (Peters & Wester, 2007). The use of QDA separates the researcher from the data, providing codes and themes that may not define the study's objective nor provide the depth of analysis that the study may require (Peters & Wester, 2007). Thus, in this study, I supported using NVivo with manual coding and interpretation of the data. Yin (2017) mentioned that the next step in data analysis is interpreting the data meaning making sense of the data. The process of interpretation consisted of comparing literature findings with identified themes and patterns to establish similarities or differences. The interpretation of the data was conducted in line with the central research question and the conceptual frameworks and compared with the reviewed literature.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness signifies a process that allows a researcher to confirm that the research outcome is a product of the participants' experiences and realities (Ravitch &

Carl, 2016). I controlled the data sources by ensuring the literature review was from peer-reviewed journals, books, and officially accredited websites. I ensured that the data was obtained from participants who have experience in leadership in construction project management. The responses provided by participants were also cross-checked with information from secondary sources. Lincoln and Guba (1985) listed four processes for which trustworthiness can be attained in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research involves systematically collecting data through an established procedure (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I collected data from a purposefully selected sample size with strict adherence to the criteria set up by the research. Bell et al. (2014) added that supplementary and follow-up engagements with the participants after the first interview, treatment of discrepancy cases, and debriefing procedure could be a good strategy for ensuring creditability in research. Ravitch and Carl identified strategies to ensure credibility, including triangulation, using participants for validating data collated, feedback from participants, and engagement with other researchers through peer-reviewed methods. I used triangulation techniques that included audiotape recording, field notes, and observations to safeguard or ensure a complete and accurate understanding of the participants' perspectives of the research subject matter (Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014). Bengtsson (2016) acknowledged that the use of methodological and data source triangulation is acceptable in qualitative research and increases the internal credibility of the study.

Transferability

Chowdhury (2015) stated that transferability refers to whether particular findings can be transferred to a similar context or situation while preserving the meaning and inferences from the completed study. The construction industry in Nigeria is the target of the study. However, as projects vary, the potential findings of this study can be transferred to other settings where project leaders are required to have some level of EI to achieve success in their tasks. The selection of project leaders as the research subjects indicated that the conclusion might be transferable to various sectors (Robinson, 2014). Robinson highlighted that describing the details of the context of the case study and providing detailed descriptions helps improve the transferability for other researchers to replicate the study. A detailed description of the outcome of a study will provide learning to scholars and enable the study to be replicated in other settings (Burkholder et al., 2016). I presented the study's conclusion in a descriptive narrative form that made the study easy to understand and transferable to other settings.

Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Patton (2015) acknowledged the essence of ensuring dependability in research to maintain consistency and reasonably reproduce discoveries from the collected data. Patton expressed that dependability relates to a researcher's ability to repeat the study with the same participants, yield the same results, and arrive at a similar conclusion. In this study, I established dependability by addressing the following: (a) provided a detailed explanation of the research design and its implementations to enable easy replication, (b) presented a step-by-step detailed data

collection process, as well as any concerns or constraints found in the field while

collecting data, (c) provided a detailed depiction of data analysis and clarification

procedures, and (d) documented changing conditions of the study phenomenon from the

interactions with the participants.

Confirmability

Confirmability describes how the research findings are determined by the

participants' responses rather than the researcher's biases (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Tangney et al. (2007) mentioned that declaring, acknowledging, and isolating personal

biases and interests would help ensure the neutrality of the data and maintain the product

of the data emanating from the participants. To ensure the confirmability of the study, I

used direct quotes from participants' responses in my analysis and interpretation of data. I

avoided biases by not allowing my knowledge of the phenomenon to influence the

analysis. I believe this could mitigate bias and personal interpretation.

Ethical Procedures

I sought the permission of the Walden University IRB before commencing data

collection for the ethical security of the research participants. The ethical consideration

for this study relating to the IRB is informed consent, confidentiality, and protection of

the rights of human subjects in research (Turner & Webb, 2014). I ensured that all

applicable institutional approvals and licenses for gaining informed consent were granted.

I used letters to invite and inform participants of the relevance of their involvement in the

study. I also informed respective participants about the audio recording of the interview,

which was solely for reviewing notetaking and transcription purposes. The protocol for

conducting interviews was followed, and participants were informed that they could exit the research at any time they felt uncomfortable with the research.

The second consideration is respecting the participants' privacy and anonymity. Anonymity suggests that the identities of research participants should be adequately protected (Angelica et al., 2001). The data collected was confidential and shared only with the participants and the interviewers. The participants' names or any other personal information were not shared. I also disclosed how the information collected was used for the study. To respect the perspectives of participants, the issue of bias is one I took seriously. I followed the procedures outlined by Walden University's IRB in the conduct of the study (Walden University, 2020). This implies that the study participants were volunteers who had filled out and submitted their consent forms. Before the commencement of any interview, the participants were briefed on the purpose of the research, the confidentially of any information provided, and their freedom to end the interview at any point. I also ensured that no harm was suffered by any participant before, during, or after the interviews. The do no harm approach during interviews has been found to create participants' confidence in responding (Babbie, 2017; Burkholder et al., 2016).

After data collection, I stored the respondents' data in secured folders on my computer to ensure they were kept safe and not easily accessed. The stored data will be preserved and kept for 5 years. Though the nature of the data collected does not indicate high risk, I will take appropriate measures to delete all information by formatting the data storage hard drive after 5 years. Another ethical issue is a conflict of interest and potential

power differentials. The participants were not part of my organization. Therefore, they

had full independence on how questions were answered and how perspectives were

narrated without my influence or fear of backlash for participating in the study. The study

did not attract compensation, but the potential findings were shared with the participants,

which could benefit their development as project leaders.

Summary

In this chapter, I covered the research design and rationale for the study. I used a

qualitative exploratory case study approach to understand and interpret first-hand

information on the perceptions and experiences of how EI could enhance the

effectiveness of Nigerian construction project leaders during periods of uncertainty. The

research design was chosen to align the study's purpose, research question, and

conceptual framework. The data collection methods were from multiple sources,

including the firms' policy documents, reflective notes, and conducting semi-structured

in-depth face-to-face, interviews using a digital recording device until data saturation was

achieved with the participants. I used purposeful sampling to select the study participants.

The participants were construction project leaders engaged in construction firms in

Abuja, Nigeria, who volunteered for the study. In this study, I was the instrument for data

collection and analysis. Data analysis was done using thematic content analysis to

provide meaning to the data. The NVivo QDA software was used as a tool for data

analysis.

To guide me in the process of conducting interviews, I used an interview protocol.

The process regarding the issue of trustworthiness was also presented. I controlled the

data sources by ensuring that the literature review was only peer-reviewed journals. I cross-checked the data collected from the interview respondents so that only credible respondents participated in the study. I also presented how the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were established. The ethical procedure involving issues such as how participants were protected, privacy and confidentiality, data storage, and power differentials were strictly observed in the conduct of the study. In Chapter 4, I provided details of the research settings, participants' demography, data collection analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and study results.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. This study may help to fill the gap in the current literature on how project leaders could utilize EI to increase their effectiveness in project management during periods of uncertainty in Nigeria. To conduct this study, I used 15 semi-structured interview questions to gather information in response to the central research question. The various responses from the participants were triangulated with the content from my reflective field notes and annual reports from the partner organizations. In this chapter, I described the research setting, the participants' demographics, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, evidence of trustworthiness, and the study results. I concluded the chapter with a summary and transitioned to Chapter 5.

Research Setting

I conducted this study in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria, in quiet locations at the participants' offices after regular business hours. I allowed participants to choose the locations and interview times for their comfort. I also ensured that the settings were quiet environments where no one else could hear or observe the discussion. There were no interruptions during the interviews. I did not observe any personal or organizational conditions of participants that may have influenced their experiences at the time of study or the interpretation of study results.

Demographics

Table 4 shows the demographic configuration of the 15 participants that I interviewed. Eleven participants were males, and four were females. All the participants were construction project leaders from five different construction firms. I assigned each participant a pseudonym from P01 to P15. The pseudonyms were given to protect the participants' identities and uphold their confidentiality. There was no vulnerable participant, as specified by Walden University IRB.

Table 4

Participants' Demographics

Participant	Sex	Educational level	Years of work experience	Years as a leader (Manager)
P01	Male	B.Eng, M.Eng	11	8
P02	Male	B.Eng	14	9
P03	Male	B.Sc	10	7
P04	Male	HND, PGD	16	12
P05	Female	BEng	8	4
P06	Male	B.Sc, M.Sc	12	6
P07	Female	HND	9	5
P08	Male	B.Sc	12	7
P09	Female	B.Sc	8	5
P10	Male	HND, PGD	15	9
P11	Male	B.Sc	14	9
P12	Male	B.Eng	16	11
P13	Female	B.Sc, M.Sc	13	8
P14	Male	B.Eng	12	7
P15	Male	B.Eng	10	6

Note: B.Eng – Bachelor of Engineering; B.Sc – Bachelor of Science; M.Eng – Master of Engineering; M.Sc – Master of Science; HND – Higher National Diploma; PGD – Post Graduate Diploma.

Data Collection

Three data collection methods were used for the study: semi-structured interviews, information from my reflective field notes, and reports from the partner

organizations. My field notes and reports from partner organizations served as secondary

data. I began collecting data after obtaining approval from Walden University's IRB

(approval number is 08-24-22-0763211). I recruited the participants for the study using

the following procedure. First, I contacted the partners' organizations with details of the

study and inclusion criteria to obtain a list of potential participants (construction

managers) and their contact information. I then sent an email to the potential participants

describing the study and the inclusion criteria for the study. I eliminated some from

consideration to obtain the required number of participants based on those who met the

criteria.

I ensured that participants were willing to participate voluntarily in the study.

Then, I sent a consent form along with a letter of interview electronically to the selected

participants to confirm their participation and ask about their preferred interview options.

After the participants confirmed their willingness and volunteered to participate, I sent

them a confirmation of the interview appointment. The 15 participants provided sufficient

data to achieve data saturation, as further information could not be obtained after the 10th

participant. All the participants preferred face-to-face interviews and were accommodated

accordingly. I conducted the interviews following the process outlined in the interview

protocol (Appendix C). The study sites were the offices of the participants. The

participants also chose the time for interviews and specific locations.

Interviews

I conducted all the interviews with an audio recorder. I made sure to obtain

permission from participants before using the audio recorder. I used 12 open-ended

interview questions to obtain responses from the participants (Appendix B). I also

followed the process in the interview guide to conduct the interviews. The interviews

were conducted and concluded within 11 days. I conducted face-to-face interviews with

all participants since that was their preferred option. I was using face-to-face interviews

to gather data created an atmosphere for mutual interaction and open discussion.

Though some participants expressed that the concept of EI was new to them, they

were willing to share their personal experiences. The interviews lasted between 14-32

minutes. The open-ended interview questions created the opportunity to probe deeper

during the interviews. The responses from participants were transcribed using Otter.ai

transcription software immediately after each interview and saved as a Microsoft Word

document. I reached data saturation with the 10th participant when new information was

no longer obtained. The transcribed information was then cross-checked with participants

to affirm the authenticity after I completed the data transcription. The transcribed data

were saved electronically on my laptop with a password. There were no unusual

circumstances that I came across during the data collection.

Reflective Field Notes

The information in my reflective field notes were the outcomes of my reflections

on participants' expressions and behavioral displays during the interviews. I also used

reflective field notes to document participants' relevant statements. With some of the

participants, discussing leadership effectiveness using EI was interesting and

overwhelming. The reflective notes recorded my observations about their passions and

awe. Such captured expressions have relevance to the interpretation of data.

Reports From the Partner Organizations

I used reports from partner organizations as secondary data sources for the study. The reports contained information about the performance of the participants' projects within different periods of the year. The reports also contained an analysis of project performance indicators, the causes of such performance, and comments about employees' and managers' roles that led to such performance. The reports equally detailed which managers were rewarded, demoted, or warned during such periods, indicating leadership effectiveness. Some of the responses obtained from participants were substantiated with information from the organizations' reports.

Transcript Review

I carried out a transcript review. The transcript review process enables participants to confirm and validate the data to represent their responses during the interview. I sent the transcribed data to participants through their emails to cross-check and confirm its authenticity. I also asked participants to make changes where necessary on the transcribed data if what was transcribed did not reflect their position and return the document to me within 3 days. Some participants made minor changes and corrections that did not affect the overall content of the transcribed data.

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Data Analysis

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Data analysis is the process where the data already collated from the field are assembled, coded, and extracted to obtain meaning (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In qualitative research, data analysis is conducted to obtain themes that indicate participants' views (Saldana, 2016). I conducted the data analysis using Yin's (2017) five phases of analysis:

assemble, collect, interpret, disassemble, and conclude the data. I conducted the data analysis after the transcript review. The various expressions from the transcribed data were delineated to form codes, categories, and themes that provided answers to the central research question. I used NVivo 12 for Windows and a manual process to conduct the data analysis.

To obtain codes from the transcribed data, I checked, marked out, and highlighted similar words and phrases (see Table 2). I grouped similar codes to obtain categories and combined these categories to obtain themes that provided answers to the central research question. This process of selecting codes and categories and matching them to obtain themes utilizes an inductive approach in qualitative research to produce or expand on a theory (Saunders et al., 2018). The themes that emerged from the transcribed data provided an understanding of participants' perceptions of how emotional intelligence could be used to enhance leadership effectiveness among construction project managers. The description of the themes is stated in Table 5, and an analysis of the themes is indicated in Table 6. There were no discrepant cases in the data.

Table 5

Codes, Categories, and Themes From the Transcribed Data

Code	Category	Theme
A leader should always know about the feelings and emotions of their subordinates	Know the feelings of subordinates	Project leaders should observe the emotions of their subordinates
Good leadership involves proper observation of the followers' emotions	Leadership involves observing followers' emotions	
Many leaders do not express their feelings to their workers	Express your feelings to your subordinates	Project leaders should communicate their feelings to their subordinates
Leaders need to tell their workers how they feel always	Communicate feelings to workers	
Leaders need to know that their behaviors affect their workers	Leaders' behaviors affect their workers	Project leaders should be conscious of how their behaviors affect their subordinates
Many leaders do not know how their behaviors affect workers	Be conscious of how your behaviors affect your workers	
Many leaders are not considerate to their workers when making decisions	Leaders should be empathetic when making decisions	Project leaders should always be empathetic in their decision making
Leaders need to consider the feelings of their subordinates when making decisions	Leaders should consider their subordinates' feelings in decision making	
Many leaders do not teach or provide guidance to their workers	Leadership involves providing guidance to subordinates	Project leaders should coach their subordinates to develop their own EI
Leaders should educate their workers how to manage their feelings and emotions	Leaders should coach subordinates on EI	
The style of a leader will always determine how they relate with subordinates	Leadership is related to EI	Project leaders should be aware of their leadership styles when relating with their subordinates
Leadership style is important when relating with workers	Leadership style is related to EI	

Table 6

Description of Themes

Theme	Description
Project leaders should observe the emotions of their subordinates.	Participants explained the need for project construction leaders to be sensitive to the emotions of their subordinates and inquire to understand why such emotions are displayed.
Project leaders should communicate their feelings to their subordinates.	Participants want construction project leaders to openly communicate their emotions and feelings to their subordinates to enhance their working relationships for improved project performance.
Project leaders should be conscious of how their behaviors affect their subordinates.	Participants expressed that the behaviors of project leaders have impact on their working relationships with their subordinates. Thus, there is need for project leaders to be conscious and aware of how their behaviors could affect their subordinates.
Project leaders should always be empathetic in their decision-making.	Participants explained that project leaders should be empathetic to the feelings and emotions of their subordinates in decision-making to relate and work amicably.
Project leaders should coach their subordinates to develop their own EI.	Participants expressed that project leaders need to coach and train their subordinates on how to develop and use EI in the workplace for enhanced performance.
Project leaders should be aware of their leadership styles when relating with their subordinates	Participants explained that project leaders have different leadership styles, thus, there is need for leaders to be aware of their styles of leadership and use such to improve their relationship with subordinates.

Table 7

Analysis on Themes

Theme	Category/Pattern	Participants responses	
		Total number of occurrences	Percentage of occurrences (%)
Project leaders should observe the emotions of their subordinates	Know the feelings of subordinates	15	100
	Leadership involves observing followers' emotions	13	86
Project leaders should communicate their feelings to their subordinates	Express your feelings to your subordinates	14	93
	Communicate feelings to workers	11	73
Project leaders should be conscious of how their behaviors affect their subordinates	Leaders' behaviors affect their workers	14	93
	Be conscious of how your behaviors affect your workers	14	93
Project leaders should always be empathetic in their decision making	Leaders should be empathetic when making decisions	13	86
	Leaders should consider their subordinates' feelings in decision making	14	93
Project leaders should coach their subordinates to develop their own EI	Leadership involves providing guidance to subordinates	12	80
	Leaders should coach subordinates on EI	13	86
Project leaders should be aware of their leadership styles when relating with their subordinates	Leadership is related to EI	9	60
	Leadership style is related to EI	11	73

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research connotes the measure of the value of truth in the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the measures used to ascertain credibility include triangulation, member-checking, prolonged engagement, and peer debriefing. I used triangulation, prolonged engagement, and member-checking in this study as primary instruments to establish credibility. The data for the study were collected from multiple sources, including semi-structured interviews, my own reflective notes, and reports from partner organizations. Information obtained from the interviews was triangulated with existing literature resources and cross-checked with partner organizations' reports. Participants authenticated the transcribed data through transcript review and member-checking. Sending transcripts to the participants to review and provide input helped prolong their study engagement. Only participants who met the inclusion criteria were selected for the study, which also reinforces the credibility.

Transferability

Transferability infers the degree to which qualitative research findings can have applicability in other settings or contexts (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This implies that the research outcome can be replicated using different respondents within different contexts. Thus, transferability is synonymous with generalization or external validity in quantitative research (Shenton, 2004). Shenton (2004) expressed that transferability is attained in a study when details of the phenomenon can be transferred and compared with other corresponding studies. In this study, I provided a detailed literature background and

description of the phenomenon and compared the themes from the transcribed data with the existing literature. I also expanded the context in which the phenomenon is investigated and explained the research method and design used in the study to help other researchers conduct similar studies in other settings and contexts. The analysis of results using the conceptual study frameworks may also serve as a basis for other researchers to learn and investigate the phenomenon in different settings.

Dependability

Dependability implies that the results of a study are reliable, consistent, and repeatable in other environments (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the results of a study should establish consistency in the interpretation and conclusion of the data when conducted in similar circumstances by other researchers. Lincoln and Guba (1985) advocated using audit inquiry to attain dependability in qualitative research. Audit inquiry may help reduce errors and biases and provide a measure of consistency in research outcomes (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). An audit inquiry involves the engagement of external experts to assess and examine the processes used in the conduct of the study to give external validation of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, I engaged two experts on qualitative methodology to review the interview guide and interview questions and assess their appropriateness for providing answers to the central research question. The review provided by these two experts validated the process that generated the final study outcomes. I also used coding procedures to analyze the data. The emergence of themes from the coding procedures

explains that the results can be replicated and consistent when conducted in other contexts.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the outcomes of a study can be verified by other researchers (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Ravitch and Carl (2016) expressed that in qualitative research, confirmability is concerned with providing evidence that the study results are true reflections of the participants' responses rather than the assumptions and biases of the researcher. Shenton (2004) listed reflexivity, positionality, and audit trail as processes that can be used to attain confirmability. I used the statements and quotes directly from the participants' responses in this study to analyze the data. Such direct quotes help to prevent biases and personal interpretations of the data. The use of direct quotes from participants provided reflexivity in the interpretation of the data.

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Study Results

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The study results are arranged and presented based on the themes that emerged from the analysis of the transcribed data. The themes were identified after a rigorous process of coding. The themes explain how construction project leaders in Nigeria may engage EI to enhance leadership effectiveness during periods of uncertainty. No discrepant or incompatible data were substantial to affect the study results. I used direct quotes from participants to demonstrate the confirmability of the study. Six themes were obtained from the transcribed data that provided answers to the central research question: (a) project leaders should observe the emotions of their subordinates, (b) project leaders should communicate their feelings to their subordinates, (c) project leaders should be

conscious of how their behaviors affect their subordinates, (d) project leaders should always be empathetic in their decision making, (e) project leaders should coach their subordinates to develop their own EI, and (f) project leaders should be aware of their leadership styles when relating with their subordinates.

Theme 1: Project Leaders Should Observe the Emotions of Their Subordinates

Participants explained the need for project construction leaders to be sensitive to the emotions of their subordinates and inquire to understand why such emotions are displayed. According to the participants, some construction project leaders have not developed any interest in knowing and understanding the feelings of their workplace subordinates. Participants believed that due to pressures from superior management to deliver targets, some project leaders are solely committed to work-related issues without considering the workers' emotions. The emotional dynamics of workers within any work environment have a significant bearing on their productivity. A project manager who understands workers' emotions will develop appropriate strategies to relate and work better with such workers. Some participants, however, expressed that project leaders relate with their subordinates differently. While some leaders are selective and may favor a few individuals in the team, some may be blatant in their relationship with subordinates. Some participants explained that the COVID-19 mayhem had changed the pattern in which the work environment operates. For instance, P04 emphasized that "human and social interactions have greatly reduced due to the phobia of the pandemic, thus, negatively impacting work productivity." P11 expressed that "since the COVID-19

pandemic, people's tolerance level in the workplace has reduced immensely due to anxiety about human interactions".

The participants stressed that project managers who demonstrate an effective relationship with subordinates by understanding their emotions would achieve a higher project success level than those who apply fewer social skills. They stated that project managers are more concerned with how employees behave and not how they feel. P07 explained that

Emotions are infectious. The emotions expressed by a worker could have deleterious effects on other workers. Besides, most of the behaviors exhibited by workers are only outward expressions of their inner feelings. So how employees feel should be of concern to project managers.

Similarly, P10 expressed:

Most of the positive or negative behaviors displayed by employees are feelings emanating from societal influences. Thus, employees whose emotions are recognized and valued have a higher tendency to be more positive and productive. The reverse also applies. Employees who feel that their emotions are not recognized may demonstrate negative behaviors and apathy in the workplace.

A number of the participants highlighted that workers will always want their emotions to be recognized and appreciated. Some participants equally expressed that emotions are strong indications or clues of problems or issues that need to be resolved. Accordingly, project managers need to be sensitive to observe and engage these workers to provide relief. P09 expressed:

To be sensitive and observant of the emotions and feelings of subordinates is part of a leader's responsibility to enhance project team performance. A leader should always know the feelings and emotions of their subordinates. A leader not sensitive to observing and knowing their subordinates' feelings may jeopardize that team's performance.

P06 also collaborated; thus, "Good leadership involves proper observation of the followers' emotions." When I asked how they have been able to observe the emotions of their subordinates, some participants expressed that though they have not consciously done that, they know that observing and appreciating employees' emotions is important to a team's success in project management.

The existing literature supports the need for construction project leaders to observe employees' emotions in project management. Montenegro et al. (2021) stated that most project failures in construction projects had been attributed to the inability of project leaders to identify employees' emotional dispositions at the workplace and relate with them appropriately. Montenegro et al. stressed that many project leaders lack the social skills to relate to and build strong teams. This implies that a project manager with strong social skills can build effective relationships with subordinates to achieve better project performance. Project managers have always placed technical abilities above social skills, thus, limiting the performance level of their subordinates (Montenegro et al., 2021). Cherniss and Roche (2020) highlighted that the ability of construction project leaders to identify and perceive emotional issues among their subordinates is critical to enable them to formulate strategies to deal with such issues. They stated that the display by a worker

of certain non-verbal cues could be a pointer to the existence of an emotional problem that needs to be resolved. Accordingly, there is a need for construction project leaders to learn how to observe the emotions of their subordinates at the workplace and develop positive approaches to deal with such emotions. The reports from the partner organizations did not provide any information on project managers' role in observing workers' emotions. Instead, the reports indicated the performance or non-performance of various projects implemented by these organizations.

Theme 2: Project Leaders Should Communicate Their Feelings to Their Subordinates

Participants want construction project leaders to openly communicate their emotions and feelings to their subordinates to enhance their working relationships for improved project performance. The participants expressed that construction project leaders should always communicate their feelings to subordinates. Good communication will promote an understanding of how employees relate and work better with their leaders. When employees understand the emotions of their leader, the conflict will be reduced to enhance productivity in the team. When a leader communicates his or her feelings to subordinates, contrary and reactional emotions may be avoided. Thus, the leader's ability to communicate effectively about their emotions to the subordinates will help to strengthen the relationship between the leader and subordinates. According to the participants, several interpersonal conflicts and misunderstandings within the workplace result from the lack of proper communication. Employees will always feel safer and more confident working with a manager who communicates their emotions. P12 expressed that

"The ability to communicate personal emotions to the subordinates significantly impacts how employees will relate with their leader. Improved communication will create strengthened relationships between the leader and subordinates to enhance increased project performance". P08 stated, "a leader's ability to communicate their emotions and feelings to the subordinates will create strong positive meanings and reciprocating response. Effective communication between the leader and subordinates will help to regulate emotions and create better relationship building". P01 also emphasized that "a leader that shares their feelings will enable the subordinates to have a better understanding of that person and relate well with the leader."

Some participants expressed that communicating personal emotions by a leader to subordinates is important in building an interpersonal relationship. Many project leaders find it difficult to do so. According to the participants, the reason for this is that many project leaders are scared of telling their subordinates how they feel to avoid becoming vulnerable to the workers. A manager's vulnerability to subordinates could generate a more damaging impact on project implementation and performance. P07 stated, "Though many leaders do not express their feelings to their workers, such habit is not without reason. Communication signifies open expression, and such expressions, if not properly presented, could have a boomeranging effect on the manager". P14, however, emphasized that "Leaders need to tell their workers how they feel always. Telling workers how they feel will improve the working relationship and improve project performance rather than not communicating with workers".

The existing literature supported the views of participants. Cherniss and Roche (2020) expressed that leaders must express their feelings to their subordinates. A leader who expresses their emotions (positive or negative) will command great influence on the subordinates. They stressed that the boss's feelings at the time would determine the response or reaction of the subordinates. For instance, a leader who displays anger most time will receive a reciprocating negative reaction from the subordinates. Contrarily, a leader expressing excitement could inspire employees to act equally to improve project performance. Djofang and Fofack (2022) asserted that good communication between a leader regarding their emotions to employees will help reduce anger, frustration, and confusion in the workplace. They stressed that a leader's ability to communicate their emotions is a way of transferring such emotions to their subordinates. The reports from the partner organizations indicated reporting lines between project managers and subordinates. Some reports indicated reasons for high or low performance, including rewards and motivation from the managers.

Theme 3: Project Leaders Should be Conscious of How Their Behaviors Affect Their Subordinates

Participants expressed that the behaviors of project leaders impact their working relationships with their subordinates. Thus, there is a need for project leaders to be conscious and aware of how their behaviors could affect their subordinates. According to the participants, construction project leaders play an important role in building the personality of team members. A leader with strong personality consciousness will positively influence the lives of subordinates. Thus, the emotions of leaders, such as their

moods per time and how such moods influence their external behaviors, could impact the moods and behaviors of workers. Consequently, there is a need for project leaders to be aware of their behaviors and how they relate with their subordinates with such behaviors. The behavior of a leader could create a healthy or toxic work environment. Positive behaviors from leaders could motivate and inspire workers to high productivity. Employees are followers, and leaders' behaviors will always influence or motivate them accordingly. One of the participants, P15 expressed:

> Different managers exhibit different behavioral patterns. Managers behave differently in the workplace. Good behaviors will motivate workers for higher productivity and performance. The reverse also happens. When a manager is harsh or moody, workers tend to work with fear, and higher productivity cannot be achieved in such environments.

Similarly, P04 explained:

> Leaders tend to demonstrate different forms of behaviors within different situations. This implies that the work situations per time influence the behavior of leaders. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, construction managers were mostly hysterical, which influenced them to make certain hasty decisions. We are still recovering from the effect of some of those decisions.

> Consequently, managers should be conscious of their behaviors and how they

affect their subordinates' relationships. One participant, P13, emphatically stated, "Many leaders do not know that their behaviors affect workers. Some project leaders operate like supermen without consideration to the feelings of their subordinates. But in reality, it is

the behavior of the leader that determines the behavior of the workers". P05 corroborated

this position. P05 asserted, "Leaders need to know that their behaviors affect their

workers. Most of the behaviors you see among workers in the field are reflections of the

behaviors of their managers".

The existing literature validated the position of participants. Fianko et al. (2020)

stated that leaders who are conscious of their emotions and behaviors toward their

subordinates lead better and manage projects more effectively. They stressed that poor

leadership in behavioral skills results in loss of confidence among team members, low

creativity of employees, high frequency of employee turnover, and a generally toxic

atmosphere in their organization. The consciousness of leaders on their behaviors can

bring out the best inputs and behaviors from their team members resulting in the

achievement of organizational goals. Fareed et al. (2021) also stated that leadership

consciousness of their behaviors is an aspect of social awareness with a high tendency to

promote internal and external social dynamics for improved work relationships. They

emphasized that effective social environments will most likely result in project success.

Unfortunately, the reports from the organizations did not contain information about the

conscious awareness behaviors of project managers.

Theme 4: Project Leaders Should Always be Empathetic in Their Decision Making

Participants explained that project leaders should be empathetic to the feelings

and emotions of their subordinates in decision-making to relate and work amicably.

Empathy is all about giving consideration to the emotions of others. Empathy involves

the ability to know and understand how others feel about any particular issue. A good

leader must sense how their followers feel, be able to interpret such feelings, and respond accordingly. Being empathetic means that you put yourself in the shoes of others. An empathetic leader will always create an atmosphere of mutual respect with their followers. The participants stressed that a leader who demonstrates empathy would have a better understanding of their subordinate's behaviors and be able to respond positively. An empathetic leader will have the capacity to promote strong interpersonal relationships with subordinates. According to P06, "It is important for project leaders to recognize the feelings of their subordinates when making decisions. Such actions will consider the expectations and yearnings of their subordinates".

Some participants were definite and unequivocal while explaining the concept of empathy and leadership relationships with their subordinates. According to P10,

Workers might express their emotions differently. Most of which are expressed through non-verbal cues. But in whatever way they are expressed, a good leader must show interest and create opportunities for such issues to be resolved. In addition, an empathetic leader will demonstrate a higher degree of commitment to the needs of workers, thus building trust and strong interpersonal relationships with subordinates.

P12 expressed, "Though workers enjoy freedom with leaders who have concern over the issues that concerns them, many leaders are not considerate to their workers when making decisions." Effective decision-making is vital in project management, but such decisions need to consider workers' needs, feelings, and expectations. Accordingly, leaders need to consider the feelings of their subordinates when making decisions.

The existing literature supported the position of participants on the need for leaders to consider workers when making decisions in the workplace. Cherniss and Roche (2020) emphasized that a leader concerned with organizational and project performance will have the subordinates' understanding and viewpoints before a decision is actualized. Knowing how others feel about a matter will enable the leader to know how to relate with the people affected by the decision. Moon (2021) stressed that leaders with good emotional understanding will always create opportunities for better analysis of situations before making critical decisions. The implication is that good leadership involves participatory decision-making to avoid or mitigate conflicts in the workplace. The reports from the partner organizations did not contain information on decision-making except for strategic plans on how to improve project performance.

Theme 5: Project Leaders Should Coach Their Subordinates to Develop Their Own EI

Participants expressed that project leaders need to coach and train their subordinates on how to develop and use EI in the workplace for enhanced performance. The participants stressed that coaching concerns how leaders interact with their team members. In coaching, the leader can understand each team member's specific role and strength, then provide guidance and support to promote personal growth and development. Coaching is not a one-off event. It is a continuous process of providing support and empowerment to employees to enhance their effectiveness. Coaching stimulates learning. Coaching makes for close interactions and engagement between the leader and subordinates. The participants emphasized that coaching would enable the

leader to identify the unique skills and talents inherent in their team members. Coaching

brings about value and personal recognition and helps employees improve their tasks.

Coaches inspire their subordinates and help them to realize their goals. P13 emphasized:

> Many leaders do not teach or provide guidance to their workers. A leader that is a
>
> coach will exhibit traits of care and support to employees. Employees who
>
> identify and recognize a caring leader will do their best in the workplace.

In addition to coaching, some participants emphasized training employees on EI

to enhance their interpersonal relationships. According to participants, training on

specific interpersonal skills will improve their understanding of engaging EI within the

work environment. Training is an integral part of workplace management. However, in

the construction industry, most training is work-related and tailor-made. Training is

organized to meet specific project needs and not necessarily to improve employee

competencies. The fact that EI is a new concept requires that construction project leaders

and employees need to be trained to improve project delivery and organizational

performance. P08 stressed:

> Leaders should educate their workers on how to manage their feelings and
>
> emotions. In today's changing business environment, employees expect their
>
> managers to coach and empower them into a sustainable and more life-enriching
>
> future. Good education on EI will improve workplace relationships and reduce
>
> conflicts.

The literature also supported the position of participants on the need for coaching

and training of employees on EI. Cherniss and Roche (2020) expressed that project

leaders should coach their subordinates to develop their own EI. They emphasized that

helping others develop their EI makes the work of the leader easier. Both leaders and

subordinates would be able to give valuable feedback in every situation of concern. In

addition, the trust would easily be built between the leader and subordinates when both

sides apply EI skills in every workplace situation. Fianko et al. (2020) explained that the

educational level of leaders significantly influences the degree of their EI and how they

relate to or influence their team members. Doan et al. (2020) stated that EI is a skill or

ability that can be learned and reinforced among individuals, whether leaders or

subordinates. The reports from partner organizations contained information on diverse

training programs implemented by these organizations. However, all the stated training

programs were job-related. There was no training related to EI that was organized by any

of the organizations, nor had any of the project managers attended any training on EI.

Theme 6: Project Leaders Should be Aware of Their Leadership Styles When

Relating With Their Subordinates

Participants explained that project leaders have different leadership styles. Thus,

leaders need to be aware of their leadership styles and use such to improve their

relationships with subordinates. The mood and emotions a project leader demonstrate will

determine the extent of cooperation they will receive from team members. Leadership

styles have a considerable influence on the mood and behaviors of subordinates.

According to the participants, employees will stick closer to a leader who demonstrates

care and concern for their feelings, emotions, and issues. A leader who establishes a good

emotional relationship with employees is likely to receive cooperation and commitment

from the subordinates. P11 expressed:

> For project leaders to improve work performance, how employees feel per time
>
> should be important to such leaders. A leader's ability to easily perceive
>
> subordinates' emotions is important in building a strong working relationship for
>
> project success.

P02 corroborated this position:

> A good project leader should be able to perceive and identify the situation of
>
> subordinates per time and develop strategies to address individual issues. Project
>
> leaders should be able to identify their leadership styles and assess how they
>
> affect subordinates' performance.

> Some of the participants emphasized that there is a significant relationship

between leadership style and employees' performance. According to P07,

> Employees' relationship with their leader significantly influences their
>
> performance, and a leader's style will always determine how they relate with
>
> subordinates. A leader that wants commitment and good performance of
>
> employees should be able to relate well with workers.

> P01 stated, "Leaders who are considerate in their leadership style with employees

are higher performers. Therefore, leadership style is important when relating with

workers". P14 also explained:

> Relationship building can be learned. One of the characteristics of a good leader is
>
> the yearning to learn new things, including learning how to relate well with

employees. A leader with a good working relationship with subordinates will always achieve greater success than others.

The literature supported the position of the participants. Moon (2021) stated that there is a strong positive relationship between EI and leadership styles. Moon stressed that leadership style that engages less EI are bound to generate contrary feelings that could hamper work relationships in the organization. Djofang and Fofack (2022) expressed that EI has a significant positive relationship with leadership effectiveness in construction project management. However, the effectiveness of leaders in using EI depends on the leader's leadership style. Cherniss and Roche (2020) explained that project leaders should always be aware of their leadership styles when relating with their subordinates. Cherniss and Roche stressed that the individual leader's leadership style has a role to play in the application of EI decision-making, particularly during periods of uncertainty. No information about leadership styles was contained in the reports from partner organizations.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I explained the research setting, demographics, data collection, evidence of trustworthiness, data analysis, and study results. The data for the study were generated through interviews. I conducted with 15 participants who volunteered for the study using 12 open-ended interview questions. The responses from the participants were transcribed and analyzed to provide an interpretation of the data. I applied coding techniques to the transcribed data to obtain themes that provided answers to the central research question. Six themes emerged from the analysis of the data: (a) project leaders

should observe the emotions of their subordinates, (b) project leaders should

communicate their feelings to their subordinates, (c) project leaders should be conscious

of how their behaviors affect their subordinates, (d) project leaders should always be

empathetic in their decision-making, (e) project leaders should coach their subordinates

to develop their own EI, and (f) project leaders should be aware of their leadership styles

when relating with their subordinates. The study's results were presented based on the

themes that emerged from the study. I used direct quotes from participants to establish

the confirmability of the study. I explained credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability, which provided evidence of the study's trustworthiness. In Chapter 5, I

will provide the interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for

future research, the implication for social change, theory and practice, and conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. The responses from interviewed participants were analyzed using coding to produce themes in response to the central research question. The participants were 15 project managers from five construction firms in Abuja, Nigeria. Six themes emerged from the analysis of the data: (a) project leaders should observe the emotions of their subordinates, (b) project leaders should communicate their feelings to their subordinates, (c) project leaders should be conscious of how their behaviors affect their subordinates, (d) project leaders should always be empathetic in their decision-making, (e) project leaders should coach their subordinates to develop their own EI, and (f) project leaders should be aware of their leadership styles when relating with their subordinates. The interpretation of findings was developed based on these six themes and grounded on the conceptual frameworks.

Interpretation of Findings

The discussion of this section was premised on how the findings of the study confirm, disconfirm, or extend the existing literature related to the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. The interpretation of findings was discussed in relation to the conceptual frameworks of the study. Accordingly, the section is organized in line with the six themes that emerged from the study.

Theme 1*:* Project Leaders Should Observe the Emotions of Their Subordinates

This theme confers the importance of project construction leaders being sensitive to the feelings and emotions expressed by their subordinates in the workplace. Participants expressed that the subordinates' moods or feelings should determine project managers' actions. According to participants, the workers constitute the team that, in turn, generates the outcome of any field operations. Most behaviors of field workers are the outward expression of their inner feelings. Therefore, happy and excited workers will generate positive outcomes. Similarly, unhappy and frustrated workers will produce negative outcomes. P09 explained:

> The business environment in Nigeria is chaotic and unpredictable. Managing projects in Nigeria is very risky due to political and economic uncertainties. Leading people, particularly in the construction industry in Nigeria, is hectic because of the erratic behavior of workers.

So, a manager must be sensitive to the workers' feelings to achieve project success. This position was also reinforced by P11, who expressed:

> Managing projects in Nigeria can be exciting but also very frustrating because of the impulsive behavior of workers. Workers are very demanding; they become aggressive and sometimes uncontrollable when you decline their demands. However, a good manager that is proactive to know and understand the feelings and moods of workers will respond swiftly to avert any negative behavior. Observing and responding quickly to subordinates' emotions proves taking responsibility for effective leadership project managers.

The expression and position of participants confirm the existing literature. According to Carasco-Saul et al. (2015), consideration of individual feelings and emotions is critical to building strong interpersonal relationships with employees. They emphasized that individuals have specific needs, and these needs going unmet could influence their emotions. Thus, project managers who treat subordinates based on their emotions would achieve project success. Rezvani et al. (2019) stated that one of the fundamental benefits of project managers learning EI is to enable them to understand their own emotions, as well as the emotions of their subordinates, to enhance team performance. They stressed that EI is essential in managing individual emotions, whether positive or negative, towards solving problems in organizations in a way that would lead to improved performance of teams. Adeleke et al. (2019) also emphasized that leaders' ability to recognize employees' emotions is required for successful project management to overcome the increased challenges within project sites. They stated that project success is a function of the role of leaders, particularly in motivating workers toward improved performance. El Khatib et al. (2021) argued that one of the essential elements of EI is self-awareness and the ability to regulate emotions, including employees' emotions. They emphasized that project leaders' EI positively correlates with the likelihood of a project succeeding. Thus, leadership capability to influence individual emotions is a key factor in successfully implementing construction projects.

The study by Montenegro et al. (2021) was emphatic on the disposition of individual emotions and the role of project managers towards project success. They stressed that social skills, such as the ability to observe and respond to emotions in

employees, are central to project success. When project leaders are conscious of the

feelings and emotions of their subordinates and respond appropriately, employees would

perform better, ultimately leading to project success. Cherniss and Roche (2020) also

stressed the need for project managers to identify the moods and emotions of employees

at the workplace to avert detrimental behaviors that could negatively affect project

performance. Furthermore, they emphasized the need for project managers to observe

non-verbal cues displayed by employees, which could serve as indicators of employees'

emotional problems. Early observation and suitable responses to individual emotional

displays by project managers would enhance the close working relationship between

managers and employees that could, in turn, help improve construction project

performance. The position of participants agrees with the conceptual frameworks of the

study. Goleman's (2019) EI quadrant and Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four-branch model

of EI includes the ability to observe and perceive emotions.

Theme 2: Project Leaders Should Communicate Their Feelings to Their

Subordinates

This theme refers to the need for project construction managers to communicate

and share their feelings and emotions with their subordinates for effective relationship

building and a good working environment. The participants expressed that good

communication between project managers and their subordinates could establish

emotional bonds between leaders and their subordinates, which could also stimulate

greater team performance. According to the participants, one of the primary

responsibilities of a project manager is to communicate effectively with employees. P11

noted that "effective communication is critical to leadership competency. A workplace environment where there is effective communication between the project manager and subordinates will foster transparency and prevent mistrust". P14 also emphasized that "the relationship between workers and employees is premised on trust. That trust is established through open and transparent communication, including letting the workers know how the leader feels per time".

The literature confirms the position of the participants. Cherniss and Roche (2020) expressed that good leadership requires project leaders to express their feelings to motivate others. They emphasized that a leader who expresses their emotions, positive or negative, will greatly influence subordinates. They stressed that the boss's feelings per times would determine the response or reaction of the subordinates. For instance, a leader who displays anger will often receive reciprocating negative reactions from subordinates.

Similarly, a leader expressing excitement could motivate employees to act positively to improve team performance. Sunindijo and Maghrebi (2020) expressed that in the construction industry, good communication between project leaders and their subordinates regarding their emotions will help to promote teamwork for enhanced performance. They argued that leaders should be proficient in sharing their feelings with subordinates to promote harmonious relationships for effective team performance.

Sunindijo et al. (2007) posited that project leaders with higher EI tend to generate delegation, open communication, and proactive behavior, which could foster positive outcomes in project management. EI has been presented as the people-orientation segment of the need to manage and lead projects (Sunindijo et al., 2007). Alvarenga et al.

(2020) also stressed that project management involves intense interpersonal relationships, mainly leading a team and being the liaison between the project team and the sponsor. Hence, effective project leadership could require practical interpersonal skills that involve open communication with employees. El Khatib et al. (2021) also argued that the key attributes of EI in project management included self-awareness, the capability to regulate emotions, motivation, possession of social skills, and empathy. In the study, communication and leadership influence were key factors in implementing EI in project management. Sunindijo and Maghrebi (2020) stated that in the construction industry, EI helps to facilitate strong communication between project leaders and their subordinates, thus, prompting teamwork for improved project performance. They stressed that construction project leaders using EI would be able to better manage and communicate effectively with the wide array of stakeholders involved in construction projects. This implies that project managers' ability to communicate their emotions to their subordinates is critical to successful construction project management in Nigeria. The position of participants agrees with the conceptual frameworks of the study. Goleman's (2019) EI quadrant and Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four-branch model of EI include the potential knowledge of how emotions are communicated and transmitted.

Theme 3: Project Leaders Should be Conscious of How Their Behaviors Affect Their Subordinates

This theme suggests the need for construction project managers to be conscious of how their behavior affects their subordinates. In construction management, leaders' behavior is about how the leaders' actions or inactions could influence their subordinates

toward the success or failure of the project. Leadership involves a process of leaders and followers influencing one another. One of the primary roles of a leader is to inspire the team toward achieving organizational goals. Thus, how a leader behaves towards their subordinates will determine the extent of influence they will have on the project. One of the participants, P08, inferred that "The behavior of workers in the field is a reflection of the behavior of the project leader. That is why a leader's behavior is vital to the success of construction projects." P06 also emphasized that "employees would always want their leader to deploy positive behavior to obtain positive success. Therefore, a leader must always create a conducive working environment by the behavior they exhibit in the workplace". For instance, a leader who obtains regular feedback will relate positively with employees.

The literature confirms the position of the participants. Sunindijo and Maghrebi (2020) expressed that organizational leaders should adopt new approaches to relating with their subordinates due to consistent changes in the business environment. They stressed that social skills, including interpersonal relationships, have become significant and effective tools in management. A project leader who is conscious of their behavior will help build a stronger relationship between leaders and subordinates that could contribute towards achieving project outcomes. Montenegro et al. (2021) posited that most failures in construction projects had been attributed to poor leadership demonstrated in their behaviors and attitudes. Thus, construction project leaders with a good disposition towards their subordinates, particularly leaders who give specific consideration to the feelings and concerns of employees, will achieve better project outcomes.

A leader must always create a conducive working environment; one way to create such an environment is to be aware of one's behavior. Awareness of one's behavior is important for relationship-building with employees. A leader who demonstrates positive influential behavior in the workplace will achieve greater success than those that do not. Fianko et al. (2020) emphasized that leaders with excellent performance in project management are conscious of their emotions and behaviors and how such behaviors affect their subordinates. They explained that self-awareness of one's behavior and sharing such feelings with subordinates would create a sense of belonging for team members.

Khosravi et al. (2020) also emphasized that emotionally intelligent leaders induce positive behavior and interactions, which helps to reduce stress and burnout among their project teams. Fareed et al. (2021) also corroborated this position, stressing that leadership is about people, and leaders' behavior will adversely impact the people they lead. Thus, a leader who is aware of others' behavior could easily initiate a form of feedback that would result in building a strong working relationship for improved performance of the team. The position of participants agrees with the conceptual frameworks of the study. Goleman's (2019) EI quadrant and Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four-branch model of EI includes the ability to use emotions to relate with others effectively.

Theme 4: Project Leaders Should Always be Empathetic in Their Decision Making

This theme explains the need for construction project leaders to be empathetic to the feelings of their subordinates before certain decisions are made. According to

participants, most of the decisions made by project managers are directly or indirectly linked to projects. The employees are involved in every aspect of projects, so decisions made on projects will affect them. To be empathetic means that project managers will understand and consider how employees would feel after such decisions are made. One of the participants, P04, expressed:

> Leadership in project management is about how the leader understands the readiness of team members to respond to instructions. Such instructions from the leader could create diverse feelings and emotions that may be inimical to the project's progress. Therefore, an empathetic leader will first consider the likely emotions emanating from an instruction before making a decision.

Another participant, P01, emphasized that their subordinates' emotions should determine the leaders' actions. An empathetic leader will easily attract the friendship of employees to create a conducive work environment for improved performance.

Empathy is a fundamental attribute that project managers should develop. When a leader develops empathy for their subordinates, the possibility for project success increases. Empathy will enable project leaders to evaluate their relationship with team members to feel their frustrations. One of the responsibilities of a project manager is to provide care for their team members. Empathy is about the ability to observe, understand, and interpret the feelings and emotions of team members to provide care for them. A project manager who can interpret team members' feelings and emotions can easily inspire them for greater productivity. Empathy enables project managers to understand deeply how to relate with team members through their emotions. As expressed by P03,

Project managers who are empathetic to team members will be able to develop

appropriate strategies to respond to the needs of their teams. In addition, empathy

enables a project manager to understand how different team members respond to

different work situations and relate with them accordingly to improve their

performance.

P06 also emphasized:

Empathy will prevent a project manager from looking down on their subordinates

and lord over them. Rather, an empathetic project manager will develop regard

and respect for team members to gain their confidence and trust. Empathy creates

compassion in project managers enabling them to develop a strong working

relationship with team members.

The existing literature confirms the assertion of participants. Khosravi et al.

(2020) expressed that EI leaders promote the perception of empathy and support among

their team members, which results in effective project performance. El Khatib et al.

(2021) posited that EI in project management includes self-awareness, the capability to

regulate emotions, motivation, possession of social skills, and empathy. Therefore,

empathy is central to the study of EI.

Moon (2021) highlighted that EI could be used to regulate emotions for effective

decision-making, resulting in less irrational and less biased decisions. Moon concluded

that the major impact of EI on intelligent risk decisions is the ability to overcome biases,

challenge assumptions, understand the situational context in risk terms, and understand

organizational and social contexts. Cherniss and Roche (2020) explained that project

performance-oriented leaders are conscious of their decisions and how they affect their employees. Ruben (2019) also highlighted the need for leaders to be competent in using EI. He explained that project leaders should apply some level of self-awareness and awareness of their decisions on the subordinates. This explains that the deliberate engagement of empathy by construction project managers may result in effective team building for enhanced project performance in Nigeria. The position of participants agrees with the conceptual frameworks of the study. Goleman's (2019) EI quadrant and Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four-branch model of EI includes the ability to manage emotions.

Theme 5: Project Leaders Should Coach Their Subordinates to Develop Their Own EI

This theme gives credence to why construction project leaders should provide coaching to their team members on EI to enhance project performance. Coaching has been identified as an effective tool for project managers to use to support team members in developing and improving their creativity and competency. The participants emphasized the need for construction project managers to coach their subordinates to develop their own EI. Coaching is a process of helping others to realize their inner strength for greater productivity and effectiveness. P06 asserted:

Helping team members develop their EI would make the leader's work easier. Coaching helps the leader identify and understand the specialized skills and talents inherent in team members so that they can be adequately developed to improve team performance.

P14 also emphasized:

Coaching helps the leader to build trust with team members. In addition, coaching team members on EI will help both the leader and members to understand and apply EI skills in every workplace situation to improve team performance. In short, project managers should combine coaching and training to improve work relationships and performance.

While coaching is significant in recognizing individual skills and talents, training has been identified as an important tool to acquire EI skills to promote competency among team members toward project performance. One participant, P15, emphasized that employees' training on EI will improve the general work relationship between the project leader and subordinates and among team members. According to P15, most project inadequacies and challenges have been attributed to a lack of requisite skills and technical competencies without regard to the role played by EI. Construction project leaders have not given training on EI and relationship-building attention. It will be most valuable to the organization and project team to combine technical training with EI". The combination of coaching and training on EI can catapult a team to achieve greater project success. Coaching and training team members on EI will help them gain control of themselves, build a better relationship with the project leader and enhance their confidence. Coaching and training will make the team more effective in project delivery. Coaching and training will also help the team solve individual and team problems. Coaching, in particular, will enable a project manager to engage with individual team members, asking them questions and helping them to reflect on work situations and how to obtain positive outcomes.

The existing literature confirms the position of the participants. Fianko et al. (2020) stressed that literacy level is a fundamental factor that regulates the relationship between leadership and team effectiveness. They expressed that poor knowledge of EI skills in project managers would result in a loss of confidence among team members, low creativity of employees, high frequency of employee turnover, and a generally toxic atmosphere in the workplace. Emotionally intelligent leaders can bring out the best inputs and behaviors from their team members that would achieve organizational goals. Khosravi et al. (2020) posited that EI positively links to project performance through project tasks, the relationship among the project team members, and the organizational processes. EI project leaders can expand their knowledge, understanding, and skill levels to interact and effectively manage their subordinates to achieve project success. EI enhances project leaders' managerial soft skills, improving their problem-solving skills. EI helps to diminish or mitigate the destructive influence of stakeholder conflicts in times of crisis or uncertainty. Doan et al. (2020) emphasized EI as a skill or ability that can be learned and reinforced among individuals (leaders or subordinates) for effective project delivery. A high EI level in project leaders positively correlates with project success. Cherniss and Roche (2020) also stated that coaching employees would result in mutual feedback that could enhance positive relationships for team effectiveness. This implies that coaching and training subordinates on EI are valuable tools for project managers for greater project performance. The position of participants agrees with the conceptual frameworks of the study. Fiedler's (1964) contingency model of leadership includes the need for leadership training and development.

Theme 6: Project Leaders Should be Aware of Their Leadership Styles When Relating With Their Subordinates

This theme implies that the leadership styles of construction project managers have much bearing on subordinates toward project performance. The leadership style of the individual leader has a role to play in applying EI in decision-making, particularly during periods of uncertainty. The styles of project leaders at any given time dictate the response from subordinates. Participants expressed that project managers must be conscious of the leadership styles they exhibit in the management of projects. P14 asserted, "Construction project leaders who have EI competence can engage their subordinates more constructively." P03 also asserted that an environment of uncertainty could easily stimulate a prompt emotional reaction from leaders and subordinates. Leaders challenged with difficult work environments are exposed to emotional disorders that could lead to irrational decisions. Such irritational decisions among construction project managers through the non-engagement of EI could lower subordinates' morale, resulting in poor project performance". As a leader, it is imperative to understand that humans are extremely emotional, and decisions made without consideration of their feelings could be counterproductive.

The literature confirmed the position of the participants. Moon (2021) posited that there is a relationship between EI and leadership styles. Transformational leaders have proved to engage more with EI, thus, demonstrating a higher project success. Other leadership styles that engage less EI are bound to generate contrary feelings that could hamper work relationships in the project team. EI was discovered as an effective tool to

manage and balance emotional disorders in leaders under situations of uncertainty. EI enables leaders to become self-aware of their internal emotions and feelings, thus, stimulating empathy that guides their decision-making. Moon emphasized that using EI among leaders could reduce internal biases, allowing for better analysis of situations and decision-making to effect positive changes in project management. Sunindijo and Maghrebi (2020) also stated that EI had been identified as a precursor of transformational leadership. Organizational leaders who adopt EI are likely to enhance project success as EI influences employee performance.

Sunindijo and Maghrebi (2020) also stated that EI had been identified as a precursor of transformational leadership. Organizational leaders who adopt EI are likely to enhance project success as EI influences employee performance. Doan et al. (2020) asserted that combining EI and transformational leadership styles enhances project success and delivery. They emphasized that the transformational leadership style is the most effective and convenient in project-oriented organizations. By inspiring their team members, EI leaders can coax higher team performance among their team members. EI is the major quality of transformational leaders. It enables them to read the emotional climate of the working environment to regulate and manage such emotions to achieve higher team performance. Fareed et al. (2021) also highlighted that EI, when combined with intellectual intelligence, contributes significantly to project success and that transformational leadership style positively affects project success. Transformational leadership styles enable project leaders to conveniently instill organizational values and ethics among the project team that will lead to project success. EI leaders who use a

transformational leadership style improve team collaboration and higher performance among the team members, leading to project success. Djofang and Fofack (2022) also explained that there is a relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness moderated by the leadership style. EI is a significant positive relationship tool with leadership effectiveness in construction project management. Thus, the style of leadership displayed by construction project leaders significantly influences the success of projects. The position of participants agrees with the conceptual frameworks of the study. Fiedler's (1964) Contingency Model of Leadership includes identifying and using leadership styles in management.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study imply the restraints on research that are not under the researcher's control but with the tendency to influence the study outcome (Brutus et al., 2013). The limitations of this study include the study sample size, the sample design, biases in the responses of participants, and the various locations of the study. The sample size of 15 participants cannot be termed a realistic representation of the project managers' population in Nigeria's construction industry. Accordingly, the study is limited to the extent of the number of participants participating. The research design used for the study was purposeful sampling which limits the study's results from generalization. Thus, the results may be limited to the responses of the participants. Also, the responses provided by participants may be prejudiced by certain biases or social desirability, therefore, may not represent the position of other categories of employees in the construction industry. The various locations used by participants for the interviews could have been arranged to

influence certain outcomes in their responses. However, I considered the issue of worthiness in the conduct of the study. Therefore, I encouraged participants to be truthful in their responses. I used transcript review and member-checking to help establish the validity and credibility of the study. I also used triangulation as part of the process to establish the study's trustworthiness.

Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. This study may help to fill the gap in the current literature on how project leaders could utilize EI to increase their effectiveness in project management during periods of uncertainty in Nigeria. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how construction projects are managed in Nigeria. The times of uncertainty have affected work and relationships in the workplace. People are more open to expressing their feelings due to fear of the unknown during uncertainty. Human and social interactions have greatly reduced due to the phobia of the pandemic, thus, negatively impacting the productivity of employees. The intolerance level of people has also increased greatly due to anxiety about human interactions. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the need for leadership development in interpersonal relationships to improve work performance. Studies have shown that the appropriate use of EI in leadership and management can bring about positive changes within a system during periods of uncertainty (Kozlowski et al., 2016; Nayal et al., 2022; Olanrewaju et al., 2018).

The results of the study revealed the need for project leaders to observe the emotions of their subordinates, communicate their feelings to their subordinates, to be conscious of how their behaviors affect their subordinates, to always empathize with their subordinates in decision making, to coach their subordinates to develop their own EI, and to be aware of their leadership styles when relating with their subordinates. Thus, the recommendations from the study are grounded on the study results and the strengths, limitations, and literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

The reviewed literature indicated that despite numerous studies on the role of EI in leadership, there is little literature on how to explore EI by project leaders in Nigeria to increase their effectiveness in project management during periods of uncertainty (Ruben, 2019; Schutte & Barkhuizen, 2016). The study's outcome has revealed areas for further research on the engagement of EI in construction project management. First, there is a need to research how EI should be used as a precondition in appointing people to leadership positions in construction firms. The study revealed the importance of leadership in project management and how the lack of EI in leadership could lead to project failure. It is imperative to consider using EI in promoting construction workers to managerial positions. Thus, I recommend further research on how EI should be used as a precondition in the appointment or promotion of people to leadership positions in construction firms in Nigeria.

The study also revealed the need for coaching and training of construction project managers on EI. Thus, there is a need to develop coaching and training on EI as part of the curriculum in leadership development and incorporate such into leadership training

and development for construction project leaders in Nigeria. I recommend that researchers should investigate how EI could be incorporated into the coaching and training curriculum of construction firms in Nigeria. In addition, the study revealed the need for leaders to observe the emotions of their subordinates for effective working relationships. Therefore, further research should be conducted on the skills required to effectively lead and manage project teams. The study further revealed the need for project leaders to communicate their feelings to their subordinates to enhance the cordial relationship in the workplace. Thus, I recommend further research on the value of communication in using EI among construction project leaders.

In addition, the study revealed the need for project leaders to be conscious of how their behaviors affect their subordinates. Thus, I recommend further research on how construction project leaders could develop a personal character that fits with effective project management. Further, the study revealed the need for project leaders to always empathize with their subordinates in decision-making, which would help to reduce the risk of project failures. Thus, I recommend that further research be conducted on methods and approaches to help build a leader-subordinate relationship that could influence trust and confidence. Finally, the study's outcome also revealed the need for project leaders to know their leadership styles when relating with their subordinates. Thus, I recommend that further research be conducted on effective leadership styles that promote construction project success.

Implications of the Study

As an important sector of the Nigerian economy, the construction industry plays a critical role in enhancing the nation's development. Omopariola et al. (2022) argued that the Nigerian construction industry contributes to almost 50% of the fixed stock capital currently invested in the Nigerian Economy. Moreso, the construction industry provides employment and job opportunities to the large population of youth in Nigeria (Olalusi & Otunola, 2012). This has underpinned the importance of having competent project leaders to ensure the success of construction projects in Nigeria (De Cuyper et al., 2020). The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the engagement of EI in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty. The findings from this study provided insights into how project leaders in the construction industry could leverage the knowledge and use of EI to create a conducive working environment that will enable them to manage their subordinates more effectively to achieve positive results in their projects.

Implications to Practice

The findings from this study have provided insights into how to employ the knowledge of EI to improve the effectiveness of construction project leaders. Considering the complexity of managing construction projects in Nigeria, proficiency in EI may equip construction leaders with the necessary skills to effectively manage their project teams and the expectations of their senior management and other external stakeholders, especially during periods of uncertainty. Various studies (Ackley, 2016; Goleman;

Knight et al., 2020; Moon, 2021) have emphasized the importance of seeking ways to utilize EI to enhance leadership effectiveness.

Findings from the study have indicated the need for construction project leaders to be conscious of their leadership style while managing their team members to manage them more effectively. Furthermore, to complement the leadership style, proficiency in EI will enable construction project leaders to achieve more project success (Ugoani, 2021). This is very relevant in Nigerian society, where the construction industry is suffering a staggering 50% of project failures due to leadership ineffectiveness, which has greatly stunted the much-desired economic growth of Nigeria (Ahmed & Anantatmula, 2017; Ogunde et al., 2017). Thus, the findings from this study have highlighted the strategies of how project leaders in the Nigerian construction industry could learn to use EI to enhance their leadership effectiveness, especially during periods of uncertainty. Consequently, the use of EI to enhance the effectiveness of project leaders in the construction industry will create positive social change by broadening or enriching their knowledge base, skills, and experience to enable them to deliver projects more efficiently, especially during periods of uncertainty and this may help to facilitate the growth of the Nigerian economy.

Implications to Theory

The dearth of information on how EI can be leveraged to enhance leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria during periods of uncertainty has created a knowledge gap in the existing literature. The findings from this study have provided avenues to enrich the leadership body of knowledge on how to enhance the

effectiveness of Nigerian construction project leaders during periods of uncertainty.

Findings from the study have emphasized the need for continuous leadership

development to enhance the effectiveness in handling and managing projects in Nigeria,

given the diverse and complex nature of the Nigerian society, which is manifested with

so many social and economic uncertainties (Odumade et al., 2020; Ugoani, 2021).

Consequently, Ackley (2016), Goleman (2019), Knight et al. (2020), and Moon (2021)

recognized EI as an ability that could enhance construction project leaders' effectiveness.

This will help complement the deficit in the theoretical knowledge on how to use EI in

construction project leaders' effectiveness development. Thus, using the conceptual

framework as a blueprint, the study has improved the thinking or knowledge of EI by

developing strategies to engage EI to enhance the effectiveness of construction project

leaders during periods of uncertainty.

Implications to Social Change

Considering the critical role that the construction industry plays in the

development of the Nigerian economy and the problems that are undermining the sector

leading to costly delays or total failures (Emerole et al., 2018; Ugoani, 2021). The

findings from this study provided avenues for positive social change that could

potentially affect or change the lives of people, help construction organization to

optimize their goals and policymakers to develop frameworks that incorporate EI in the

continuous development of construct leaders to enhance their effectiveness in managing

projects during periods of uncertainties (Knight et al., 2020; Moon, 2021). According to

Brimhall and Saastamoinen (2020), Positive social change involves any conscious effort

aimed at promoting activities that will positively impact people's lives, resulting in better societies. Therefore, the results from this study have provided Nigerian policymakers and leaders in the construction industry the opportunity to incorporate the findings in leadership development programs and make them mandatory.

The study has provided an opportunity for knowledge sharing, new thinking, and awareness around EI as a key leadership competence requirement for construction project leaders who could enhance their effectiveness in managing project periods of certainties. This may create positive social change that will transform the construction industry and the industry's value chain, thereby improving the nation's economy and its people.

Conclusions

There is a new paradigm in construction management, a change from conventional project practices to people-oriented management focusing on relationship building Montenegro et al. (2021). EI deals with people and relationships. Studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between construction project leader's use of EI and the success of construction projects. Goleman (2001) asserted that EI is a vital element of leadership effectiveness. EI is a social awareness process that helps build constructive relationships toward organizational performance. Studies have shown that the success or failure of projects largely depends on the leaders. Therefore, project success can be ensured through leadership competence enhancement. EI leaders have been found to create enabling and conducive environment for projects to succeed.

Project leaders with high EI have more reliable and effective approaches to managing complex situations that may affect the project's success. EI improves the social

awareness of the project leaders, thus, making them conscious of the internal and external

social dynamics that enable them to develop strategies for their project success. EI

leaders can bring out the best inputs and behaviors from their team members resulting in

the achievement of their organizational goals. The display of EI by leaders predicts how

their followers perceive their level of leadership effectiveness. Thus, EI leaders can

promote or enhance team members' solidarity and morale, resulting in higher team

performance. The study has revealed EI approaches that construction project managers

can engage in improving project performance in Nigeria. The results may contribute to

knowledge on using EI by construction project managers to improve project success.

Applying these approaches in project management will improve the success rate of

construction projects in Nigeria.

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Appendix A: Invitation Letter to Participants

Email Invitation to Participate in Emotional Intelligence among Nigerian Construction Project Leaders in Periods of Uncertainties: A Qualitative Exploratory Case Study

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Ibrahim Mashi, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University and working on my doctoral dissertation research to complete PhD Management degree. I am conducting this doctoral research study to explore and gain an improved understanding of the engagement of emotional intelligence in enhancing leadership effectiveness among construction project leaders in Nigeria in periods of uncertainties.

I would like to invite you to participate in the study. I respect your time and ask you to please read this email and attached consent form to decide whether you will participate in the study. Your participation in the study will help explore the perception of construction project leaders in Nigeria on emotional intelligence engagement towards enhancing effective leadership.

Your participation in the study will consist of 15-35 minutes interview. After an interview, I will email a summary of your interview responses to you for verification and accuracy. The research is purely for academic purpose and all information discussed or shared with me will be treated confidential and protected. If you agree to participate, please sign the attached consent form and return to me or reply to this email and state 'I consent to participate in the study'.

I am looking forward to answering any questions or concerns that you may have and discuss further details of my research. You can contact me at XXXXXXX or via email at XXXXXXXXX

Thank you for your time,

Ibrahim Mashi
PhD Management Candidate
Walden University

Appendix B: Interview Questions

The interview questions include the following:

1. How would you describe your role in your organization?

2. What are the factors that influences leadership effectiveness in your organization?

3. Tell me about the role you play in your organization as a leader and what challenges shapes your daily decisions?

4. What existing formal structures does your organization have that shape your decision-making process?

5. Tell me what you understand by Emotional Intelligence?

6. What do you think are the influences of Emotional Intelligence on project leadership?

7. How do you think construction project leaders can engage Emotional intelligence to enhance their leadership effectiveness during periods of uncertainty?

8. Tell me about the key leadership competences in project leadership in Nigeria?

9. How would you relate your leadership style to your leadership effectiveness in your organization?

10. Tell me about your experiences of leading project in Nigeria?

11. Tell me about your experience of leading projects in these times of uncertainty?

12. Is there any other additional information you feel would assist in my study you would like to share or anything that needs further clarification?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

What to do	**What to say**
Begin of the interview protocol.	
A brief introduction of myself and the purpose of the research topic under study	My name is Ibrahim Mashi and I am a Doctorate student at Walden University. I would like to thank you for your time and for granting me this interview. The purpose of this research interview is to gain an improved understanding of how construction project leader can use emotional intelligence to improve their leadership effectiveness during periods of uncertainty. By so doing, I will be asking and discussing the interview questions that I provided to you earlier.
Set the stage to get the interviewee at ease by asking about their background. Use the subsequent questions (2–4) to probe further for a more targeted response from the participant.	Before we get into that, could you: 1. Please, briefly tell me about your background? 2. How long have you been working construction? 3. What is your current position? 4. etc.?
Explain the informed consent form process and address any concerns the participant may have.	On [insert date] you received a consent form via email or hand delivery by me. The consent form contains information about the study, to include your rights to withdraw or stop participation at any time with no punitive action against you. In addition, participation is voluntarily in nature with no monetary incentive. On [insert date] you signed the consent form by granting me the consent for this interview. Do you have any questions or concerns before we proceed? My contact information is also included in

	the consent form; if you have any further questions or concerns about the study after this interview, please feel free to contact me.
Receive consent to begin the interview and remind participants that the interview will be recorded to ensure data accuracy. Remind and assure participants of anonymity and confidentiality.	Our interview conversation today will be voice recorded and taking notes to help ensure data transcription accuracy on my part. I want to remind and assure anonymity and that your identity and information shared and discussed are protected under confidentiality and will be used solely for research purpose without disclosing your identity.
	We will proceed this interview shortly if I have your consent to begin recording.
Start the audio recording and/or be prepared to take notes.	
Introduce participant with code, the date, time, and location.	Interview with Participant [P1, P2, P3…10], [date], [time], and [location].
Begin asking the predefined open–ended interview questions, and probe further with targeted questions when necessary to ensure in–depth exploration.	1. How would you describe your role in your organization? 2. What are the factors that influences leadership effectiveness in your organization? 3. Tell me about the role you play in your organization as a leader and what challenges shapes your daily decisions? 4. What existing formal structures does your organization have that shape your decision-making process? 5. Tell me what you understand by Emotional Intelligence? 6. What do you think are the influences of Emotional Intelligence on project leadership? 7. How do you think construction project leaders can engage Emotional intelligence to enhance

	their leadership effectiveness during periods of uncertainty? 8. Tell me about the key leadership competences in project leadership in Nigeria? 9. How would you relate your leadership style to your leadership effectiveness in your organization? 10. Tell me about your experiences of leading project in Nigeria? 11. Tell me about your experience of leading projects in these times of uncertainty? 12. Is there any other additional information you feel would assist in my study you would like to share or anything that needs further clarification?
	This concludes our interview, thank you for your time and participation.
Stop audio recording.	
End of the interview, let the participant know the next step. Explain the transcript review process following interview.	As indicated in the consent form, participant will be asked to member check summarized post– interview transcript. I will verbatim transcribe this interview and synthesize your responses to each question. I will subsequently email it to you for confirmation of accuracy; you can make corrections to ensure accurate representation of your views.
Schedule follow–up meeting or alternative avenue to confirm data accuracy.	I will email you the summarized transcript on [insert date] and would like to schedule a follow– up meeting on [insert date] or you may provide your feedback/corrections (if any) by replying to the email.
	Thank you, once again for your time.
End of the interview protocol/	

Appendix D: Letter of Cooperation

<<Name of Organization>>
<<Address of Organization>>

<<Date>>

Dear Mr. Ibrahim,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled "*Emotional Intelligence Among Nigerian Construction Project Leaders during Periods of Uncertainty: A Qualitative Exploratory Case Study*" with construction project leaders within our organization. As part of this study, I authorize you to: contact potential participants in the sustainability department via provided telephone numbers and email addresses; conduct interviews face-to-face or via online platforms like Skype or Zoom at the participants' convenience and timing outside official work hours; and follow-up member-checking and results dissemination through email addresses of participants, as well as use the organization's policy manuals and procedures. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include providing names and contacts of potential participants for your study. However, the potential participants' acceptance to participate is solely the participants' decision and communication via a consent form.
We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that the student will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in ProQuest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

<<Your Full Name>>
<<email address>>