Making of a Credible, Authentic Leader

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Abstract

Studies have suggested various ways of developing leadership credibility and becoming a more authentic leader. To further explore and get an in-depth understanding of credible, authentic leadership, this paper carries out a qualitative study on the making of a credible, authentic leader. Three leaders of different age groups and sectors who have portrayed themselves as credible and authentic, by the values and outcomes they exemplify were interviewed on the following; what they understood by credible, authentic leadership, how to develop credibility and authenticity and some daily habits that enable them develop the same. The three leaders were picked from different sectors. Open ended questions were administered and the results revealed learning, planning, identifying and keeping values as some of the common characteristics that enable them to grow in credibility and authenticity.

Keywords: *Credible Leadership, Authenticity, values, Growth*

1.1 Introduction

The concept of leadership can be traced back to the medieval times. Traditionally, as noted by Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2013), leadership was defined by traits or behavior but currently, other factors have contributed to the definition of leadership. According to Northouse, (2016), there are as many definitions of leadership as there are authors on the subject; however, they all seem to agree that leadership involves influence, process, a group of people and attainment of goals. Northouse (2016) further defines leadership as a process of influence where one individual is able to influence other people towards a common goal. Silva (2016) sees leadership as an interactive process that occurs through influence and when followers accept to be guided by a leader to achieve common goals.

Mullins (2010) posits that leadership may be attributed to a person's position, wisdom or knowledge. According to Mullins (2010), leadership may also be attributed to personality or behaviour. As posited by Ivancevich et al, position is not necessarily a requirement to exercise leadership but various factors have to be present in a leadership situation which includes people, task and environment. As posited by Kaiser, Hogan and Craig (2008), leadership has great effect not only on individuals but also on the entire organizations. Leaders have the ability to transform ordinary workers to high performers through modeling the way, envisioning the future, encouraging the heart (Kouzes and Posner, 2012) and motivating them to work towards a common purpose (Kouzes & Posner, 2011).

The challenges brought about by the current global changes as posited by Avolio and Luthans (2006) have increased people's quest for genuine, credible and authentic leadership. Organizations are looking for leaders with a deep sense of responsibility and purpose. Authentic leaders have the

ability to translate these values to the employees and create a desire to value their customers. This will then create public trust and set an organization on a highly competitive advantage. Credibility as noted by Kouzes and Posner (2011) is the foundation of leadership and exemplifies characteristics that include honesty, visionary, inspiring and competence. Credibility is about the ability to clarify one's values, beliefs and purpose. As further posited by Kouzes and Posner (2011), people believe first the person before they can take the message. This paper seeks to explore common characteristics of credible and authentic leadership and factors that promote growth in credibility.

2.1 Literature Review

There are numerous studies focusing on leadership. However, empirical studies on credible and authentic leadership are limited.

2.1.1 Credible leadership

The concept of leadership can be traced back to the work of Katz and Kahn (1978) and Max Weber (1864-1920). Weber's concept of leadership as posited by Ivancevich, Konopaske, and Matteson (2013) was on rationality and efficiency of work operations. His model stipulated a hierarchical structure that was differentiated by expertise and competence. Later on, Stogdill (1974) and Bass (1990) did a more comprehensive review of leadership theories and identified several categories of leadership constructs which include; the great man theory, the traits theory of leadership, the behavioral theory, the contingency theory, and the path-goal theory. Though there is a similarity in some of the concepts underlying these theories and credible leadership, the concept of credible leadership was first introduced by Kouzes and Posner in the early 1990s.

The genesis of credible leadership concept as noted by Hoffman (2008), springs back to the ancient Greek, when leadership theories were being developed. According to Hoffman, credible leadership concept existed in the traits and leader follower theories of leadership since the traits of great leaders as noted by Northouse (2016) resembled those of credible leadership outlined by Kouzes and Posner (2011). According to Northouse (2016), great leaders as depicted by the traits theory of leadership exemplified characteristics that include intelligence, focus, people skills and trustworthiness. Hoffman further noted that, the constructs of credible leadership which are trustworthiness, honesty, integrity and consistency can be traced in these ancient leadership theories. Credibility according to Kouzes and Posner (2011) builds trust and trust is the glue that holds leaders and their followers together.

To further advance credible leadership, Kouzes and Posner (2011) have conducted various studies on credible leadership and four characteristics emerged at the top which are honesty, forward looking, competent and inspiring. According to Kouzes and Posner (2011), Credible leaders are great leaders who envision the future, great learners, are role models, appreciate their constituents, give and receive feedback. Kouzes and Posner (2011) see leadership as a relationship where the leader first understands his/her own values and beliefs and those of the constituents. Inclusiveness is what makes a difference in credible leadership where credible leaders agree with their constituents on values, goals and support the team in maximizing their potential. Kouzes and Posner (2011) have further highlighted leadership constructs that contribute to credible leadership.

Knowing Oneself

As posited by Kouzes and Posner (2011), leaders ought to define their values and their leadership philosophy. They need to demonstrate that they prescribe to a certain way of life and are ready to

defend it. Their personal creed needs to be well defined and registered by their followers. Drucker (2008) in his book managing self asserts that, great leaders demonstrate congruency in what they speak and what they do. They are guided by their values and the personal belief that they can remain credible. They understand their strengths and weaknesses and also evaluate the opportunities and threats around them. They are high in self-efficacy which according to Maddux (2013) enables them to visualize themselves succeeding in whatever situation. According to Maddux, people with high self-efficacy are more likely to overcome challenges through self-evaluation, more result oriented and more committed to the purpose or goal.

Appreciating constituents

Credible leaders focus on the welfare of their constituents. According to Kouzes and Posner (2011), they seek to understand the values and the abilities of their constituents in order to integrate these values with those of the organization. A credible leader shows the constituents that they matter, by receiving feedback and appreciating their efforts. This promotes the leader's development and the output of the followers. As posited by Mullins (2010) leaders improve their effectiveness by appreciating diversity and the uniqueness of every team member. They are not discouraged by conflicts but rather they manage them. They appreciate different opinions because as noted by Coleman et al (2014), this helps clarify issues and brings better understanding when well managed.

Uphold common values

Since people have different values and beliefs, Kouzes and Posner (2011) suggest that a leader needs to identify the common values among the team. This creates synergy as every member is conscious about the common values that everyone upholds. When people are working towards common goals, the atmosphere becomes more of cooperation than competition. The resultant factor is success for all.

Develop Capacity

Drucker (2008) has noted that people perform better when they have the skills to do the task. This creates motivation and the enthusiasm in carrying out the task and increases individual performance. Kouzes and Posner (2011) affirm that leaders need to create a learning environment where everyone has the opportunity to develop their capacity. Armstrong (2014) recommends a learning culture where constituents are committed and engage in it out of free will.

Serving a purpose

Committing to a purpose is another practice of credible leaders. Kouzes and Posner (2011) advance that, leaders are the first to take responsibility of every situation and hold themselves accountable to the promises they make. They are innovative, creative and envision the future of the organization. They act on what they believe in and as posited by Kouzes and Posner (2011), their strong value system becomes their guiding compass. They view themselves as liberators to set free the leadership trapped in people. Credible leaders spend their lives for others and are not afraid to lay down their lives for their constituents. Committing to a purpose produces mastery which as posited by Bandura (1977) promotes excellence.

Sustaining Hope

Credible leaders demonstrate enthusiasm and confidence even in difficult situations. They express optimism for the future and as noted by Kouzes & Posner (2012), they encourage the heart. With

the current global challenges where changes are the major constant thing, followers are looking for leaders who remain hopeful and enthusiastic irrespective of the challenging situations. Kouzes and Posner (2011) advance that, credible leaders are able to translate the future into the present. They can create humor even in the worst situations because they focus on the good side of every situation. To them, every cloud has a silver lining.

2.1.2 Authentic leadership

Empirical studies have shown a significant relationship between authentic leadership and performance. Walumbwa *et al.* (2008) carried out an empirical study, which involved various countries that represented three continents (Asia, Africa and US) as target population. The qualitative study demonstrated a significant relationship between authentic leadership and supervisor rated performance. Though the research was comprehensive and revealed the key role of authentic leadership in driving performance, Walumbwa *et al (2008)* noted that, there is still need to determine the exact constructs of authentic leadership. Though as noted by Walumbwa et al (2008) that there are inadequate tools to accurately test authenticity, the desire for authentic leadership is evident. According to Kernis (2003), studies have associated authentic leadership with high performance, high self -esteem, good interactions with people and personal well -being. According to Walumbwa et al (2008), when leaders act according to their true self, beliefs and abilities and teach their followers to do so, there is increased performance in the organization.

Avolio and Luthans (2006) also agree that the subject of authentic leadership has generated interest from both the academicians and the practitioners. Avolio and Luthans acknowledge that, the challenges facing organizations today demand for a better leadership approach that exudes confidence, hope, resilience and optimism. According to Harter (2002), authenticity is not a recent term but like credibility, it can also be traced back to the ancient Greek where it meant being true to oneself. Avolio et al (2004) has built on this definition and stated that, authentic leadership is being aware of one's values and standpoints and demonstrate those values and live transparent lives. Avolio et al contrasts authentic leadership and styles of leadership and posits that, authentic leadership is not a style of leadership but it's about deep personal values and convictions. Like credible leaders, authentic leaders as noted by George (2003) are geared towards helping others realize their potential and are guided by strong values. They have the ability to identify individual talents and motivate them to develop those talents. Just like credible leaders, Avolio and Luthans (2006) posit that, authentic leaders are aware of their own values, abilities and emotions. Authentic leaders have the ability to listen to their followers and as posited by Oginde (2011), followers expect their leaders to have listening skills as well as integrity and an excellent character.

Gardner *et al.* (2005) have noted two unique characteristics of authentic leadership as self – awareness and self –regulation. According to Gardner et al, self- regulation includes internalized regulation, balanced processing of information, transparency and being authentic. Gardner et al (2005) further noted that, authentic leaders are guided by high ethical values that govern their character and behavior.

2.1.3 Integration of authentic and credible leadership

From the literature reviewed, authenticity and credibility though different concepts, their constructs somehow integrate. Self- awareness is one of the characteristics that are shared by both credible and authentic leadership concepts. Kouzes and Posner (2011) suggested several characteristics of credible leadership which include knowing self. Avolio and Luthans (2006) had also introduced self- awareness as a major characteristic of authentic leadership. They both agree

on definition of values and being true to oneself without being coerced to do the right thing. To grow in credibility, leaders need to discover who they are, their mission in life and the capacity they have to accomplish that mission.

Self- regulation is another component that is shared by both authentic and credible leadership concepts. Self –regulation according to Avolio and Luthans (2006) involves constant learning or personal development. Kouzes and Posner (2011) advanced the same concept by noting that credible leaders treasure feedback and consistently develop their capacity and that of their followers. Consistency is another factor that is shared by both credibility and authentic concepts that promotes growth. Avolio and Luthans (2006) advocate for a continuous learning from experiences and taking stock of every progress. Kouzes and Posner (2011) agree on following through one's convictions and being consistent. Our values and beliefs need to correspond with our actions.

2.14 Biblical perspective

Paul in Galatians 1 to 6 demonstrates the characteristics of authentic and credible leadership. In the first chapter, he demonstrates that he knew who he was and his purpose. He acknowledges that he had not received his mission from people, but from God Himself. In the second chapter, he boldly confronts Peter, who was the leader of the church at that time, of his hypocritical actions. Paul realized that such actions could hinder the progress of his ministry. A credible leader according to Kouzes and Posner (2011) stands for what they believe is right. They are ready to defend their values and are not ashamed to explain their stand.

In Galatians chapter 5 and 6, Paul demonstrates the importance of consistency, not falling back to false doctrines and unfruitful works. He records the freedom of choosing to do the right thing and the maturity associated with consistency. In the last chapter of Galatians, Paul outlines various characteristics of credible /authentic behavior which include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self -control. These constructs correspond very well with those raised by authors of credible and authentic leadership theories.

2.1.5 Theories of leadership

As noted by Hoffman (2008), credible leadership is indeed underpinned by the theories of leadership. This paper presents three leadership theories that are most relevant to this study. These are transformational leadership, leader – follower exchange theory and the Upper Echelon theory of leadership.

Transformational Theory

According to Northouse (2016), transformational leadership is based on changing the followers' attitudes, values, beliefs and encouraging them to perform beyond expectation. Bass (1988) as cited in Northouse (2016) presented four dimensions of transformational leadership which are; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Idealized influence is about setting high moral standards as a leader, thus attracting loyalty from the followers. Inspirational motivation is about encouraging the followers by envisioning the future and making it a reality to the followers. Intellectual stimulation as noted by Northouse (2016) refers to the leaders' ability to challenge the status quo and challenge the followers to think and act creatively and strategically. Individualized consideration is about identifying the needs and the strengths of the followers. This theory corresponds to Kouzes and

Posner (2011) credible leadership constructs of appreciating constituents, building capacity, creating hope, affirming shared values understanding self and serving a purpose.

Leader – member exchange theory

The leader member exchange theory is posited by Northouse (2016) as a two way relationship between leaders and followers. This theory displays a relationship between a leader and followers and states that the relationship goes through three stages which are; establishing of roles, taking up roles and routine establishment. According to Northouse, the skills and the abilities of the followers are assessed by the leader. After skills are identified, the team is divided into two according to their capabilities. The most proficient team is placed in the in group and the other in the outer group. The leader puts more effort in the in group and prepares them for greater responsibilities.

This theory relates to the study of credible leadership in many ways. First, as posited by Kouzes and Posner (2011), credible leaders are able to identify the skills and abilities of their members. They then build their capacity and as noted by Drucker (2008) place them in areas where they can maximize their potential. Secondly, credible leaders are visionary as posited by Kouzes and Posner (2012). They make succession plans by preparing able leaders to take up after them as seen in this theory. Lastly, credible leaders are competent. The aspect of dividing the team into two depending on the member's level of competence gives the leader a higher degree of success. This is because as Northouse (2011) has noted, the members in the in group work hard to maintain their relationship with the manager and the leader is able to model him/self on this to group. The concept of credible leadership as posited by Kouzes and Posner (2011), that it's about a relationship between the leader and the follower fits well in this theory, and therefore relevant to this study.

Upper Echelon Theory

According to this theory, the top management analyses the external environment and makes strategic plans for the organization. Through the intellectual capabilities of the leader, the organization is able to transform and become competitive. This theory was modified by Hambrick (2007) by introducing two variables - managerial discretion and executive job demand. This means that, performance is directly related to the extent of managerial discretion. The characteristics of the employees are reflective of the cognitive abilities of the top leaders.

This theory corresponds to the competence principle of a credible leadership presented by Kouzes and Posner (2011) and therefore relevant to this study. According to Kouzes and Posner (2011), a leader builds credibility by self-development and remaining competent. According to this theory, the entire organization reflects the intellectual capabilities of the leader. Credible leaders build the capacity of their constituents (Kouzes and Posner, 2011) and encourage others to act (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). They encourage the heart and create hope even in the most difficult situations. As posited by Hughes and Beatty (2005), they are visionary making both short term and long term plans.

A few gaps identified in these theories are highlighted. First, these theories are not exhaustive by themselves and may not have been tested empirically to determine exactly how they relate to credible leadership construct. Secondly, literature has no specific theories on credible leadership. Lastly some of the theories need to be reconstructed or revised to fit the current leadership situation.

The carrying out of this research is quite significant because the literature on credible and authentic leadership is not exhaustive. First, there are no definite constructs for credible or authentic leadership. Secondly, though leadership credibility is such an essential topic in the current global situation, very few empirical studies have been dedicated to the topic. Lastly, there is need to build on the body of knowledge by introducing new ideas into the topic of credible and authentic leadership and making suggestions for further research. The current study is based on the making of a Credible Authentic leader. The study is based on the following research question. What is credible leadership and what are the factors that contribute to one becoming a credible leader? To further explain the above question, three main interview questions were prepared and other supplementing questions were used as need arose.

a) What do you understand by Credible, Authentic leadership?
b) How does one develop Credibility and Authenticity?
c) What are some of your daily habits that help build your leadership Credibility and Authenticity?

3.1 Methodology

This study has employed a social constructivism philosophical world view approach, to seek more understanding of the phenomenon which according to Creswell (2013) is appropriate when little or nothing is known about the subject. The research approach used is qualitative inductive method to help get an in-depth understanding of the situation (Terrell, 2016).

Research Method

The research design used is qualitative where broad semi-structured questions were prepared and the interviews were conducted through telephone. As noted by Lune & Berg (2017), interviewing refers to a conversation with a purpose of gathering information. Bryman (2016) has contrasted between the telephone and face to face interviews and noted that, face to face interviews have the distinct advantage of enabling a researcher to establish rapport with potential participants and therefore gain their cooperation. Thus, according to Bryman (2016), such interviews yield the highest response rate which is measured by the percentage of people agreeing to participate in the survey. However, there are various limitations of a face to face interview as noted by Lune and Berg (2017) which includes time and cost involved, quality of data may be compromised if the interviewer is tired and there could be security issues involved.

The choice of telephone rather than face to face was considered due to the short time frame and the current covid-19 situation. The sample selected also didn't need to create rapport because they were well known by the researcher and thus the limitations of telephone interviews have been mitigated. The target population was highly credible leaders within the researcher's context. Three highly credible leaders were selected by the use of convenience sampling which according to Creswell (2013) enables the researcher to select samples that are relevant to the topic. The three samples differed in age, in career back ground and gender (two females and one male). The specifics were as follows; One was young single female adult in her early 20s who has been a student leader for a while, the other one is a middle aged married lady working for a financial company and has exemplified mastery in her career and leadership development and the final one was a Senior Pastor, pastoring a mega church, married and in his early 60s. The criteria for selecting these samples was their availability since they are within the researcher's circle of friends, their remarkable leadership skills and their value system that is evident to all. They have a reputation of having mentored many leaders and are well respected in the society. The

respondents gave their stories through guided semi-structured questionnaires that helped construct the concepts and get a deeper understanding of the topic under research. The responses were then arranged according to themes and then coded and arranged in broad categories that represented credible leadership concepts as indicated below;

4.1 Understanding of Credible, Authentic leadership

Every Respondent was asked what they understood by credible, authentic leadership. Their responses are summarized below;

Table 1: What do you understand by Credible, Authentic leadership?

Respondent	Understanding of credible, authentic leadership
Respondent 1	Being selfless and supportive of others +++ Being truthful *** Being trustworthy @@ Responsible ///
Respondent 2	Helping others become what they want to be +++ Committed to achieving goals Able to influence others in going the right thing @@ Takes responsibility /// Portrays good character ***
Respondent 3	Service to others +++ Wise in decision making /// Submitting to a higher authority rather than depending on self Straight forward *** Open minded and approachable

Four themes have emerged from the above responses:

+++Supportive

** Honesty

/// Responsible

@@ Committed

As reflected in Table 1, the Respondents responses can be put into four categories which are; Supportive, Honesty, Responsibility and commitment. These responses relate to Kouzes and Posner (2011) study on credible leadership that revealed four broad categories of credible leadership as honest, forward looking, competent and inspiring.

Supportive and selfless: The Respondents understood credible, authentic leadership as being selfless and supportive. They noted that for a leader to be said to be credible and authentic, he/she must be selfless, not only looking into his own welfare but also that of others. According to the respondents, credible, authentic leaders go out of their way to develop others. This is in line with Kouzes and Posner (2011)'s observations that credible leaders appreciate their constituents and devote to enabling them realize their goals. The same aspect is shared by Avolio and Luthans (2006) who posit that authentic leaders seek to understand their constituents in order to serve them

better. Credible leaders do not focus on satisfying self but their greatest joy is in seeing others achieve their goals. They realize that when people focus on cooperation rather than competition, everyone wins.

Honesty or truthfulness: This is another description of credible, authentic leadership as given by the Respondents. According to the respondents, credible, authentic leadership is about being straight forward, truthful, good character and transparent. They indicated that being truthful and honest attracts followers to a leader. Kouzes and Posner (2011) argue that honesty is a very important component in credible leadership. Followers value leaders who are open and honest. They value feedback and being told the truth concerning a situation. Being honest even when one has made a mistake creates more trust than backlash.

Responsible and committed: Another aspect of credible, authentic leadership as depicted by the respondents is being responsible and committed. They said that they understood credible, authentic leadership as having the ability to take responsibility over situations and being committed to a course. They noted that a sense of responsibility is what sets apart a credible, authentic leader from the rest. Kouzes and Posner (2011) have noted that credible leaders do not shy away from responsibilities. They are committed to a purpose and are role models. Kouzes and Posner (2012) further suggest that credible leaders model the way, they challenge the status quo and enable others to act.

Table 2: How does one develop Credibility and Authenticity?

Respondent	Developing credibility and Authenticity
Respondent 1	Keep on doing right Standing for what you believe is right ## Being positive Purposing to keep improving ***
Respondent 2	Having faith Focusing on the goal +++ Remaining teachable *** Personal evaluation
Respondent 3	Trusting in God even when situations are tough Making learning a continuous process *** Setting goals and looking forward to reach them +++ Defining a personal culture ## Embracing Godliness.

3 themes emerged as follows:

*** Learning

+++ Goal setting

Defining values

The respondents brought out three themes regarding the ways to develop credibility and authenticity. These are learning, goal setting and defining values. These relate to other studies in literature that have discussed on the topic of credible, authentic leadership. Avolio and Luthans

(2006) noted that, for leaders to become authentic, they needed to make learning a continuous process, be committed to what they desire to achieve and to have a personal creed.

Learning: The respondents gave learning and being teachable as one of the ways to develop leadership credibility and authenticity. They noted that no one knows everything and there is always something new to learn either through self-initiation or from other people's feedback. They also noted that the more one is skilled and increases in knowledge, the more supportive they become since one can only give what they have. Learning therefore emerged as the most important aspect of developing credibility and authenticity. According to Luthans (2006) leaders learn through experiences that they go through in life. They observed that growing in authenticity is a life time process that requires personal evaluation and taking note of every lesson that is hidden in personal experiences whether positive or negative. Kouzes and Posner (2011) argued that leaders grow in credibility by accepting feedback and being open to learn. According to Thomas (2008), leaders can develop credibility by learning even from a terrible situation. Every experience for leaders is a learning experience and should be used maximally. This response corresponds also to Kouzes and Posner (2011) sentiments that growing in credibility requires leaders to build capacity both for themselves and their constituents. This enables them to remain relevant and to offer support to their constituents. It takes personal development to grow in credibility and remain consistent with the personal values that are congruent with the societal values.

Goal setting: The respondents also suggested goal setting as another way to develop credibility and authenticity. They noted that to grow in and authenticity, one has to dedicate his/her life to a purpose. Having a target to accomplish creates motivation and enthusiasm even during the difficult times. Some of the respondents felt that most leaders fail in credibility and authenticity test because they do not set daily targets thus lacking in competence. Kouzes and Posner (2011) advanced that credible leaders are purpose driven. They have the ability to set goals and as noted by Avolio and Luthans (2006), authentic leaders are not afraid to set high goals. Living for a purpose is one of the constructs suggested by Kouzes and Posner (2011) that lead to credible leadership.

Defining values: Another response from the Respondent on developing credibility and authenticity is defining values. The respondents noted that, to stand out as a credible, authentic leader, one has to first of all define their personal credo and then live by it. Defining personal values as noted by the respondents is like having a personal brand that enables one to stand out among other leaders. It includes a personal belief system and a leadership philosophy. As noted by Kouzes and Posner (2011), defining values is like having a guiding compass that directs a leader to walking in certain values. These responses agree with Kouzes and Posner's credibility construct of knowing self. According to Kouzes and Posner (2011), identifying and defining values is one of the first steps to credible leadership. These values should be communicated to the constituents and the leader should ensure that their actions are consistent with these values. Just as strong brands give companies a competitive advantage, strong personal brands which encapsulates values, beliefs, language and culture give a leader a unique none imitable competitive edge.

Table 3: What are some of your daily habits that help build your leadership Credibility and Authenticity?

Respondent	Daily habits that promote credible, authentic leadership
Respondent 1	Study God's word ### Personal evaluation @@@ Appreciate people +++
Respondent 2	Prayer ** Set daily goal and evaluate them @@@ Purpose to show kindness to someone +++ Read ###
Respondent 3	Prayer ** Make a daily plan @@@ Reading ### Encourage someone +++

Emerging themes:

@@@ Planning

Reading or learning

+++ Supporting others

** Prayer

From the responses, we identify four themes which are; planning and evaluation, reading or learning, supporting other people and prayer. These themes correspond with what other authors have noted about the topic. According to Avolio and Luthans (2006), to grow in authenticity, leaders need to commit themselves to setting goals, to learning and helping other people achieve their goals. Kouzes and Posner (2011) affirmed the same by noting that credible leaders are committed to a purpose and seek to improve the capacity of others.

Planning and Evaluation: The respondents said that, they are committed to planning for the day, setting daily goals and evaluating them at the end of the day. They argued that this helps them to remain on the goal without being distracted by other pressing issues. Ivancevich et al (2013) noted the importance of planning and suggested that it leads to efficiency in resource management. This emerging credible, authentic leadership construct may not have been noted from what other authors have presented, but from the study, it came out as a significant variable in credible, authentic leadership. Planning promotes competence which according to Kouzes and Posner (2011) is one of the characteristics of credible leadership. Gardner et al (2006) agrees with this observation that authentic leaders self-evaluate, are aware of who they are and have respect for both self and the constituents.

Reading or Learning: All the three respondents suggested that one of their daily habits is reading or learning to increase knowledge. Some have well established devotionals every morning as well as other leadership books that they read during the day. They noted that increasing their knowledge kept them informed and relevant in their leadership journey. Some felt like they were addicted to reading and to others, reading was a hobby. They read while waiting for services in an office and

some even in the salon and recreation facilities. Some posited that reading especially the Bible gave them direction in decision making, and they felt confident to face any kind of situation. According to them, the Bible gives them instructions that improve their lives and thus growing in credibility and authenticity. Kouzes and Posner (2011) suggest that credible leaders seek to grow by reading and listening to other people and as noted by Avolio and Luthans (2006), authentic leaders mine knowledge from even the seemingly insignificant sources. Building capacity as noted by Drucker (2008) improves performance and thus promoting competence in a leader.

Supporting and appreciating others: The respondents stated that they sought to encourage, appreciate, support or show kindness to at least one person every day. They did this in various ways, including smiling, saying a kind word to someone like, "you're smart", choosing not to be rude even when tempted to do so, giving a helping hand whenever in a position and listening to people's feedback. One of the leaders explained how she involves the team in celebrating every milestone whether big or small. This according to her enables the team to feel appreciated and recognized. The leaders realized that they thrive through people and did as much as they could to improve their relationships. Kouzes and Posner (2011) have noted that leadership is relationship based and people first believe in the messenger before they can take the message. According to Northouse (2016), leadership is influence and people follow leaders who seem to care. Kouzes and Posner (2011) argue that appreciating constituents is one principle of growing in credibility. It involves understanding their values and believes, appreciating their feedback and showing genuine concern for them. Reaching out to support other people requires humility on the part of a leader which is an essential character in developing credibility. Appreciating the team as noted by Kouzes and Posner (2011) promotes performance and thus improving the leader's credibility. People have a great desire to be valued and to be recognized. They want to know that they are contributing to the welfare of the organization or the team.

Prayer: One of the respondents said that prayer was one of her daily habits. She intimated that she felt ready to face any kind of situation after engaging in prayer. According to her, prayer involved invoking a higher power that could intervene in every situation. Fry et al (2005) as cited in Oginde (2011) provided strong support for spiritual leadership theory. They provided evidence that followers who have hope/faith in a transcendent vision within a context of the values of altruistic love have a higher sense of calling and membership, are more committed to their organization, and describe their work units as more productive. Though this construct is not explicitly noted in most literature reviewed, some authors (Oginde, 2011, Fry,et al, 2005) have noted significant impact of spirituality on performance. Oginde (2011) noted that, people with a high sense of calling perceive their work as a spiritual vocation and demonstrate a high level of commitment and performance. Apart from self –awareness and self – regulation constructs of authentic leadership advanced by Gardner and Avolio (2005) and Klenke (2005) also advanced the concept of spirituality in authentic leadership. According to Klenke (2005), spirituality which comprises of sense of meaning, transcendence and self-sacrifice contribute to the growth of authenticity in leadership.

5.1 Conclusion

This study sought to establish the qualities and the principles that contribute to the making of a credible, authentic leader. From the research study, there are several themes that emerged that can be associated to the making of a credible, authentic leader.

1) Offering support
2) Honest
3) Commitment
4) Consistent
5) Learner
6) Spiritual (Prayerful, Godly, hopeful)
7) Good planner
8) Carries out self-evaluation
9) Defines values
10) Responsible

The above themes suggested by the respondents are in line with existing theories and concepts of credible leadership. This paper concludes that, for someone to grow in leadership credibility and authenticity, there are various important qualities they need to possess. These include genuine support for people, self- awareness which is the ability to define their values and beliefs, committed to a purpose, responsible, good planner, honest, consistent learner, carries out personal evaluation and spiritual.

This study is not conclusive because the credible, authentic leadership constructs need to be verified empirically. At the same time, the results cannot be generalized due to the small size of the sample. The use of sample from the same locality may also be another limitation. However, the information adds to the body of knowledge and corresponds with the extant credible and authentic leadership theories especially by Kouzes and Posner (2011), Avolio and Luthans (2006) and Avolio et al (2004).

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