

A CASE STUDY ON RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP IN A RENEWABLE ENERGY ORGANISATION IN THE EASTERN CAPE

By

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DECLARATION

I, Chulumanco Mdingi, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my original work and has not previously, in its entirety or in part, been submitted at any university for a degree.



Signature

-----01 July 2022----

Date

ABSTRACT

This research was a case study of responsible leadership in a renewable energy organisation in the Eastern Cape. The study aimed to understand and describe how a renewable energy organisation applies responsible leadership to build trust. The four objectives of the study were namely to: (1) describe how the organisation interacts with its stakeholders to build trust; (2) understand how the members of the organisation demonstrate the characteristics of responsible leadership; (3) understand how different stakeholders perceive and experience the interaction of the company with established stakeholders; (4) make recommendations that a renewable energy organisation can exercise the characteristics of responsible leadership to develop its stakeholder engagement framework.

In the study the stakeholder theory was applied as the theoretical framework, and the theory encourages organisations to determine the "power, legitimacy, and urgency" of stakeholders with whom they interact. A qualitative approach was used in this study. The data collection method was semi-structured interviews for all 12 participants. Data were analysed through a deductive thematic approach to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes within the data collected.

The study showed that the wind farm unintentionally applies some components of responsible leadership among its stakeholders. Openness, transparency, and communication are critical actions that this organisation undertakes to cultivate trust among both its internal and external stakeholders. External stakeholders experience this organisation differently. There are mixed feelings regarding how the wind farm conducts its stakeholder engagement activities, particularly relating to landowners and government institutions. A stakeholder engagement framework is imperative if an organisation is to maintain cordial relations with its stakeholders.

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This research project would not have been possible without the guidance, insights, and patience of my supervisor, Mr Kevin Rafferty. It was a challenge to see this thesis to satisfactory completion. As the researcher, I struggled throughout the journey, but my supervisor's expertise on the subject continuously assisted and kept me on track. His background in leadership concepts contributed immensely to my academic and professional development. The consistent feedback I received from him significantly helped me remain focused and actively engaged in literature to better understand and construct the study.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	1
CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT AND PURPOSE	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH	1
1.3 METHODOLOGY	2
1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY	2
1.5 RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	3
1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
1.7 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY	6
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1. INTRODUCTION.....	7
2.2. STAKEHOLDER THEORY	7
2.3. RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP.....	8
2.3.1. Characteristics of responsible leadership	8
2.3.1.1. Respect.....	8
2.3.1.2. Care.....	9
2.3.1.3. Honesty.....	10
2.3.1.4. Accountability	10
2.3.1.5. Humility.....	11
2.3.1.6. Trust.....	11
2.3.1.7. Active citizenship.....	12

2.4. TRUST BUILDING	13
2.4.1. Integrity.....	14
2.4.2. Benevolence.....	14
2.4.3. Ability.....	14
2.5. EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP	15
2.6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	16
2.7. DISCUSSION OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	16
2.8. PROPOSITIONS.....	17
2.9. CHAPTER SUMMARY	17
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ON RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP IN A RENEWABLE ENERGY COMPANY IN THE EASTERN CAPE.....	18
3.1 INTRODUCTION	18
3.2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND FRAMEWORK	18
3.3 CASE STUDY DESIGN	19
3.4 RESEARCH METHODS AND TOOLS.....	19
3.5 SAMPLING STRATEGIES	20
3.6 VERIFICATION	21
3.6.1 Reliability.....	22
3.6.2 Validity.....	22
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS.....	23
3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	24
3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY	24
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	26
4.1. INTRODUCTION	26
4.2. RESULTS.....	26
4.2.1. Data collection.....	26

4.2.2. Data presentation	27
Table 4.2.2.1: Description of the study's themes	29
Table 4.2.2.2: Reliability testing of codes through the data collection process	33
4.3. THE CASE STUDY.....	38
4.3.1. Description of trust – How the renewable organisation builds trust.	39
4.4. RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP	40
4.4.1. Characteristics of responsible leadership.....	40
4.4.2. Trust building	47
4.4.3. Effective stakeholder engagement.....	50
4.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY	51
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	53
5.1. INTRODUCTION	53
5.2. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS	53
5.3. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT.....	56
5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	57
5.4.1. Delimitations of the study	57
5.4.2. Limitations of the study	57
5.4.3. Contribution of the study	57
REFERENCES.....	60
APPENDIX A – DISCUSSION GUIDE.....	67
APPENDIX B – INFORMED CONSENT	71
APPENDIX C – ETHICAL CLEARANCE	74
APPENDIX D – CODING MANUAL.....	75
APPENDIX E – VALIDATING AND USING THE CODE	80

CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research study aimed to understand and describe how a renewable energy organisation applies responsible leadership to build trust among its stakeholders. The research was premised in the context of responsible leadership and stakeholder theory, including how an organisation cultivates trust among its stakeholders. The research sought to answer the question: "How does a renewable energy organisation apply responsible leadership to build trust among its stakeholders?"

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

In 1987 the United Nations (UN) hosted the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) to deliberate climate change. The theme of the conference was "Our common future". The outcome of that conference was the Brundtland Report, which became a framework for other climate-orientated initiatives. The report provided a classic definition of sustainable development, which is "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations, 1987).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are a global aspiration, were launched by the UN in 2015. The SDGs comprise 17 goals which are intended to be responded to by all, in various ways possible, to address global challenges by the year 2030, for example, "poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice" (United Nations, 2015, p.37). Omer and Noguchi (2020, p.2) state that there shall be recognition of the interrelatedness of SDGs as this is essential in making progress towards reaching the targets. Consequently, as a response to climate change, renewable energy has been promoted globally as the most viable alternative to fossil fuels.

According to Gomaa, et al. (2019, p.2), renewable energy generation will constitute approximately 69% of total energy by 2040. China, the United States and Germany currently boast 19.7 GW, 7GW and 6.1 GW respectively of wind energy. The development of the renewable energy industry is a significant step towards reducing carbon emissions.

The Republic of South Africa (RSA) launched the Renewable Energy Power Producers Procurement Programme (REI4P) in 2011 to respond to the country's growing energy needs. South Africa's renewable industry is intertwined with the "broader social, economic and political forces" (Baker, 2015, p.47). According to the White Paper on Renewable Energy, the long-term goal of establishing a renewable energy industry in South Africa must be inclusive through BEE and sustainable employment creation (White Paper on Renewable Energy, 2003, p.3).

Omri (2021, p.2) states renewable energy studies have primarily focused on economic growth, human development and the environment. The law requires Independent Power Producers to establish relationships with various stakeholders to implement the socio-economic development plans.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The study is an exploratory study grounded in a constructivist research paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.110). According to Creswell (2007, p.20), constructivists investigate and explore participants' subjective lived experiences. This approach is often used in tandem with interpretivism (ibid). The study consisted of two senior managers (Plant Manager and Economic Development Manager) and one Economic Development Specialist from the wind farm, two Local Economic Development (LED) officials from both the local and district municipality, three owners of SMME businesses, and four project managers of NGOs are examined. Lastly, the study explored how the wind farm applies the principles of responsible leadership and how they affect the identified stakeholders.

A non-random purposive sampling strategy was used in this study. Taherdoost (2016, p.23) noted that participants are selected based on the researcher's subjective judgment of their significance to the study. A sample of twelve participants was selected in this study. Due to the purely qualitative nature of the study, the analysis was therefore conducted using a deductive thematic approach. The seven steps used for deductive thematic analysis proposed by Pearse (2019, p.2) were employed in this study.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Shi and Ye (2016) note that responsible leadership is critical in addressing competing stakeholder needs, and current research is being conducted in western countries. In

the context of history, politics, culture and diversity, the application of responsible leadership still needs to be explored in developing countries (Shi and Ye, 2016, p.882). This perspective has been neglected, and the researcher identified a gap that could be empirically explored in the South African context of renewable energy. More so, the renewable industry is still in its infancy in South Africa, and the researcher was not able to find recent and relevant studies conducted in the sector.

The study explored how responsible leadership is applied in a renewable energy organisation. Literature suggests that trust is critical in constructing sustainable stakeholder relationships (Crane, 2020). The purpose of this study was to explore, understand and analyse how an organisation ensures both internal and external stakeholders have confidence in its leadership as embodying integrity, benevolence, care, accountability and ability.

1.5 RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study's research problem was concerned with understanding and describing how a renewable energy organisation applies responsible leadership to build and strengthen stakeholder relationships. The case study in this research is a renewable energy organisation that began commercial operations in 2016. The field of research was Responsible Leadership. This study drew from stakeholder theory, which encourages organisations to determine and recognise their stakeholders' "power, legitimacy, and urgency" (Mitchell, 1997, p.855). This theory is concerned with "(1) the stakeholder's power to influence the firm, (2) the legitimacy of the stakeholder's relationship with the firm, and (3) the urgency of the stakeholder's claim on the firm" (Donaldson and Preston, 1995, p.854). According to this perspective, an organisation must consider all legitimate needs of the stakeholders affected by its operations. Some of the stakeholders include employees, suppliers, communities, political groups, customers, political groups, trade associations and investors (Donaldson and Preston, 1995).

An organisation concerned with sustainable development, product stewardship and pollution prevention can improve its reputation among its stakeholders. According to the stakeholder theory, a stakeholder is anyone who affects or is affected by an organisation's operations (Mitchell, 1997, p.854). Stakeholder theory can be used to understand the "past, present, and future states of affairs of corporations and their

stakeholders" (Donaldson and Preston, 1995, p.69). This theory is critical to understanding how stakeholders affect or are affected by the activities of an organisation. The components of responsible leadership, such as "respect, care, honesty, accountability, humility, trust, and active citizenship" (Maak and Pless, 2006, p.104), align well with stakeholder theory. Furthermore, such leadership provides legitimacy and credibility amongst its stakeholders, as responsible leadership relates to mobilising both internal and external stakeholders "to contribute to business sustainability and legitimacy" (Maak and Pless, 2006, p.104).

Responsible leadership is a complex concept that stakeholders perceive differently in society, and it is also an "ethical phenomenon" (Maak and Pless, 2006, p.103). This concept requires leaders to exhibit specific positive attributes. Responsible leadership is defined as "the art of building and sustaining good relationships to all relevant stakeholders" (Maak and Pless, 2006, p.104). Maak (2007, p.334) adds that responsible leadership involves "building, cultivating and sustaining trustful relationships to different stakeholders." This includes paying attention to both the organisation's internal and external environment while coordinating and implementing its strategic vision, which is appreciating the stakeholder framework. One can deduce that this type of leadership is different from the classic shareholder centric perspective.

Donaldson and Walsh (2015) note that businesses have lost legitimacy through various scandals in the United States of America, such as accounting irregularities, corruption and environmental transgressions. Responsible leadership embodies "staying true, being authentic, leading with integrity", states George (2003, cited in Maak and Pless, 2006, p.104), to advance the ethical principles required in a leadership role. Critical characteristics of a responsible leader are "respect, care, honesty, accountability, humility, trust, and active citizenship; and they should practice 'introspection'" (Maak and Pless, 2006, p.104). Responsible leadership is a leadership concept that can significantly benefit an organisation if its characteristics are applied.

Yukl (2012) identified two critical areas that one might link to responsible leadership: external monitoring and representation as an element of leadership. The former focuses on external activities and identifying opportunities and threats, while the latter entails lobbying, mobilising resources, managing the organisation's external image, and liaising with stakeholders Yukl (2012). Therefore, "the leader becomes a co-

ordinator and a cultivator of relationships towards different stakeholder groups” (Maak and Pless, 2006, p.100), thereby exercising leadership.

Crane (2020, p.264) argues that an organisation must evaluate the interconnectedness of its stakeholders, including paying attention to each of their needs to build trust. Trust building is essential in strengthening relationships with different stakeholders. As previously noted, Maak and Pless (2006, p.104) state that trust is a key component of responsible leadership to building lasting relationships with stakeholders. Furthermore, Crane (2020, p.265) highlights emergent perceptions of other stakeholders towards an organisation when interacting with one stakeholder. Crane (2020) also stresses the interconnectedness of stakeholders, and that if an organisation wishes to be perceived positively, it must always be mindful of the needs of all its stakeholders. According to Poon (2013, p.398) trust building involves exercising acts of integrity, benevolence and ability.

This study aimed to understand how a renewable energy organisation applies principles of responsible leadership to build trust among its stakeholders.

1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research was to understand and describe how a renewable energy organisation applies responsible leadership to build trust among its stakeholders.

Objectives:

- To describe how the organisation interacts with its stakeholders to build trust
- To understand how the members of the organisation demonstrate the characteristics of responsible leadership
- To understand how different stakeholders perceive and experience the interaction of the company with established stakeholders
- To make recommendations that a renewable energy organisation can exercise the characteristics of responsible leadership to develop its own stakeholder engagement framework

1.7 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: This chapter provides an introduction to the study. It presents the research, research methodology, the significance of the study, the objectives and the outline of other chapters in this study.

Chapter 2: This chapter offers the theoretical context of responsible leadership within stakeholder theory. The chapter further explores characteristics of responsible leadership, including the process of trust building.

Chapter 3: This chapter covers the process followed in conducting the study, namely the research methodology, paradigm and the research method used. Data gathering techniques, analysis methods and ethical considerations are also covered in this chapter.

Chapter 4: In this chapter, key findings obtained during interviews are covered and are presented in relation to the stated propositions. A discussion of findings is further covered in the chapter.

Chapter 5: The conclusion of the study to emphasise the key findings is covered in this final chapter. The managerial implications of the findings, including the acknowledgment of the study's limitations, delimitations and recommendations, is provided in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the literature on stakeholder theory which formed the theoretical framework of this study. It further examines the literature on responsible leadership, characteristics of responsible leadership, application of responsible leadership within an organisation, as well as trust building. The principles of integrity, benevolence and ability are explored. Lastly, this chapter introduces the propositions that were tested in the study.

2.2. STAKEHOLDER THEORY

Stakeholder theory encourages organisations to determine the “power, legitimacy, and urgency” (Mitchell, 1997, p.855) of stakeholders with whom they interact. Stakeholder theory is concerned with “(1) the stakeholder’s power to influence the firm, (2) the legitimacy of the stakeholder’s relationship with the firm, and (3) the urgency of the stakeholder’s claim on the firm” (Donaldson and Preston, 1995, p.854). According to this perspective, an organisation should consider all legitimate needs of the stakeholders affected by its operations. Stakeholders are internal and external to an organisation, and the former refers to employees, shareholders and management, whereas the latter refers to suppliers, communities, political groups, customers, political groups, trade associations and investors (Donaldson and Preston, 1995, p.69).

An organisation concerned with sustainable development, product stewardship and pollution prevention can have an improved reputation among its stakeholders. According to the stakeholder theory, a stakeholder is anyone who affects or is affected by an organisation’s operations (Mitchell, 1997, p.854). Stakeholder theory could be used to understand the “past, present, and future states of affairs of corporations and their stakeholders” (Donaldson and Preston, 1995, p.69). This theory is critical to understanding how both internal and external stakeholders affect or are affected by the activities of an organisation. Therefore, in responsible leadership, this theory is relevant to generating insights.

2.3. RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

Responsible leadership is defined as “the art of building and sustaining good relationships to all relevant stakeholders” (Maak and Pless, 2006, p.104). In addition, responsible leadership is a complex concept that stakeholders perceive differently, and it is also an “ethical phenomenon” (Maak and Pless, 2006, p.103). Maak (2007, p.334) further posits that responsible leadership involves “building, cultivating and sustaining trustful relationships to different stakeholders”. These values include paying attention to the organisation’s internal and external environment while appreciating the stakeholder framework and coordinating and implementing its strategic vision.

Donaldson and Walsh (2015) note that businesses lost legitimacy through various scandals in the United States of America, such as accounting irregularities, corruption and environmental transgressions. Responsible leadership requires one to be “staying true, being authentic, leading with integrity” (George, 2003, cited in Maak and Pless, 2006, p.104) to advance the ethical principles required in a leadership role.

2.3.1. Characteristics of responsible leadership

Critical characteristics of a responsible leader are “respect, care, honesty, accountability, humility, trust, and active citizenship; and they should practice ‘introspection’” (Maak and Pless, 2006, p.104). Yukl (2012) identified two critical areas that one might link to responsible leadership, namely: external monitoring and representation as an element of leadership. The former focuses on external activities, identifying opportunities and threats, while the latter entails lobbying, mobilising resources, managing the organisation’s external image, and liaising with stakeholders (Yukl, 2012). Therefore, “the leader becomes a co-ordinator and a cultivator of relationships towards different stakeholder groups” (Maak and Pless, 2006, p.100), thereby exercising leadership.

2.3.1.1. Respect

According to Blader and Yu (2017, p.4), respect is interpersonal and a psychological phenomenon. Similarly, Rudolph, et al. (2021) state that the respect concept can refer to “people’s attitudes, values, and/or actions directed towards others that convey appreciation” (Rudolph, et al., 2021, p.1). Janoff-Bulman and Werther (2008, p.19) postulate that respect is a higher degree of valuing others but does not necessarily mean devaluing oneself. Another definition of respect is drawn from the respectful

leadership school of thought. Respectful leadership is defined as “respectful behaviours enacted by visionary leaders, suggesting that such leaders respect and treat others respectfully” Sashkin (1988a, 1988b, cited in Rudolph, et al., 2021, p.3). One can therefore deduce from this perspective that respect requires reciprocity from either party.

According to Janoff-Bulman and Werther (2008, p.3), people grouped as part of a particular society are fundamentally glued together by mutual respect. Furthermore, the author states that there are two types of respect, namely categorical respect and contingent respect. The former refers to in-group inclusion and recognition of one’s existence to have a voice (Cremer and Tyler, 2005, p.123). The latter refers to assigning an individual a higher status within a group setting, for example, due to their advanced knowledge and expertise in a subject matter and perhaps feelings of heightened psychological satisfaction (Jackson, et al., 2001, p.49).

2.3.1.2. Care

Lawrence and Maitlis (2012, p.642) argue that most literature has ignored the concept of care and compassion, particularly the ethic of care concept. Tomkins and Simpson (2015, p.1014) state that care has long been viewed as a reaction to suffering or pain. Furthermore, these scholars posit that an ethic of care refers to “moral development more closely associated with the feminine, in contrast to a more rule-based and impersonal justice associated with masculine maturation” (Tomkins and Simpson, 2015, p.1014).

Gabriel (2009, p.383) states that ethics of care is critical in cultivating lasting relations that allow individuals to flourish, trust, respect and be responsible for one another. Similarly, Younger (2021, p.11) argues that well-processed feedback is paramount in developing trust and nurturing relationships. According to a management seminal scholar, Heidegger (1962, cited in Tomkins and Simpson, 2015, p.1016), care is demonstrated in two ways and requires different intervention qualities. The author states that the two concepts are where the carer leaps in (*einspringen*) or leaps ahead (*vorausspringen*). Tomkins and Simpson (2015, p.1016) state that the former refers to substitutive intervention where the carer assumes control of a particular situation and resolves it according to their preferences. This involves the carer putting themselves in another person’s shoes until the matter is brought to its logical conclusion. The care-

recipient can remain in the situation or abort himself/herself. The latter refers to the carer encouraging the care recipient to explore various progressive possibilities according to his/her own terms. This type is more collaborative and suggestive.

2.3.1.3. Honesty

According to Wells and Molina (2017, p.294), previous scholarship on honesty has followed three philosophical approaches, namely, “virtue (character-based), deontological (principle-based), and utilitarian (consequence-based) reasoning” (Wells and Molina, 2017, p.294). Similarly, Wells and Molina (2017, p.262) state that “honesty is a moral virtue”. Ethical leadership scholars corroborate this perspective as Brown, et al. (2005, p.119) suggest that “honesty and trustworthiness” have a direct effect on the morality of an individual. Wilson (2018, p.263) states that virtue could be likened to wisdom, compassion, justice, generosity and courage.

Scholarship on honesty tends to describe or relate it to certain types of behaviours, and thus a universal definition is hard to find. However, the Lexico online dictionary defines honesty as “free of deceit; truthful and sincere; morally correct and virtuous” (Lexico, 2022). Furthermore, behaviours associated with honesty include “truthfulness; respect for property rights; proper compliance (playing by the rules, not cheating); fidelity to promises; forthrightness” (Miller, 2017, cited in Roberts and West, 2020, p.98). In concluding this section on honesty, it is worth noting that a seminal scholar of philosophy on the subject argues that “The virtue of honesty is, centrally, a character trait concerned with reliably not intentionally distorting the facts” (Miller, 2017, cited in Wilson, 2018 p.268).

2.3.1.4. Accountability

Accountability is defined as “the ability to provide answers to higher authorities over the actions of a person/group of people to the wider community within an organization” (Khotami, 2017, p.30). Similarly, Jenkin (2014, p.87) states that accountability should not be about finding someone to blame when unfortunate events occur, but instead, it involves empowerment and leadership. Accountability sometimes refers to transparency and efficiency from leadership (Thomas, 2018, p.641). In an Environmental Impact Assessment study conducted in the mining sector in Peru, Li (2009, p.220) found that while the term accountability has similarities to responsibility, there are also fundamental differences. The author further argues that the former

refers to an organisation's obligation to respond to societies, including governments, to report performance on different outcomes. By contrast, the latter refers to "initiatives that do not necessarily require accounting to any specific entity" (Li, 2009, p.220).

2.3.1.5. Humility

Humility refers to the ability of an individual to control their ego by prioritising collective achievements and willingly putting personal interests behind themselves (Burton, 2018). Humility is defined as "being down to earth, unassuming, and willing to admit to mistakes (vis-à-vis being arrogant, self-centred, or conceited)" (Krumrei-Mancuso and Rowatt, 2021, p.1). Similarly, some scholars have defined humility as an "interpersonal characteristic that emerges in social contexts" (Owens and Hekman, 2016, p.1088). Furthermore, literature further describes humility as a willingness to view oneself accurately, an appreciation of others' strengths and contributions, and teachability or openness to new ideas and feedback (Xu, et al., 2019, p.159).

There are two levels of humility, namely interpersonal and intrapersonal humility (McElroy-Heltzel, et al., 2019). Van Tongeren, et al. (2019, p.463) argue that the former refers to the extent of one's concern about others and involves actively exhibiting modest behaviours, whereas the latter refers to an individual's self-awareness. Xu, et al. (2019, p.160) argue that humility, growth, desires and teachability are critical elements in leadership development. Anderson and Caldwell (2018, cited in Xu, et al., 2019, p.160) posit that humility also involves having a long-term view of issues, looking at the bigger picture and avoiding acting impulsively. These scholars further note that humility can be manifested as a vision, meaning one can be persistent despite the hurdles. In corroborating this view, such humility enhances commitment and builds trust (Ali Habi, et al., 2019, cited in Xu, et al., 2019, p.160).

2.3.1.6. Trust

Trust is defined as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the action of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party" (Mayer, et al., 1995, p.712). Similarly, a classical definition of trust drawn from the psychology discipline describes trust as a "psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of

another” (Rousseau, et al., 1998, p.395). The two definitions provided by these scholars are similar, and both emphasise the element of the vulnerability of one party to the other. In previous scholarship, the risk perspective has been absent in trust studies, which has limited the development of understanding of the associated elements of the absence (Das and Teng, 2004, p.87). Trust is studied across social science disciplines, including management studies.

2.3.1.7. Active citizenship

Naidoo (2001, p.80) states that active citizenship can be used interchangeably with corporate citizenship. This scholar further argues that active citizenship could be likened to volunteering. Corporate citizenship is described as a “social role, characterized by the social contract of business, a participatory ethics of business, the precautionary principle and the promotion of just international institutions” (Jeurissen, 2004, p.87). This perspective comes from sustainability studies and emphasises the role of business in society. According to Schwab (2015), corporate citizenship refers to the business concern with global problems such as environmental change, food security and cybersecurity. Similarly, Gardberg and Fombrun (2006, p.330) suggest corporate citizenship refers to developmental socioeconomic activities on which organisations embark to appear to be committed community members.

Clarke and Missingham (2009, p.955) note that active citizenship involves organisations using a bottom-up participatory approach to enhance civil society participation. According to Jeurissen (2004, p.89), it is against this background that organisations partner with stakeholders to develop solutions for social issues. Shea and Hawn (2019, p.1611) further argue that organisations are subject to stereotyping and social evaluation, therefore becoming subject to the moral standards that prevail in the area in which they operate. Jeurissen (2004, p.88) states that a social contract binds a citizen, and organisations ought to abide by them, which involves high moral loyalty. Another scholar, De George (1993, cited in Jeurissen, 2004, p.90), describes corporate citizenship as perceiving business organisations to be citizens who pursue a common good and having fidelity to the prevailing laws.

Donaldson and Preston (1995, p.182) wrote about the purpose of business in society and concluded that its role is to create shared value. Shared value is defined as “policies and operating practices that enhance the competitiveness of a company while

simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates” (Porter and Kramer, 2011, p.66). To achieve shared value through corporate citizenship, an organisation embarks on activities such as volunteerism, donations to development causes such as education and health care, including environmental protection efforts (Gardberg and Fombrun, 2006, p.330). Jeurissen (2004, p.87) further argues that corporate citizenship depends on interaction of various institutional conditions that influence the social impact of corporations.

These activities are performed through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Nwadior and Igwe (2013, p.18) state that CSR refers to an organisation’s deliberate efforts to address social and environmental problems, enhancing its positive impacts in communities where it operates. Through subscribing to the UN’s conventions on sustainable development, CSR is integrated into business models of forward-looking organisations. Sustainable development is defined in the Brundtland Report as “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations, 1987). The UN’s 17 SDGs call nations to address global challenges through policy reform, for example, “poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice” (United Nations, 2015). In light of the above, trust is identified as a key concept in building stakeholder relationships.

2.4. TRUST BUILDING

Crane (2020, p.264) argues that an organisation must evaluate the interconnectedness of its stakeholders, including paying attention to each of their needs to build trust. As discussed above, responsible leadership is people-centred and its characteristics require trust building to cultivate trusting relationships. Trust building is essential in strengthening relationships with different stakeholders. As previously noted, Maak and Pless (2006, p.104) state that trust is a crucial component of responsible leadership to build lasting relationships with stakeholders.

Furthermore, Crane (2020, p.265) highlights emergent perceptions of other stakeholders towards an organisation when interacting with one stakeholder. Crane (2020) also stresses the interconnectedness of stakeholders. According to Poon (2013, p.398), trust-building involves exercising acts of integrity, benevolence and ability.

2.4.1. Integrity

Integrity means that “a professional exercises [their] tasks adequately, carefully and responsibly, taking into account all relevant interests” Karssing, (2007, cited in Huberts, 2018, p.19). Similarly, Van Niekerk and May (2019, p.2) state that having integrity is the ability to establish a set of values and principles that are morally justified and that prioritise the preservation of core values. Furthermore, integrity is defined as “the quality of acting in accordance with socially accepted moral values, norms, and rules” states Huberts (1998, cited in Vargas-Hernández, et al., 2012, p.295). The literature also notes that integrity reflects the overall moral code within society and organisations. Leaders with integrity are willing to compromise their social and professional standing to advance justice, thereby enhancing their trustworthiness (Russell and Gregory Stone, 2002, p.148).

2.4.2. Benevolence

Benevolence is defined as “the confidence that another party has the other’s best interests at heart and will protect them by demonstrating caring, sincerity, discreteness, fairness, goodwill, empathy, a lack of opportunism, equitability, and altruism” (Di Battista, et al., 2020, p.2). Scholars such as Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999, p.187) understand benevolence as the comfort that one experiences resulting from believing an individual has their best interests, including counting on their goodwill. Karakas and Sarigollu (2013, p.666) attempted to develop a conceptual framework of benevolence and beneficence. They found that the former refers to morally sound behavioural traits, whereas the latter is more focused on the action executed for the benefit of others. It is apparent in literature that previous studies on benevolence focused on conceptual development rather than its application by organisations (Mercier and Deslandes, 2020, p.126).

2.4.3. Ability

According to Treviño, et al. (2003, p.123), having ability refers to establishing legitimacy by shaping the perception of others towards themselves through being effective in their tasks. The term also refers to a leader’s ability to make sound and moral judgments (Pless and Maak, 2011, p.8). Ability is “the knowledge, experience, and skill that an individual or group brings to a particular task or activity” (I.G.I. Global, 2022). This concept in the context of responsible leadership literature seems not to

have been sufficiently interrogated. However, the current definition does shed some clarity on how it fits into trust building and responsible leadership.

2.5. EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

According to Waldman and Balven (2014, p.224), responsible leadership cannot solely focus on organisations without considering the behaviours of decision-making individuals. Previous studies on responsible leadership have investigated the conduct of individuals and how they exhibit elements of responsible leadership within their organisations. Koh, et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative empirical study with 20 business leaders to investigate the application of responsible leadership in a Singaporean context. Four key themes emerged from the study and ranged from “people orientation, visible ethical actions and traits, setting ethical standards and accountability, and broad ethical awareness” (Koh, et al., 2018, p.37).

Antunes and Franco (2016) conducted a qualitative study among six Portuguese organisations and found that stakeholder involvement was a priority to the leaders of the organisations. Furthermore, these scholars note that Portuguese organisations do not see themselves as existing outside of society, but rather as crucial components of society and the environment (Antunes and Franco 2016, p.139). Similarly, Szczepańska-Woszczyna, et al. (2015) investigated principles of responsible leadership among Polish organisations and found that acceptance of leadership is dependent on respect and trust. Among Polish organisations, this includes the prioritisation of stakeholders’ needs. However, in conclusion, it was discovered that knowledge of responsible leadership is still at an elementary stage among Polish organisations.

Longest (2017) investigated the application of responsible leadership within the health sector in the United States of America. The author noted that ethical considerations guide responsible leaders, for example, they ensure beneficence by causing no harm to their stakeholders (Longest, 2017, p.11). Another critical dimension to the health sector organisations is that they focus on developing their surrounding communities by providing public health and reducing environmental harm. This scholar further concluded that responsible leaders consider “the wants, needs, and preferences of the multiple stakeholders of the organizations they lead” (Longest, 2017, p.14).

A standout factor from the studies cited above is that responsible leadership emphasises the consideration of stakeholders. Furthermore, the principles of responsible leadership are necessary to realise stability within an organisation. Koh, et al. (2018, p.44) noted that in Singapore, leaders perceived effective and responsible leadership as inter-related, and they attribute their effectiveness to honesty, integrity and trustworthiness. In essence, Stahl and Sully de Luque (2014, p.239) argue that responsible leadership involves the ability to align the competing interests of stakeholders and take the most ethically sound decisions. The industries investigated are not related to renewable energy. Empirical studies on applying responsible leadership in the African context are scarce.

2.6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

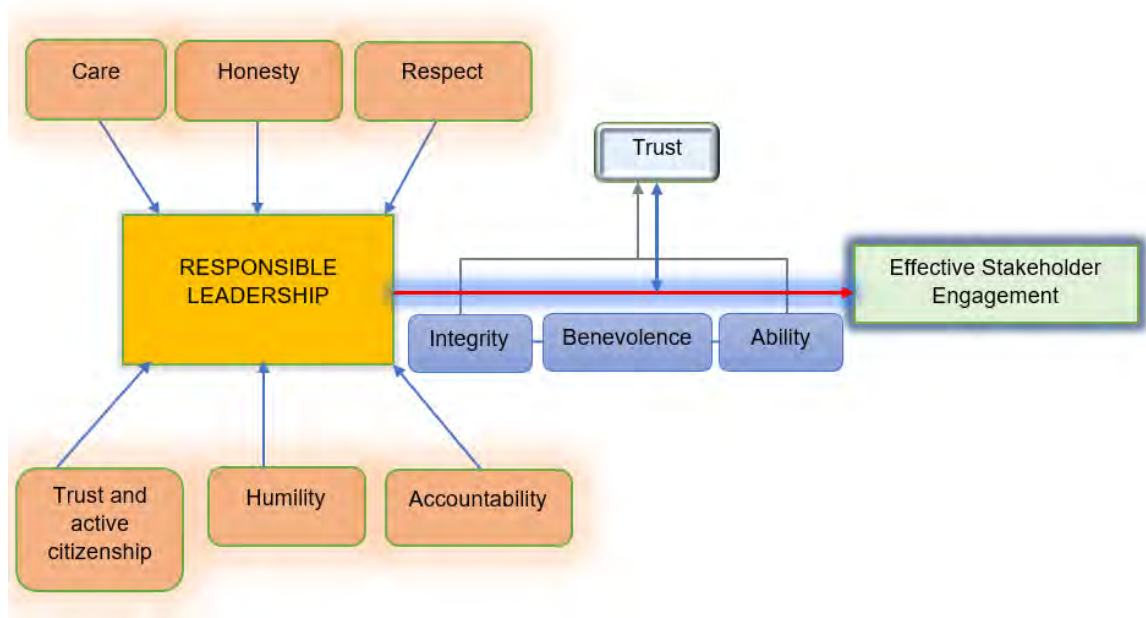


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.7. DISCUSSION OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Above is a conceptual framework used in the study to develop an understanding of the application responsible leadership principles with an organisation. The elements reflected (characteristics of responsible leadership) illustrate how each component builds into effective stakeholder engagement. Trust is an outcome of integrity, benevolence, and ability. It is a mediating variable which helps an organisation to cultivate and maintain stakeholder relationships. Miles and Huberman (1994, p.18),

describe a conceptual framework as a graphic or narrative representation of the interaction of critical elements, constructs, and variables to be studied.

2.8. PROPOSITIONS

1. *Responsible leadership requires acts of care, honesty, respect, trust and active citizenship, humility and accountability to achieve effective stakeholder engagement.*
2. *Acts of integrity, benevolence, and ability are critical for an organisation to build trust among stakeholders.*
3. *Trust is the ultimate mediator for effective stakeholder engagement.*

2.9. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This section has discussed various elements of responsible leadership, including its characteristics. It considered how a responsible leader builds trust to increase legitimacy among stakeholders. This chapter specifically focused on responsible leadership and deliberately did not discuss other forms of leadership as part of the literature review. This section purposely covered the characteristics of responsible leadership in the context of effective stakeholder engagement. Three propositions emerged based on the harmonisation of the responsible leadership characteristics. The propositions of this study are listed below.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ON RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP IN A RENEWABLE ENERGY COMPANY IN THE EASTERN CAPE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes research methodology used in the study on *Responsible Leadership in a renewable energy company in the Eastern Cape*. It provides steps followed in conducting the study and methodological choices made. This section also discusses their possible shortcomings and strengths and how such issues were encountered and addressed. In addition, this chapter provides the justification and significance of adopting specific methodological approaches.

3.2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND FRAMEWORK

The study is an exploratory study grounded in a constructivist research paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.110). According to Creswell (2007, p.20), constructivists investigate and explore participants' subjective lived experiences. This approach is sometimes used in tandem with interpretivism (ibid). In the context of this study, the lived experiences of two senior managers (Plant Manager and Economic Development Manager) and one Economic Development Specialist from the wind farm, two Local Economic Development (LED) Managers from both the local and district municipality, three owners of SMME businesses and four project managers of NGOs are investigated. Furthermore, the study explores how the wind farm applies the principles of responsible leadership and how they affect the identified stakeholders.

A constructivist approach is an in-depth approach that allows the researcher to understand individuals' subjective meanings while the inquirer interacts with the participants (Lee, 2012, p.407). As such, the study's objective is to describe a phenomenon as understood by the participants with as many details as possible according to phenomenological research principles. Finlay (2013, p.190) argues that phenomenologists need advanced description capabilities. Such an approach guided the researcher to better understand the participants' experiences without being clouded by personal preconceptions. The interpretivist paradigm is also utilised in this study. It is worth noting that the interpretivist approach highlights participants' subjective accounts, and they are not necessarily passive in phenomenological research (Taylor and Medina, 2013). As such, the researcher prioritised participants' voices, and his interpretive role was considered throughout the research process.

3.3 CASE STUDY DESIGN

This research is an empirical case study. The thesis used methods that conform to case study analysis to understand the application of responsible leadership at the Eastern Cape wind farm. This analysis deepened the researcher's insights on how principles of responsible leadership are applied at the wind farm and how various stakeholder relationships are cultivated and maintained by the organisation.

A case study research is described as a "qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case)... through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (Creswell, 2007, p.73). This research is an instrumental case study because the researcher's primary objective was to understand how a renewable energy organisation applies principles of responsible leadership. Sandelowski (2011) states that an instrumental case study is concerned with understanding a phenomenon, and researchers create their case based on their interests. Rashid, et al. (2019, p.2) note that a case study provides rich text emanating from complex social processes, and in certain instances, information is gathered through more than one medium. This case study is therefore interested in how the wind energy organisation applies and negotiates principles of responsible leadership. A case study design was suited for this research study since it sought to understand the lived experiences of the representative of the organisation and stakeholders.

A case is selected based on the research question design and the purpose of the study (Guetterman and Fetters, 2018). The selection of the wind energy organisation was based on the fact that the renewable industry is new in South Africa, and organisations are required to invest in the socio-economic development initiatives of local communities. The other reason for selecting this company emanates from the researcher's interest in leadership behaviours in the context of maintaining stakeholder relationships.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODS AND TOOLS

Semi-structured interviews were conducted for both participants from the wind farm and external stakeholders. Adams (2015, p.493) states that semi-structured involves in-depth, open-ended questions followed by interrogative questions beginning with "How" and "Why". A discussion guide is only used to keep the interview within its set parameters (*Appendix A*). Interviews were scheduled telephonically and by email. One

interview was conducted through a video conferencing platform (Zoom) with the video functionality switched on. All other participants were available for face-to-face interviews. The first interviews were conducted with the three officials of the wind farm. Two of the interviews were conducted at the wind farm's project site. The remainder of the interviews were conducted at each stakeholder's office.

In one case, due to distance and time considerations, data collection was conducted virtually using Zoom. A video conferencing platform compensated for the absence of face-to-face interaction. It prevented the loss of non-verbal data that could be observed through certain physical and facial expressions. Gray, et al. (2020, p.1293) state that a video conferencing platform has advantages such as saving time and cost, including reducing the impact of bad weather that may prevent face-to-face interaction. Participants in virtual interviews are relaxed and willing to express themselves and often appreciate the convenience (Deakin and Wakefield, 2014). Similarly, Mabragaña, et al. (2013, p.868) found that participants are more open and willing to share intimate communication in virtual interviews.

3.4.1. Semi-structured Interviews

As stated above, semi-structured interviews were conducted in this study. Adams (2015, p.493) states that a researcher conducts semi-structured interviews through a discussion guide to guide the discussion and help with follow-up probing questions. The interviews were not rigid, and the questions were open-ended. All participants willingly participated in the study and shared intimate details relevant to the topics covered in the discussion guide.

3.5 SAMPLING STRATEGIES

Sampling is defined as the selection of a part of a population to infer judgments (Haque, 1996). Haque (1996, p.4) further states that a sample comprises a representative number of individuals or objects selected from a wider population. A non-random purposive sampling strategy was used in this study. Taherdoost (2016, p.23) noted that participants are selected based on the researcher's subjective judgment of their significance to the study. The value of purposive sampling is based on the participant's in-depth knowledge of the topics covered in the study, and the researcher carefully considers who to include in the sample (Creswell, 2007). The sample in this study consisted of a total of 12 participants. The participants included

two senior managers (Plant Manager and Economic Development Manager) and one Economic Development Specialist from the wind farm. In addition, there were two Local Economic Development (LED) Managers from both the local and district municipality, three owners of SMME businesses and four project managers of NGOs.

According to Creswell (2007, p.128), as part of a purposive sampling strategy, the researcher selects participants who can provide insight into the study's research problem and central phenomenon. According to the researcher's judgment, those directly involved with the wind farm were selected in the study as participants. As mentioned above, using a purposive sampling technique, 12 participants were selected for the study. They are various stakeholders within the wind farm, and they all provided substantive data to consider during the analysis phase of the study. Among external stakeholders, data saturation was reached on the fifth participant. The variety of responses from other participants provided augmented the responses of the internal stakeholders of the wind farm. The government official offered a different institutional perspective on the topics covered in the study. The sample was taken from them wind farm was drawn from a population of 13 employees. Whereas stakeholders interviewed came from various organisations supported by the wind farm. Institutional voices represented government organisation working closely with the industry.

To gain access to the wind farm, the researcher approached the site manager, who also linked other internal stakeholders. The site manager was willing to participate in the study due to recognising the value and significance of the insights generated in the outcomes. Despite the busy schedule of the site manager and other stakeholders, appointments ensured that they could reserve time to participate in the study. External stakeholder's interviews were organised telephonically and via email; however, the researcher ensured that the participants did not feel pressurised to participate in the study by making them aware that participation was completely voluntary.

3.6 VERIFICATION

Verification is defined as the "process of checking, confirming, making sure, and being certain" (Morse, et al., 2002, p.17). Furthermore, assurance of validity, reliability, and rigor of qualitative studies can be achieved through verification (ibid). Through reflecting on the design and execution of the process, the review of the instruments for collecting data, and the analysis of the collected data, various verification

mechanisms were applied. Additionally, other verification strategies followed to ensure data quality include: systematic sampling, collection and analysis of data simultaneously to ensure a parallel interaction between what is known and what needs to be understood.

3.6.1 Reliability

Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Golafshani, 2015, p.601) state that in qualitative studies, reliability must be understood as dependability, which refers to examining consistency in the research process and outcome. The researcher ensured reliability by member checking. Audio and soft copies of the data were stored with a password on the online file hosting service, Dropbox, and hard copies were stored in a locked cabinet for safekeeping. These processes allowed the researcher to verify findings against the recorded data and share them with participants to confirm their accounts. Documenting the entire research process is also vital for conducting a similar study in the future.

3.6.2 Validity

Bashir, Afzal and Azeem (2008, p.41) argue the validity of an explanation is the degree of congruence between it and the realities of the world. Furthermore, Creswell (2007, p.206) states that validity assesses the accuracy of findings and "thick descriptions" used by the Research contribute to the study's strength. Validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument accurately captured what is reflected in the findings; however, a term primarily used in qualitative studies is trustworthiness and dependability (Mohajan, 2017). The study used various data validation methods such as peer review and member checking. This approach helped to ensure rigor in the study and validate both the research process and participants' accounts.

Creswell (2007, p.207) expanded on three techniques that were used in this study to ensure credibility, namely:

- a. Prolonged engagement – Emerging themes from data were thoroughly analysed until saturation was reached over a significant amount of time.
- b. Peer debriefing – The researcher discussed the findings with the supervisor and other colleagues throughout the research process. Throughout the research process, the conclusions were shared and discussed.

- c. Reflexivity – Reflexivity is about monitoring bias. The researcher declared their relationship to the wind farm. The responses of some participants might be affected by their preconceptions.

Furthermore, a verbatim account of the participants' responses was captured in their literal sense (Bashir, Afzal and Azeem, 2008, p.43).

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

This was a purely qualitative study, and so the analysis of data was conducted using a deductive thematic approach. The seven steps for deductive thematic analysis proposed by Pearse (2019, p.2) were employed in this study. Additionally, five other steps considered included: data transcription, categorisation and coding according to themes emerging from literature. Thematic clusters were used to categorise each sub-theme (Creswell, 2007, p.148). Such a categorisation involved identifying specific themes, for example, the application of the principles of responsible leadership by the wind farm and the experience of such behaviour by the selected stakeholders. A thematic analysis was conducted on the prominence of specific themes. Lastly, data analysis involved grouping similar responses under a relevant theme and ranking according to their reoccurrence (*Appendix D*). This approach was valuable because the researcher could identify relations between prevalent responses and literature.

The preceding points illustrate that it is important to look for inconsistencies and patterns of convergence among themes when analysing data. However, an essential aspect of this study is that data analyses were not only conducted at the end of the study. As data emerged from the fieldwork, analysis was performed concurrently. This approach enabled the researcher the opportunity to review the research questions after every data collection session and check whether there are questions that require reformulation or further exploration if there was an opportunity for a follow-up interview.

Approximately 83% of the interviews were conducted in English as most participants could speak the language and indicated that they were comfortable using it to express themselves. This made the analysis process more efficient when transcribing data using the text transcription software, Otter.ai. Two interviews were conducted in *Xhosa*, and analysis involved transcribing and translating data into English. It was also imperative that the researcher was mindful of the risk of losing the detail and context of the responses through the translation process.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of this section is to highlight the study's ethical considerations. In the study, different ethical considerations were taken into account, such as privacy and anonymity, informed consent and respect for confidentiality (*Appendix D*). All participants were made aware of and assured that this study was purely for academic purposes. Furthermore, an opportunity to not participate in the study was offered to all participants, including indicating whether they wish to be anonymised in the final write-up, and none of them were coerced into participating. Some participants expressed wishing their identities to be anonymised, and therefore pseudonyms were used to express their views, for example, P1 or P2. The researcher displayed fidelity to the ethical principles of good research practice.

The researcher first obtained the participant's permission before deploying a voice recorder or activating the screen recorder for virtual interviews conducted via Zoom. The researcher also assured all research participants that audio visual content taken during fieldwork would be securely stored and not be shared with anyone or on any platform, as per the principles of participant ethical obligations. In addition, it is important to note that the researcher explicitly described participants' rights before the actual interview took place. An example of this would be the freedom to terminate, cancel or reschedule an interview should the participants no longer feel interested. Any question they found uncomfortable, they could refuse to answer.

A good research project is bound by ethical principles. The researcher sought permission from the university authorities and the wind farm before conducting the study to adhere to the principles/rules. The study was conducted in compliance with Rhodes University's ethical policies with ethics clearance reference: 2021-5259-6373. The ethical clearance letter is attached in the Appendix (see Appendix C).

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, this study used a qualitative approach which required rigorous data quality assurance measures, such as verification of findings to ensure accuracy. This process included reliability testing of the findings, and this should be understood as dependability. This process ensured consistency of the research process and outcome. Member checking and data storage on password-controlled cloud platforms confirmed data was reliable, safe, and secured. Data validity was another quality

control measure used in the study, and it ensured the research instrument accurately captured what is reflected in the findings (*Appendix E*). Lastly, credibility was ensured through peer debriefing, prolonged engagement, and reflexivity to monitor bias. Ethical considerations involved adhering to the university's ethical standards and ensuring the anonymity of the study site, including all participants. It was paramount that the researcher maintained professionalism throughout the research process.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the research project's findings obtained through a qualitative research method using semi-structured interviews. The results are presented according to the study objectives and propositions. This study aimed to understand and describe how a renewable energy organisation applies responsible leadership to build trust among its stakeholders.

To reiterate, the objectives of the study are as follows:

- To describe how the organisation interacts with its stakeholders to build trust
- To understand how the members of the organisation demonstrate the characteristics of responsible leadership
- To understand how different stakeholders perceive and experience the interaction of the company with established stakeholders
- To make recommendations that a renewable energy organisation can exercise the characteristics of responsible leadership to develop its own stakeholder engagement framework

4.2. RESULTS

The following section outlines the results of findings from the study as per the objectives stated above. The researcher used an inductive thematic data analysis approach to analyse data collected through semi-structured interviews, as indicated in Chapter 3. Data were coded using the themes identified in the literature. The study's results are covered in the section below in line with the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, including according to the identified themes and the study's propositions.

4.2.1. Data collection

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews. Twelve participants were interviewed using a discussion guide, which helped to maintain the structure of the interview. Two of the participants were not available for a face-to-face interview and thus opted to meet with the researcher virtually via Zoom; one participant was an official from the wind farm, and the other participant was a local government official.

4.2.2. Data presentation

During analysis, data were deductively organised, for example, themes that were covered are care; honesty; respect; trust; active citizenship; humility; accountability; integrity; benevolence; and ability. The presentation follows the sequence of the objectives stated above. Lastly, the discussion is according to the propositions of the research project.

The first objective of this study was to describe how the organisation interacts with its stakeholders to build trust. The organisation stated various mechanisms it uses to build trust among its employees. P1 said that *“employees will basically come to management and highlight things that are wrong, for instance, without fearing that something bad will happen to them”*. Over and above this, another senior manager at the wind farm highlighted some attributes required to build trust, *“honesty, openness, transparency, and then also making sure that you deliver what you promised”*.

The second objective of the study was to understand how the members of the organisation demonstrate the characteristics of responsible leadership. The organisation has policies and deliberate actions to address stakeholders' needs. The senior manager personally interacts with stakeholders through formal and informal meetings. The economic development team uses social media and community meetings to communicate with its stakeholders to display transparency and the characteristics of responsible leadership, such as care, humility, honesty, accountability, trust and respect.

The third objective of the study was to understand how different stakeholders perceive and experience the interaction of the company with established stakeholders. The organisation approaches its stakeholders according to how they affect or are affected by its operations. Landowners who own the property on which the wind farm is located tend to make unreasonable demands on the wind farm's management. One manager from the wind farm shared that after the incident and the lodging of a complaint by a farmer whose cattle were dying, *“I've taken pictures and I've written a report to P3, my manager, and I say to him. This is what I can tell you. We had an interview with the landowner. And this is what we feel is that you also say that he doesn't attend to his cattle every day, but basically every 21 days he will go to the cattle.”*

Community members are not approached on an individual basis; a structure from within their communities represents them. The wind farm uses those structures to communicate with the community members. A grievance and compliments line was recently launched to enable all stakeholders to submit in writing any issue they may have with the wind farm. SMMEs and NGOs are treated in an equitable manner by the wind farm because information is shared with them through local newspapers, websites and social media platforms. Those receiving funding from the wind farm stated that they receive all the support from the organisation.

The last section of this chapter delves into the fourth objective of this study, which is to make recommendations that a renewable energy organisation can exercise the characteristics of responsible leadership to develop its own stakeholder engagement framework.

Below is a list of deductively considered themes from literature and characteristics of responsible leadership in the study results. Table 4.2.2.1 conveys the themes identified in the literature and illustrates how data were analysed, including the qualification and exclusion of information. Table 4.2.2.2 refers to the reliability testing of the themes.

Table 4.2.2.1: Description of the study's themes

Code no.	Label	Definition	Description of occurrence	Qualifications and exclusions	Reference
1	Respect	Exhibiting acts valuing others and engaging in activities that do not compromise the dignity of the other.	The organisation is transparent to both internal and external stakeholders. Information is made available through various communication channels	<u>Qualification:</u> Formal meetings are held, community road shows; media is used to reach out to stakeholders, including social media. <u>Exclusion:</u> Communication is not intended for an audience.	Rudolph, et al. (2021); Blader and Yu (2017).
2	Care	A display of genuine concern for another party, as well as a show of actions that protect or ensure the well-being of the other.	Cultivating trust through ensuring confidentiality. Responsiveness to stakeholder issues.	<u>Qualification:</u> Statements assuring confidentiality, solutions provided or suggested to stakeholders.	Tomkins and Simpson (2015); Younger (2021).
3	Honesty	Refers to honesty and trustworthiness which directly affect the morality	The organisation declares to all relevant stakeholders its activities, including planned	<u>Qualification:</u> Formal reporting in various platforms such as meetings, newspapers,	Brown, et al. (2005); Lexico

		of an individual. These attributes are virtues that could be likened to wisdom, compassion, justice, generosity and courage.	projects, budgets, progress updates and scope change.	website, community meetings, institutional forums and on social media.	(2022); Wells and Molina (2017).
4	Accountability	Accountability is a consistent behaviour of answering to authorities.	The organisation reporting regulators and displaying transparency.	<u>Qualification:</u> Statements confirming reporting to the Department of Energy. <u>Exclusion:</u> Reporting to local authorities.	Khotami (2017).
5	Humility	Humility is a willingness to view oneself accurately, an appreciation of others' strengths and contributions and teachability or openness to new ideas and feedback. Furthermore, it refers to an	The organisation displaying acts of willingness to listen to stakeholders. Officials being approachable and accessible to stakeholders. Providing constructive criticism where the need arises.	<u>Qualification:</u> Organisational platforms and processes to hear stakeholders' views. <u>Exclusion:</u> Informal engagement.	Burton (2018); Xu, et al. (2019); Van Tongeren, et al. (2019).

		individual's ability to control their ego by prioritising collective achievements and willingly putting personal interest behind them.			
6	Trust	Trust refers to one party being willing to be vulnerable to the conduct of another party based on the assumption that the other party is genuine and sincere, regardless of the trustor's ability to control the others' conduct.	The organisation providing consistent and accurate information and delivering on their promises they make to stakeholders.	<u>Qualification:</u> Project delivery, funding provision and general deliverables. <u>Exclusion:</u> Public relations activities.	Mayer, et al. (1995); Rousseau, et al. (1998); Das and Teng (2004).
7	Active citizenship	The concept is described as a role business plays in society and includes ethical and participatory conduct to promote justice.	The interventions the organisation is making to solves issues affecting communities in which it operates.	<u>Qualification:</u> Service delivery, human rights interventions. <u>Exclusion:</u> Recreational interventions.	Jeurissen (2004); Schwab (2015).

8	Integrity	Integrity is the ability to establish a set of values and principles that are morally justified and that prioritise the preservation of core values within a society.	The transparency and compliance to regulations as per the power purchase agreement the organisation has with the State.	<u>Qualification:</u> Reporting; community meetings; responsiveness to issues raised by stakeholders. <u>Exclusion:</u> Events not intended to enhance the credibility of the organisation.	Van Niekerk and May (2019).
9	Benevolence	It is defined as “the confidence that another party has the other’s best interests at heart and will protect them by demonstrating caring, sincerity, discreteness, fairness, goodwill, empathy, a lack of opportunism, equitability, and altruism”.	Provision of both financial and non-financial support to stakeholders, including guidance on issues that may be complex or disadvantaging some stakeholders.	<u>Qualification:</u> Funding, mentorship and coaching, branding requirements. <u>Exclusion:</u> Institutional support.	Di Battista, et al. (2020).

10	Ability	Having ability refers to establishing legitimacy by shaping the perception of others towards themselves through being effective in their tasks.	The organisation's execution of its tasks through its officials, including their ability to effectively deliver to their stakeholders.	<u>Qualification:</u> Technical advice; guidance; professional execution of responsibilities.	Treviño, et al. (2003); Pless and Maak (2011); I.G.I. Global (2022).
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Table 4.2.2.2: Reliability testing of codes through the data collection process

Code no.	Label	Definition	Description of occurrence	Interview evidence
1	Respect	Exhibiting acts valuing others and engaging in activities that do not compromise the dignity of the other.	The respect the organisation provides is transparent to both internal and external stakeholders. Information is made available through various communication channels.	This organisation displays respect through its various stakeholder engagement processes. This is done to cultivate a trusting relationship that is envisioned to ensure fruitful collaborations. Internally, the organisation guarantees employee

				confidentiality. This helps to create a work environment in which each employee feels safe.
2	Care	A display of genuine for another party, as well as a show of actions that protect or ensure the well-being of the other.	Cultivating trust through ensuring confidentiality. Responsiveness to stakeholder issues.	This organisation attempts to show that it cares about its stakeholders. Communication and constructive consultation are prioritised to ensure that the relationships remain cordial. This organisation uses various means to make stakeholders always feel valued.
3	Honesty	Refers to honesty and trustworthiness which have a direct effect on the morality of an individual. These attributes are virtues that could be likened to wisdom, compassion, justice, generosity and courage.	The organisation declares to all relevant stakeholders its activities, including planned projects, budgets, progress updates and scope change.	The organisation prioritises transparency and openness, and these virtues are embedded in its goals and objectives.

4	Accountability	Accountability is a consistent behaviour of answering to authorities.	The organisation reporting regulators and displaying transparency.	The organisation has invested in establishing a grievance line for the public to submit compliments or complaints. They state that this strategy's objective is to promote accountability and respect to their stakeholders.
5	Humility	Humility is a willingness to view oneself accurately, an appreciation of others' strengths and contributions, and teachability or openness to new ideas and feedback. Furthermore, it refers to an individual's ability to control their ego by prioritising collective achievements and willingly putting personal interest behind them.	The organisation displaying acts of willingness to listen to stakeholders. Officials being approachable and accessible to stakeholders. Providing constructive criticism where the need arises.	This organisation attempts to embark on a series of activities to enhance stakeholder relations by listening to their views through the grievance hotline. Willingness to receive complaints to learn and improve on any issue that a stakeholder identifies indicates humility.

6	Trust	Trust refers to one party being willing to be vulnerable to the conduct of another party based on the assumption that the other party is genuine and sincere, regardless of the trustor's ability to control the other's conduct.	The organisation providing consistent and accurate information and delivering on their promises the make to stakeholders.	The organisation contributes to socio-economic development initiatives within the communities it supports to cultivate and enhance the trust.
7	Active citizenship	The concept is described as a role business plays in society and includes ethical and participatory conduct to promote justice.	The interventions the organisation makes to solve issues affecting communities in which it operates.	The wind farm collaborates with the municipality to construct boreholes to address drought in the surrounding communities. The current situation is that food security is also threatened since farmers cannot produce adequate volumes to meet the local demand.
8	Integrity	Integrity is the ability to establish a set of values and principles that are morally justified and that prioritise the preservation of core values within a society.	The transparency and compliance to regulations as per the power purchase agreement the organisation has with the State.	The wind farm bore the cost of installing signing signage of a farmer from whom they are renting land. The gate was once left

				closed, and consequently his cattle couldn't access water and died.
9	Benevolence	Is defined as "the confidence that another party has the other's best interests at heart and will protect them by demonstrating caring, sincerity, discreteness, fairness, goodwill, empathy, a lack of opportunism, equitability, and altruism".	Provision of both financial and non-financial support to stakeholders, including guidance on issues that may be complex or disadvantaging some stakeholders.	Senior management visits organisations they support and are committed to ensuring they place meaning in making a structural change with their communities.
10	Ability	Having ability refers to establishing legitimacy by shaping the perception of others towards themselves through being effective in their tasks.	The organisations execution of its tasks through its officials, including their ability to effectively deliver to their stakeholders.	All employees interviewed have university qualifications and are specialists in their fields.

4.3. THE CASE STUDY

THE RENEWABLE ENERGY ORGANISATION

This case study was conducted in a renewable energy organisation established in 2016 in the Kouga Local Municipality, within the Sarah Baartman District Municipality in the Eastern Cape. Since its establishment, the government required it to contribute to the socio-economic development of communities within its 50-kilometre radius. This broad-based development approach was attached as a condition to obtaining a utility power producer permit from the South African government (Department of Minerals and Energy, 2003).

Renewable energy producers were further required by legislation to establish community trusts. These trusts would hold 4 – 20% shareholding in the power plants, and funds accrued to the trusts in dividends would be spent on various socio-economic development projects. The organisation, in this case, is also subject to these conditions and is actively navigating the socio-economic development space together with its primary objective, which is to generate electricity for ESKOM.

This organisation has headquarters in Cape Town, and locally its office is situated at a remote plant. The plant itself is constructed at privately owned properties with various owners. The properties serve a dual purpose due to livestock and game farming still occurring alongside the spinning wind turbines. This organisation is obligated to manage and fulfil local stakeholders' interests—that is, both internal and external stakeholders—for example, their employees, suppliers, government institutions, political organisations, government institutions, NGOs and SMMEs.

Currently, similar to other renewable energy organisations in South Africa, this organisation is under pressure from the community because questions are raised regarding the impact of the contributions it makes to uplift the lives of people living in communities within its 50-kilometre radius (Nkoana, 2018a). Other issues that have emerged include questions on how renewable energy organisations engage with their stakeholders. Trust and transparency are increasingly becoming areas of contention in the renewable energy industry. According to Wlokas, et al. (2017, p.36), the industry's dynamic of operating in the private sector is seemingly becoming an issue, and stakeholders are grappling with coordinating and implementing socio-economic development initiatives. P8 remarked that *"they lack working with local government to do community mobilisation, community participation, and social facilitation because they*

appointed social facilitators not even from the municipalities they are going serve". One could infer from this statement that there is weak trust in renewable organisations.

4.3.1. Description of trust – How the renewable organisation builds trust

The first objective of this study was to describe how the organisation interacts with its stakeholders to build trust. The organisation employs various means to build trust among both its internal and external stakeholders. P3 postulated that, *"I think trust will also in a business enhance the employees' performance, they would want to go the extra mile, do something extra, you know, because there is transparency. Transparency goes together with trust"*. The organisation sends the MD, CFO, and other top executives to visit the plant at random to observe and interact with ground-level employees to thoroughly grasp their concerns and challenges, including understanding their work process. According to the plant manager, transparency also promotes trust within the organisation and enhances management's credibility.

The wind farm promotes cohesion among staff members and encourages employees to develop ideas that could help foster a trusting relationship among the team members. *"Let's have like [sic] a platform whereby we can have Friday lunches together so that we can understand each other in terms of how the other person deals with something, you know, and then it's also like building in a comfortable culture in the organisation"*. This statement was shared by a mid-level employee who is employed as an enterprise development specialist and is responsible for external stakeholder engagement. The Friday lunch is used as space where employees eat lunch together, and the employer pays for all the edibles. The dining areas are well lit and have a *braai* stand attached to the building. Employees take this opportunity to form deeper connections with each other.

The organisation also uses the Friday lunch to socialise new recruits into the organisation's culture. Annually approximately two interns are recruited, and among their duties, they are required to light a fire for a *braai* if the meal consists of meat. This approach helps to reduce the barrier between experienced employees and the interns and helps form and strengthen relationships among the team members, which arguably yields positive relations and enhanced performance.

There are certain strategies utilised by the organisation to help cultivate trust among external stakeholders. Stakeholders have competing interests and building trust with them can pose a challenge if one stakeholder does not enjoy the approach used by an organisation. One fundamental approach mentioned by all wind farm officials is clear and consistent

communication with all stakeholders. P1 noted that *"you need to be transparent. You need to have regular engagement with the people you're working with [sic]. And the other thing is, if you are able to involve the stakeholders or the community members in what you're doing, they also feel like they are part of what is happening, and they are able to trust you as a person who is actually coming into their community and doing any kind of development"*. This sentiment is evidenced by using social media to report on any development project on which the organisation has embarked.

It was prevalent among all the wind farm's employees that transparency and consistent communication were key methods of building trust. Reporting to communities' future plans, budgets, work progress and scope modification was integral in cultivating a trusting relationship between the renewable energy organisation and the respective external stakeholder groups. However, this sentiment was contradicted by other participants who are external stakeholders.

The study's second objective was to understand how the members of the organisation demonstrate the characteristics of responsible leadership (viz. "respect, care, honesty, accountability, humility, trust and active citizenship"). The third objective is to understand how different stakeholders perceive and experience the interaction of the company with established stakeholders. The last objective was to recommend that a renewable energy organisation exercise the characteristics of responsible leadership to develop its own stakeholder engagement framework.

Section 4.4 below covers the three propositions explored in the study regarding the application of responsible leadership within an organisation. Before expanding on the sections, the researcher interviewed selected participants, and from the data collected, accounts were deductively categorised under each proposition.

4.4. RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

4.4.1. Characteristics of responsible leadership

The first proposition was, *responsible leadership requires acts of care, honesty, respect, trust and active citizenship, humility and accountability to achieve effective stakeholder engagement*.

4.4.1.1. Care

This organisation attempts to show that it cares about its stakeholders. Communication and constructive consultation are prioritised to ensure that relationships remain cordial. This organisation uses various means to make stakeholders always feel valued. P2 remarked, *"Our philosophy is how can we engage in [sic], you know, this is where we are going. Do you think it's the right route? Does it bring benefit to your community? What's your feedback? If we feel it doesn't, what are the alternatives?"* This approach is in line with participatory development because the stakeholders are given a platform to express their opinions regarding any development on which the organisation is embarking. P2 also mentioned that stakeholder consultation helps their organisation obtain buy-in and achieve their desired impact. If stakeholders, particularly communities, feel valued and cared for, they support external socio-economic development efforts.

Furthermore, this organisation established a code of behaviour governed by its pronounced objectives and goals. P4 stated, *"We believe that the moment you start working with people within an organisation that is transparent, you have to have trust because the company's objectives and goals talk about openness and transparency"*. This attitude is imperative in building trust that is founded on pronounced virtues such as transparency and openness. It assists in fostering positive relationships internally, meaning there is a high possibility that internal stakeholders feel valued and cared for.

There is a case of an external stakeholder (supplier) who felt aggrieved by how the organisation dealt with an issue at his game farm. There were animals that died due to gunshot wounds. Some wind turbines are situated on this farmer's land, and he receives monthly rentals from the wind farm. He felt that one of the reasons he was experiencing such a challenge was due to the individuals who frequently visited the plant. To protect the relationship and show that the organisation cares about this stakeholder, it helped with investigations of the incidents. The case concluded with the land owner being granted access to their own CCTV security system server in order that he could monitor the gate leading to his property.

This organisation is invested in complying with government imperatives of socio-economic development as per the White Paper on Renewable Energy (WPRE) of 2004. The wind farm has developed strategies to address the historical inequalities in communities within its 50-kilometre radius. This is done by offering higher education bursaries to deserving learners who passed their Grade 12 examinations. Another approach to accelerate structural change

includes extending funding to NGOs and SMMEs. Some of the NGOs that have benefited from the wind farm are focused on child health, nutrition and women's gender-based violence issues. SMMEs that have been awarded funding by this organisation range from a township restaurant (*tshisanyama*), an internet café, and an enterprise development consultant. This organisation further recognises agriculture and fisheries as catalysts for economic development in the area. The pre-1994 labour and ownership relations characterise both industries. Black people are employed as unskilled labourers, and so the wind farm wishes to transform the industry by capacitating labourers with high potential with business skills.

Currently, this organisation is purchasing a line fishing boat for a cooperative made up of semi-skilled fishermen. The idea is to appoint a mentor that would assist them with market access and bookkeeping. The ultimate goal is to have the group operate as a sustainable business. In a recent incident, a cooperative was assisted by the wind farm after they realised that, *"They were advised from the outside, not from within the co-op and they were given bad advice by someone pushing their own agenda"*, states P5. In previous years there has been significant deception on established businesses. The present situation is that government grants fishing licenses to cooperatives, but the challenge is that such fishermen neither own nor have access to fishing vessels. Their only option to receive income from the license is to rent these to vessel owners. However, according to P5, the revenue is never satisfactory because the cooperatives do not understand the value chain of fishing and are cheated on by vessel owners. The renewable energy organisation is therefore attempting to assist one cooperative in establishing its fishing business.

4.4.1.2. Honesty

As stated above, this organisation prioritises transparency and openness, and these virtues are embedded in its goals and objectives. Therefore, honesty appears to be an integral component of achieving the stated goals. Honesty is an imperative trait within its practices to ensure that stakeholder relations remain cordial. One senior manager suggested that *"when there's a trust between the employees and management, the employees will basically come to management and highlight things that are wrong, for instance, without fearing that something bad will happen to them"*. This situation indicates a long-held practice of creating a safe space for employees to make errors and receive constructive feedback from management. P1 stated during the interviews they receive reliable and consistent support from management, and a culture of honest and respectful feedback has been inculcated within the organisation.

Similarly, to enhance trust through honest conversations within the organisation, the economic development team regularly meets to discuss reporting templates. This is done to standardise all internal reports. The team gives each member constructive feedback and ensures that no one is made to feel incompetent in the process. The primary objective of this approach is skills transfer. For example, if one individual is skilled in any Microsoft Office application, they can help others acquire the skill. P2 stated, *"maybe let's say you need to do a report about a particular project and me as an individual., I would think, okay, maybe I need to just do the project description in the budget, and that's it. But [sic] someone else would say no, but if you give the communities where these projects are [sic], if you give timelines of this project, then the person receiving the report would be able to get to know the project better"*.

When dealing with communities and other external stakeholders, this organisation attempts to provide detailed information. This approach includes being open about budgets for development projects and being transparent about what's possible or impossible within a specific time frame. P5, who is a senior official stated that *"If we talk about a project for, say, two or three years, and nothing happens, the frustration starts to creep in. But if they can see like, you know, Okay, fine, we've got a long-term project that's going to take two to three years, but in the interim, the company has been able to do X Y Z, which has helped us unlock value for us in the short term, [sic] then there's more receptiveness towards you as a group and as a person"*. This sentiment is intended to address the recent reports about renewable energy organisations. There is political pressure towards them, and their contribution to communities is questioned (Nkoana, 2018b).

P11, who works in local government, felt that renewable energy organisations tend to invest in a project with minimal structural change impact. The official said that how these organisations conduct themselves is a ticking time bomb. Unfortunately, they don't account to local government but rather to the Department of Energy's Independent Power Producer's office (IPP). This situation seemingly creates tense relations between local renewable energy organisations and local authorities.

4.4.1.3. Respect

This organisation displays respect through its various stakeholder engagement processes. This is done to cultivate a trusting relationship that is envisioned to ensure fruitful collaborations. Internally, the organisation guarantees employee confidentiality. This helps to create a work environment in which each employee feels safe, meaning the plant becomes a safe space for all employees with this approach. P3 stated that *"if a person comes to me with*

an issue, that is not something I'm going to discuss with another guy. It's something that's confidential and I think that is the type of trust that I have built with my team over the last couple of years". This approach is vital in strengthening internal relationships within an organisation because the participant further mentioned that cultivating a respectful culture is paramount and that he sets the tone.

There is an instance where an external stakeholder experienced a personal problem. She stated that she could comfortably share its details with the individuals within this organisation with whom she interacts: *"I'm experiencing some other personal issues, and I shared the matter with them, and the way they responded to me and supported me showed that they are people who care"*. It is evident that this individual is made to feel as a part of the team and is valued by the organisation. She is treated with respect and has since become comfortable sharing some issues about her personal life with the organisation.

Similarly, communities receive constant communication and feedback on various activities on which this organisation embarks. To mitigate any potential conflict due to a lack of transparency, the wind farm must display acts of respect towards its stakeholders. P1 stated that they hold community meetings to account: *"On [sic] the next meeting, I'll be presenting what we're doing this year, so there are different people involved in that meeting. So, anyone who has questions will be able to ask questions during that interaction"*. According to Nkoana (2018b, p.37), this approach plays a role in gaining public confidence and the communities' buy-in to proposed development projects.

Currently, this organisation has invested in establishing a grievance line through which the public can submit compliments or complaints. They state that this strategy's objective is to promote accountability and respect to their stakeholders. Furthermore, this organisation is committed to sharing information externally. Another organisation is contracted to ensure that its social media pages are active with updates and information that may be valuable to stakeholders. There is also a practice of respecting external stakeholders by being available at any reasonable time and showing them that they are valued. P6, who is a recent grantee, remarked about the organisation's economic development specialist by saying, *"She is very nice, because even if it's the weekend, I can call her on her WhatsApp number and she assists me, and she is open to me. She also advised that I must ask for anything that I need."*

4.4.1.4. Trust

Trust emerged to be a core focus of this organisation. However, due to power dynamics, it became apparent that only the external stakeholders could be vulnerable to the wind farm.

Though the organisation expects to cultivate a trusting relationship through consistent communication and transparency, its power over stakeholders remains unchanged. However, the strategy to establish the hotline/grievance line does, to a certain extent, portray the wind farm to be making itself vulnerable to stakeholders, including the existence of social media pages where any individual could comment negatively or positively online.

On the contrary, this process is reciprocal, and external stakeholders also decide to make themselves vulnerable to the organisation in order that they can be trusted. P7, an SMME remarked, *"I was working alone, and then I told them that I need to go to schools where I've just started with the student cards initiative. So I told them I could not be 100% at work, I must go out and seek customers. So [sic] they assisted me with the lady who is my clerk, then they are currently paying for this month. For the next three months they are going to pay for that lady and then afterwards I will take it up myself"*. The wind farm intervened by recognising that the business of this grantee would not succeed if he cannot have the time to explore other revenue streams. This assertion confirms Rousseau, et al.'s (1998, p.395) notion that an individual or group ought to make himself vulnerable to the other with the hope of receiving positive results.

4.4.1.5. Active citizenship

Schwab (2015) states that active citizenship involves an organisation concerned about the issues affecting humanity, for example, environmental change, food security, education and cyber security. The wind farm collaborates with the municipality to construct boreholes to address drought in the surrounding communities. The current situation is that food security is also threatened since farmers cannot produce adequate volumes to meet the local demand. P4 stated, *"The municipality approached us to assist with funding for the construction of boreholes in Patensie and Loerie because there is extreme drought. This collaboration with the municipality contributes to service delivery and climate change response. It is also in line with our sustainability imperatives"*. This view is evidenced by the ongoing stakeholder engagements in which the wind farm participates to enhance its corporate reputation as an active citizen in the area.

There is also a challenge of under-resourced early childhood development centres in the surrounding communities. Teachers in the centres do not have the required minimum qualification, and there is also an issue with operating costs as most parents cannot afford to pay the school fees. The wind farm took the initiative to enlist a service provided to facilitate the teacher's training in order that they obtain the required qualification. The same service

provider is also implementing an infrastructure development project for the centres. The community trust that has a 6% shareholding at the wind farm collaborates with the wind farm to ensure stipends, learning materials and nutrition for children are covered. As stated above, bursaries form part of addressing the education challenges existing in the area. The activities embarked on by this organisation are in line with Gardberg and Fombrun (2006, p.330) when they argue that corporate citizenship refers to a commitment to addressing the socio-economic circumstances of communities.

4.4.1.6. Humility

Regarding humility, this organisation attempts to embark on a series of activities to enhance stakeholder relations by listening to their views via the grievance hotline. The willingness to receive complaints to learn and improve on whichever issue a stakeholder identifies, indicates humility. To emphasise the organisation's participatory approach to development, thereby displaying the act of humility, P3 stated that, "*[W]e also have the municipalities that we have to deal with and the local communities, so there's [sic] more stakeholders involved, but we make sure that as we move, we keep people informed. It's not a matter of you know, we know what's best for you. So, we will implement, and we don't care what you think it. That's not our philosophy*". This attitude is evidenced in literature since it describes humility as being able to recognise and acknowledge one's strengths and contributions and being receptive to new ideas and feedback (Xu, et al., 2019, p.159).

The wind farm carries itself in a way that values the views of its stakeholders. The manner in which it attempts to bridge the gap between itself and stakeholders is helping local communities easily interact with it. However, even though this is the case, a small business supported by the organisation shared during the interviews that there is a general challenge in accessing funding opportunities from the wind farm due to the process not being as transparent as he would like. There are no open calls to invite qualifying community organisations to apply for support, and they only encourage individuals to submit their applications when they hold community roadshows. They submit their applications at random to the relevant official and hope for the best. P8, who also owns a business, stated that, "*It's also motivating other people or SMMEs to go to them, and they do have roadshows where they invite people to apply for funding. Even if they don't support you, they will give you reasons as to why they cannot fund that and that [sic]*". The feedback provided to unsuccessful applicants positively contributes to their development since they are to improve on the next submission.

4.4.1.7. Accountability

The wind farm applies various methods to portray itself as adhering to accountability principles among its stakeholders. As stated above, consistent feedback and transparency regarding budgets and project progress contribute to its image of an accountable organisation, but to communities in particular. P11 stated that, *"We're having a meeting, for instance, a third quarterly meeting on the fifth of May, where we want to look at consequences of not sharing information. Because you're not sharing the perception that you create to the high-level politicians, a MEC or a minister will have a different view about [sic] you. These are decision-makers"*. Therefore, as stated above, renewable energy organisations directly account to the Department of Energy's Independent Power Producer's office. This arrangement has potentially strained working relations between these organisations and the local government.

Jenkin (2014, p.87) states that to achieve accountability, one should not point fingers when unfortunate events occur, but rather empower ourselves and lead others. P3 said that, *"I think one of the things that helps is if an employee comes to you with a problem. You need to provide a solution to the problem."* This indicates a commitment to being level-headed and not punishing an employee for raising an issue that needs attention without considering the causes. The wind farm has seemingly developed a culture in which all employees feel comfortable through these practices.

4.4.2. Trust building

The second proposition was *acts of integrity, benevolence and ability are critical for an organisation to build trust among stakeholders*. This organisation attempts to deliberately invest in relationship-building activities on both its internal and external stakeholders. This is in line with Maak and Pless (2006, p.104), who note trust as a critical component within responsible leadership to cultivate sustainable relationships with stakeholders. Internally, employees are shown to be valued partners by senior management. A behavioural code was launched to ensure that health and safety standards are adhered to by all employees. Each employee signs the code to commit to always ensuring that they adhere to the stipulated standard. This approach was implemented to ensure that there was compliance with the standards by everyone. P3 said the code reads, *"[W]e will wear PPE according to the risk that we've established for that area. So, for instance, if you're cutting with a grinder, you will wear your ear plugs and things like that. It's based basically on behaviour, so what we intend to do with that is to also change the behaviour of employees and then management towards safety"*.

Trust could be the outcome of this exercise as an employee would know that the organisation is serious about their health and safety at work.

In addition to the Friday lunches mentioned above, the tradition of buying a cake for an employee whose birthday falls on a workday is well established. Employees gather at the dining area during their lunch break to celebrate with their colleagues. Furthermore, employees' suggestions to changing processes are considered to ensure continuous improvement that could be owned and appreciated by junior employees. In one instance, it was shared that *"If someone in the organisation comes and ask [sic] me what's happening with the projects in different areas or what I was doing [sic]. So, for me to share the information with them, there needs to be trust, transparency, and openness about the information, and involving people in my projects in presenting to the directors"*. It is apparent that communication is crucial to cultivating trusting relationships, as the previous junior employee has stated that collaborating with other employees to gather information makes it easier when reporting to directors.

Crane (2020, p.264) argues that evaluating the interconnectedness of stakeholders is critical to an organisation, and this further requires building an understanding of their needs in order that trust becomes an outcome. This organisation does not only deal with internal stakeholders but also external stakeholders, including government institutions, businesses and NGOs. All these stakeholders intersect and have different interests. The local government should collaborate with the wind farm on specific projects, but due to communication breakdown, it has become difficult for both parties to coordinate development efforts properly.

P5 from the wind farm stated, *"Sometimes when you are doing some of the projects, you would expect your municipalities to have a list of SMEs in the community, for instance, if you want to do a community project. For example, you need SMEs that are involved in construction. I believe the first stakeholder to go to would be a municipality to get that kind of data. So, in some instances, it's difficult to get kind of information from the municipality. I'll just say sometimes lack of information sharing is one of the challenges that I normally encounter when I work with external stakeholders."* On the contrary, small businesses are represented by the municipality's LED department at the municipality's LED forum. The wind farm's mandate includes extending funding to small businesses, and therefore poor communication and coordination between the two parties leads to small businesses missing out on support opportunities.

4.4.2.1 Integrity

The wind farm attempts to conduct itself to portray it as an organisation with integrity. One external stakeholder who owns the land on which some of the turbines are erected experienced approximately fourteen of his cattle die due to dehydration. The farmer attempted to receive compensation from the wind farm, but it was declined. The reasons for the decline were based on the fact that there was no convincing evidence that the gates leading up to the water had been left open by the wind farm staff. The “GATE CLOSED” and “GATE OPEN” signs had also faded, which did not help the situation.

Furthermore, the cattle owner only visited his farm every twenty-one days. The relationship broke down between the wind farm and the landowner, but the wind farm bore the costs of installing clear signs at all the gates to revitalise it even though this was not its responsibility. This action by the wind farm confirms that acting with integrity includes considering all the interests of the parties concerned, as noted by Karssing (2007, cited in Huberts, 2018, p.19).

To refer to an earlier point, the acts of transparency, openness and the commitment to information sharing to all its stakeholders appear to be another attempt by the wind farm to reflect integrity. Such actions are consistent with Huberts (1998, cited in Vargas-Hernández, et al., 2012, p.295), when he recognises integrity in behaving according to established moral standards, norms and values. P8 remarked, *"Being transparent as they are, and when they say they're going to do something, they make it a point like [sic] they do it until you are satisfied. And for example, when I got to the fencing, there were three companies, and then they stuck [sic] to local SMMEs in terms of giving support. So, they asked me whether no one can do fencing within Thornhill. What they say, they really mean. That's what I've experienced with them, because they don't just make promises and are transparent in such a way that they have a Facebook page. All the SMMEs is [sic] that they funded are there"*. This level of transparency enhances the positive attributes of this organisation, in line with responsible leadership.

4.4.2.2. Benevolence

Furthermore, benevolence emerged to be embedded in the strategy of this organisation. Senior management visits organisations they support and are committed to ensuring they play meaningful role in making a structural change within their communities. An example is a case of a fishing cooperative in which an established fishing company was cheating. The cooperative had leased their fishing to the company, but the wind farm realised that the terms were highly unfair to the cooperative. The wind farm wanted to support the group in acquiring its boat to become a fully-fledged enterprise. To build the group's capacity, an enterprise

development specialist was appointed to help coach and mentor the group, including ensuring that governance systems were in place. The behaviour displayed by the wind is consistent with Karakas and Sarigollu (2013, p.666). In their research, they developed a conceptual framework of benevolence and beneficence, and found that the former relates to morally sound behaviour, whereas the latter is more focused on the actions performed for the others' benefit.

4.4.2.3. Ability

This organisation is modern and recognises the competencies required to advance its objectives. All employees interviewed have university qualifications and are specialists in their fields. This translates to a high quality of work, including the ability to cultivate trusting relationships with both internal and external stakeholders. Treviño, et al. (2003, p.123) note that having the ability is a result of shaping perceptions of others towards oneself by being effective at their task. Some stakeholders perceive the wind farm employees as performing their tasks very well. One small business owner who is contacted as an enterprise development supplier by the wind farm stated, *"For me, to assist an organisation in the fishing industry, I have to go and research and study the business processes. So, for us to come up with an approach that will be working for this organisation, I need to go and research so that I provide a proper service. So, I find that when I interact with them, one official of the wind farm is very knowledgeable in the manner, he will know the price of this type of boat and those things, and then I feel like no; he's two steps up."*

4.4.3. Effective stakeholder engagement

The third proposition was that *trust is the ultimate mediator for effective stakeholder engagement*.

The organisation attempts to strengthen relationships through various actions. As it is stated above, trust is critical to effective stakeholder relationships. The contribution of the wind farm to socio-economic development within the communities it supports helps enhance the trust. Transparency appears to be crucial in maintaining trust between an organisation and its stakeholders. P2 from the wind farm noted that there is distrust towards the organisation in certain instances and remarked that, *"So quite often the distrust is there because people don't have the right information. They are talking amongst themselves in the community. So, for example, right if I tell you a story today, by the time that very same story reaches the 100 person, it's a very different story to what I told you."*

Consistent with Maak and Pless (2006, p.104), trust is an integral part of responsible leadership to build lasting relationships with stakeholders. The wind farm actively engages its stakeholder through internal platforms as the feedback management provides to employees. Furthermore, external stakeholders are constantly updated with developments through deliberate information sharing activities, and an example is the organisation's social media pages and community meetings. Transparency with budgets is imperative, and this action mitigates conflicts with communities. The wind farm declares to all its external stakeholders how it plans to spend each financial year.

Furthermore, Crane (2020, p.265) notes emergent perceptions of other stakeholders towards an organisation when interacting with one stakeholder. Established stakeholders with financial resources tend to have a stronger voice. The wind farm is noted for being fair and listening to everyone in the area it operates. However, some emerging stakeholders believe that stakeholders with more financial resources and pedigree have the advantage of accessing support from the wind farm. A member of the wind farm stated there is scepticism towards the wind farm. However, the cause of this situation is that people do not read the request for proposal specifications. Sometimes the organisation would require specialised skills for a particular service, and the reality is that there is an extreme skills gap in the surrounding communities. Business development coaches are appointed by the wind farm to assist emerging businesses. Furthermore, bursaries are awarded to qualifying learners to address the skills shortage in the area.

4.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented and discussed the study's findings. The presentation of the results is according to the study's objectives and the tested propositions. Therefore, the chapter described the actions undertaken by the organisation to build trust among its stakeholders. The highlights from the sections above are as follows: with regards to care, the organisation engages in deliberate actions to assure its stakeholders that it is concerned about their well-being, for example, communication and transparency are key applied to enhance stakeholder relationships. Creating a safe space for stakeholders and ensuring honest feed appear to help the organisation maintain its existing relationships. This organisation demonstrates respect by ensuring that it treats matters affecting both internal and external stakeholders with confidentiality. The outcome becomes the development of trust among all parties.

The wind farm actively contributes to socio-economic development in the area, and it collaborated with the local municipalities to mitigate the severe drought affecting livelihoods in

the surrounding communities. The organisation further contributes to community development by spending on education, which demonstrates that it is an active citizen. The wind farm shows humility by listening to everybody's voice. As an example, they launched a hotline to enable its stakeholders to submit their grievances and compliments. However, despite this deliberate effort to display humility and accessibility of information, some stakeholders are concerned by the lack of defined call for funding. The organisation reports to the national department of energy. Accountability to local authorities seems to be lacking and has negatively affected relations.

Furthermore, trust emerged as is vital take-away from this study. The wind farm ensures its employees receive management support and makes them feel like valued partners. Cultivating trusting relationships with external stakeholders such as government appears to be a challenge due to communication breakdowns. The wind farm attempts to protect its reputation among stakeholders by engaging in actions that portray it as having integrity. In one instance, it decided to bear the costs of installing signage for a farm owner whom they are renting land. They did not have to, but the farm owner was aggrieved due to the death of his livestock. This organisation shows benevolence through supporting its stakeholders, whom they identified as lacking business knowledge capacity. They provide advice and long-term plans to coach and mentor their grantees to reach a mature business status indicates benevolence. The organisation hired some highly-qualified employees who actively demonstrate knowledge in their field, which is beneficial to those who actively demonstrate ability in their area that benefits their stakeholders.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This is the final chapter of this study. It provides a summary of the study's findings, implications for managers and recommendations for management. The chapter further considers the study's delimitations, limitations and contributions. Recommendations for further research are offered in this section as well.

5.2. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Using the application of responsible leadership within a renewable energy organisation as a case study, this research explored how relationships with stakeholders are enhanced through responsible leadership. The research aimed to understand and describe how a renewable energy organisation applies responsible leadership to build trust among its stakeholders.

The objectives of the study included the following:

Firstly, to describe how the organisation interacts with its stakeholders to build trust. The study described trust as one party's willingness to be vulnerable to the other, believing that no negative experience will occur. Findings indicated that this organisation actively cultivates trust with its internal and external stakeholders. The c-suite leadership visits the plant at random to understand employees' day-to-day experiences. The value of communication and transparency was prominent in the findings, and it contributed significantly to employee morale and further enhanced external stakeholder relationships, especially with communities.

Secondly, to understand how the organisation's members demonstrate the characteristics of responsible leadership (viz. "respect, care, honesty, accountability, humility, trust and active citizenship"). Findings indicated that the organisation had established stakeholder engagement processes to cultivate respectful relationships with its internal and external stakeholders. Internally, the organisation guarantees its employee's confidentiality on issues they bring to management. This act aims to create a safe space in which each employee feels protected and their dignity is intact. The organisation further organises regular stakeholder engagement meetings to provide feedback and updates regarding its development activities. It became evident that the wind farm deliberately embarks on efforts to create cordial relations with stakeholders to ensure that they feel valued by management.

The organisation is obliged by contemporary business models to display acts of care towards its stakeholders. It emerged in the findings that stakeholders are given a platform to express

their feeling and concerns during meetings. The organisation recently established a grievance line to enable stakeholders to report whatever they wanted to anonymously. Community buy-in is obtained before any development project is implemented in the respective communities. This act ensures that there are no surprises such as protests and property destruction. One can deduce that this participatory development approach is in line with the act of care.

Furthermore, the act of honesty is taken seriously by this organisation. Openness and transparency are critical approaches that this organisation uses to display honesty to its stakeholders. Findings indicate that even if there is a fault identified at the plant, employees willingly inform management with the belief that there will be no blame game but rather a collective effort to remedy the situation. The economic development team holds meetings to share strategies for developing reports. If one colleague's approach is believed to be problematic, constructive guidance is provided. Budget details of development projects are proactively shared with communities regarding external stakeholders. The scope and update of development activities are also given to communities to avoid complaints if there are any delays.

The organisation attempts to be accountable to all its stakeholders. There is an IPP forum that the local government chairs. This organisation reports to that platform and accounts to the energy department. Apart from institutions, the findings indicate that this organisation accounts to communities during community meetings. However, one local government employee felt that renewable energy organisations do not prioritise politicians in general, which has created discontent among local political leaders. The expressed negative attitude by one government official showed that, indeed, there is a rift between the renewable industry and local government.

In terms of humility, findings indicate that this organisation attempts to embark on a series of activities to enhance stakeholder relations by listening to their views through the grievance hotline. Willingness to receive complaints to learn and improve on whatever issue a stakeholder identifies indicates humility. The grievance hotline further suggests that the organisation is open to receiving negative feedback or complaints from its stakeholders. This organisation uses community roadshows and government stakeholder engagement platforms to interact with various stakeholders with transparency and openness to criticism.

Regarding active citizenship, Schwab (2015) stated such an organisation is concerned about the issues affecting humanity, for example, environmental change, food security, education and cyber security. Findings indicate that this organisation is addressing the issue of drought

in the area by constructing boreholes to help farmers with water shortages and enable them to use it for irrigation, assisting them in producing food. Furthermore, this organisation addresses education challenges through investing in early childhood development centres. Teachers are funded to acquire relevant qualifications, and infrastructure is also improved. A community trust attached to the wind farm collaborates by ensuring that stipends for teachers and nutrition are available. Bursaries are also awarded to deserving learners who pass matric and attend institutions of higher learning.

Thirdly, the study's objective was to understand how different stakeholders perceive and experience the organisation's interaction with established stakeholders. The organisation actively embarks on trust-building activities through the acts of integrity, benevolence and the ability to ensure that no stakeholder is above the other.

Findings indicate that the organisation develops mechanisms to ensure its stakeholders perceive it as having integrity. Internally, there is a behavioural code implemented, and all employees are required to commit to it. It involves declaring that one would always wear personal protective equipment. Crane (2020, p.264) argues that evaluating the interconnectedness of stakeholders is critical to an organisation. Coordinating development projects with local government is a challenge due to the long time it takes government officials to obtain approval from their senior managers. However, the renewable energy organisation continuously keeps its stakeholders updated about developments, budgets, and delays in maintaining integrity.

Similar to the accounts above, findings indicate that benevolence is at the core of this organisation's strategy. It emerged that this organisation genuinely cares about its stakeholders. There is a situation with a fishing cooperative whereby its members were made to sign a licensing agreement at unfavourable terms. The wind farm used its expertise to guide the members and committed to purchasing the cooperative its line fishing boat to generate sufficient revenue to acquire a squid fishing boat. A double cab 4X4 *bakkie* is also set aside for these fishermen. A mentor is assigned to the group to develop a governance structure and a comprehensive business plan.

Regarding ability, findings indicate that this organisation has highly qualified, capable individuals in all key positions relevant to stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders also expressed confidence in the skills of the officials with whom they interact from this organisation. The continuous communication, transparency, accessibility and project delivery

indicate that the organisation has knowledgeable officials who are able to cultivate and maintain stakeholder relationships.

Furthermore, stakeholder theory enabled the researcher to understand how the renewable organisation determines its stakeholders' power, legitimacy and urgency. It emerged that stakeholders who own land have some power because the wind farm settled a dispute with two landowners by absorbing costs of security features to ensure their relationship remained cordial. However, the local government feels it does not receive much attention from the wind farm, and thus they have a strained relationship. Major issues appear to exist among external stakeholders. The lack of attention to political dynamics appeared to be a problem that could threaten the wind farm. Another issue is the prioritisation of landowner's issues, and the wind farm's urgency to respond to this group may result to other stakeholder demanding the same level of attention. Trust is not experienced the same way by the external stakeholders of the wind farm. SMMEs and NGOs emerged to be generally satisfied with the organisation. The local government still needs some focused attention to cultivate a trusting relationship.

5.3. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

Below are the implications that the study has for management:

- The stakeholder theory suggests that an organisation should consider the needs of both its internal and external stakeholders as they are critical in entrenching an organisation's credibility. The wind farm should entrench its stakeholder management mechanism by also including senior management in its external stakeholder consultation sessions.
- The characteristics of responsible leadership are equally important to building trust among stakeholders. Renewable energy organisations should develop policies and procedures that promote all characteristics of responsible leadership and ensure they embedded on both their strategic and operational plans.
- An organisation must not ignore stakeholders who influence communities. Wind farms must ensure transparency when dealing with communities. This would help minimise over expectations and uncertainties in development projects.
- The wind farm should consider acknowledging political leaders as key stakeholders and include them in their stakeholder engagement activities, including sending them quarterly newsletters. These actions would help reduce the tension between the wind farm and local politicians. Ultimately, this level of transparency would cultivate trust.

- As a practice and risk mitigation measure, other organisations, including those in mining, establish community development forums with steering committees, as well as politicians. This approach helps to make political grouping in the areas feel valued.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.4.1. Delimitations of the study

This study only investigated one case of an organisation operating in the renewable energy industry. The scope of the study was intended to examine one organisation among five renewable organisations located within the Kouga Local Municipality.

The study aimed to understand and describe how a renewable energy organisation applies responsible leadership to build trust among its stakeholders. Further studies could explore how leadership entrenches responsible leadership with an organisation's corporate strategy. Other studies could examine how stakeholders interact and respond to a stakeholder-centric organisation.

Lastly, the study focused on trust-building mechanisms. Further studies could explore how responsible leadership enhances integrity, benevolence and ability within an organisation. Trust could be explored as to how it can enable organisations operating in other industries to build sustainable stakeholder relationships. Trust is a crucial ingredient that enhances both internal and external relationships. An organisation valuing its stakeholders has a better chance of maintaining beneficial relationships.

5.4.2. Limitations of the study

The study focused on one organisation. The findings of the study reflect this single case. The research only obtained the perspectives of a selected number of employees and stakeholders. A sample of twelve participants was interviewed. They consisted of two senior managers (Plant Manager and Economic Development Manager) and one Economic Development Specialist from the wind farm, two Local Economic Development (LED) Managers from both the local and district municipality, three owners of SMME businesses, and four project managers of NGOs. The study's findings do not represent the view of the entire organisation as it has other plants in locations around South Africa. Another study may examine how responsible leadership is applied in other provinces in which the organisation has plants.

5.4.3. Contribution of the study

The study has acknowledged both its limitations and delimitations. Furthermore, the study has contributed to the knowledge of the application of responsible leadership within an

organisation. Theory suggests that an organisation ought to consider the needs of both its internal and external stakeholders. It highlights specific characteristics of responsible leadership that must be carefully considered and entrenched within an organisation's practices to build trust with its stakeholders. This study confirmed that a trust-building mechanism as a component of building stakeholder relationships is imperative. This study further demonstrated that when responsible leadership characteristics are applied, cordial and mutually beneficial relations emerge between an organisation and its stakeholders.

Thus, the following research recommendations are outlined based on the study's findings:

Management recommendations:

Firstly, responsible leadership is a critical leadership approach that promotes stakeholder integration. Therefore, stakeholder engagement strategies must be developed to ensure that no group that affects an organisation is left behind and doesn't feel valued. Management should ensure that it deliberately engages both its internal and external stakeholders to build trust, regardless of their level of influence. The prioritisation of influential stakeholders could be explored in future studies to investigate the dynamics of such a situation.

Secondly, it emerged in the study that communication and transparency were crucial factors that contributed to cultivating and maintaining stakeholder relationships. Stakeholders indicated that how information is made available by the organisation makes it a reliable development partner. The use of social media and community roadshows help bridge the gap between the organisation and its stakeholder. Information regarding development activities is shared through these platforms. Therefore, it is recommended that further studies explore how communities utilise information made available by socio-economic development-oriented organisations to improve their living situation using their agency. Lastly, it also emerged that local government has weak relations with renewable energy organisations. This means that renewable energy organisations should engage in deliberate efforts such as sharing their socio-economic development plans and progress reports with local authorities to build cordial relations and trust.

Research recommendations:

Finally, this study focused on the application of responsible leadership in a renewable energy organisation. Trust was identified as a critical component of building stakeholder relationships. Future studies could build into the contribution of this study and explore stakeholders' agency in responding or interacting with organisations applying responsible leadership. Other studies

can explore the propositions in a different context to better understand the application of responsible leadership. Lastly, a teaching case could be developed to enable a student to examine responsible leadership and stakeholder theory critically.

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APPENDIX A – DISCUSSION GUIDE

Interview Schedule: Renewable Energy Organisation

Propositions

- Responsible leadership requires acts of care, honesty, respect, trust and active citizenship, humility and accountability to achieve effective stakeholder engagement.
- Acts of integrity, benevolence and ability are critical for an organisation to build trust among stakeholders.
- Trust is the ultimate mediator for effective stakeholder engagement.

Opening

- A. My name is Chulumanco Mdingi and I am an MBA student at Rhodes University. I am conducting a case study on responsible leadership in a renewable company in the Eastern Cape.
- B. I would like to ask you some questions about your relationship with your different stakeholders in the context of the principles of responsible leadership.
- C. The aim of the research study is to understand and describe how a renewable energy organisation applies responsible leadership to build trust among its stakeholders.
- D. The interview duration should not extend one hour. Are you willing to respond to questions during this time?

Transition to questions.....

Questions (Organisation)

Responsible leadership

1. How would you define trust in the work place?
2. Why is trust in the workplace important to you?
3. How do you build trust among your stakeholders?
4. What are the specific actions you take to build trust?
5. What do you purposely focus on (deliberately do) to build trust?
6. What acts are important to you in building trust or what actions have you found to be helpful in building trust in your experience?
7. Can you describe a particular incident where you were able to build trust in the workplace and what were the results/outcomes of this action?

8. Can you describe a particular incident/s where you were not successful in building trust and what were the outcomes?

Closing

- A. This study will be used to develop a teaching case on the topic mentioned earlier as part of the partial fulfilment of my Master's degree in Business Administration.
- B. I appreciate the time you took to participate in this interview. Do you have any question that you would like to ask?
- C. I should have all the information I need. Would you be comfortable if I contact you via a telephone call or an email if a follow-up interview from any of the questions explored arises?

Definition of concepts

- **Trust:** "Trust is the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the action of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective to the ability to monitor or control that other party" (Mayer, et al., 1995, p.712).
- **Accountability:** "[A]ccountability is defined as the ability to provide answers to higher authorities over the actions of a person/group of people to the wider community within an organization" (Khotami, 2017, p.30).
- **Integrity:** "[I]ntegrity means that a professional exercises his tasks adequately, carefully and responsibly, taking into account all relevant interests" Karssing, (2001/2007, p.3 cited in Huberts, 2018, p.19).
- **Benevolence:** "is the confidence that another party has the other's best interests at heart and will protect them by demonstrating caring, sincerity, discreteness, fairness, goodwill, empathy, a lack of opportunism, equitability, and altruism" (Di Battista, et al., 2020, p.2).
- **Ability:** According to IGI global as the knowledge, experience and skill that an individual or group brings to a particular task or activity.

Interview Schedule: Stakeholders

Propositions

- Responsible leadership requires acts of care, honesty, respect, trust and active citizenship, humility and accountability to achieve effective stakeholder engagement.
- Acts of integrity, benevolence and ability are critical for an organisation to build trust among stakeholders.
- Trust is the ultimate mediator for effective stakeholder engagement.

Opening

- E. My name is Chulumanco Mdingi and I am an MBA student at Rhodes University. I am conducting a case study on responsible leadership in a renewable company in the Eastern Cape.
- F. I would like to ask you some questions about your relationship with your different stakeholders in the context of the principles of responsible leadership.
- G. The aim of the research study is to understand and describe how a renewable energy organisation applies responsible leadership to build trust among its stakeholders.
- H. The interview duration should not extend one hour. Are you willing to respond to questions during this time?

Transition to questions.....

Questions (Organisation)

Questions (Stakeholders)

1. What is your relationship with Jeffreys Bay Wind Farm?
2. With whom have you had interaction at the wind farm and could you describe the experience?
3. How would you describe the trust you have or do not have with each of the people with whom you have interacted?
4. Can you recall any particular incident where trust was in question?
5. How do you think the organisation displays acts of accountability towards its stakeholders?
6. From your experience and observation how do the people (members of the wind farm) display acts of integrity towards its stakeholders?

7. Can you recall an incident where each of the members of the wind farm displayed acts of benevolence towards its stakeholder?
8. Describe where the each of the members displayed acts of ability to stakeholders?

Closing

- D. This study will be used to develop a teaching case on the topic mentioned earlier as part of the partial fulfilment of my Master's degree in Business Administration.
- E. I appreciate the time you took to participate in this interview. Do you have any question that you would like to ask?
- F. I should have all the information I need. Would you be comfortable if I contact you via a telephone call or an email if a follow-up interview from any of the questions explored arises?

Definition of concepts

- **Trust:** "Trust is the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the action of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective to the ability to monitor or control that other party" (Mayer et. al., 1995, p.712).
- **Accountability:** "[A]ccountability is defined as the ability to provide answers to higher authorities over the actions of a person/group of people to the wider community within an organization" (Khotami, 2017, p.30).
- **Integrity:** "[I]ntegrity means that a professional exercises his tasks adequately, carefully and responsibly, taking into account all relevant interests" Karssing, (2001/2007, p.3 cited in Huberts, 2018, p.19).
- **Benevolence:** "is the confidence that another party has the other's best interests at heart and will protect them by demonstrating caring, sincerity, discreteness, fairness, goodwill, empathy, a lack of opportunism, equitability, and altruism" (Di Battista et al., 2020, p.2).
- **Ability:** According to IGI global as the knowledge, experience and skill that an individual or group brings to a particular task or activity.

APPENDIX B – INFORMED CONSENT

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(To be signed by research participants)

Project Title: A case study on responsible leadership in a renewable energy organisation in the Eastern Cape.

Chulumanco Mdingi from the Rhodes University Business School has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to to understand and describe how a renewable energy organisation applies responsible leadership to build trust among its stakeholders.
2. The Rhodes University has given ethical clearance to this research project (***Ethics Approval Number***) and I have seen/may request to see the clearance certificate by contacting the Ethics Coordinator (ethics-committee@ru.ac.za).
3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards the development of a teaching case on the application of renewable energy principles by a renewable company to build trust among its stakeholders.
4. I will participate in the project by availing myself to respond to semi-structured interviews.
5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
7. The following risks are associated with my participation: Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained; however, some comments quoted in the research report could be attributed to a

participant due to their role and position in and with the wind farm. Participants will be afforded the opportunity to request which information they would prefer not to be described in the research report.

8. The Principal Investigator intends publishing the research results in the form of a teaching case, However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conducting of the research, ***unless I indicate to the contrary/recognize that as a public figure my identity will inevitably be/become known. (Agree/Accept loss of confidentiality)***
9. In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act, it remains my right to request the Researcher to provide me with a detailed explanation of exactly how confidentiality and anonymity will be achieved. I may request to know how my personal information will be stored securely, for how long it will be stored, and whether it is likely to be used again in further research.
10. In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act, I possess the right to receive feedback about this research. This will take the form of requesting a copy of the final report and teaching case, ***unless I elect not to receive feedback.***
11. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research, or my participation will be answered by the Ethics Coordinator (ethics-committee@ru.ac.za).
12. By signing this informed consent declaration, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.
13. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I,, have read the above information/confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all the questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

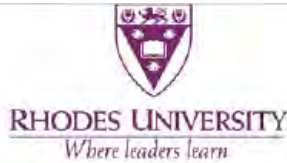
I **agree/disagree** (SELECT APPLICABLE) to the Researcher's request to take photographs and/or videos of me as part of this research project, recognising that agreement here is likely to raise the risk of compromising my anonymity and that steps will be taken to ensure this does not happen if my approval is granted.

I **agree/disagree** to the Researcher's request to voice record my comments and opinions during interviews, the purpose of which is to ensure the accurate recording of my views. Furthermore, I have the right to request a copy of interview transcriptions to confirm that my opinions are accurately recorded.

.....
Participant's signature

.....
Date

APPENDIX C – ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Rhodes University Human Ethics Committee
PO Box 94, Makhanda, 6140, South Africa
t: +27 (0) 46 603 7727
f: +27 (0) 46 603 8822
e: s.mangele@ru.ac.za
NHREC Registration number: RC-241114-045

<https://www.ru.ac.za/researchgateway/ethics/>

27/10/2021

Shoez MDINGI

Email: g10M4981@campus.ru.ac.za

Review Reference: 2021-5259-6373

Dear Mr Kevin Rafferty

Title: A case study on responsible leadership in a renewable energy organisation in the Eastern Cape

Principal Investigator: Mr Kevin Rafferty

Collaborators: Mr Chuhmanco Mdingi,

This letter confirms that the above research proposal has been reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Rhodes University Human Ethics Committee (RU-HEC). Your Approval number is: 2021-5259-6373

Approval has been granted for 1 year. An annual progress report will be required in order to renew approval for an additional period. You will receive an email notifying when the annual report is due.

Please ensure that the ethical standards committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the ethics committee on the completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of. If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloging number allocated.

Sincerely,

Prof Arthur Webb

Chair: Rhodes University Human Ethics Committee, RU-HEC

cc: Ms Danielle de Vos - Ethics Coordinator

APPENDIX D – CODING MANUAL

Code No.	Label	Definition	Description of Occurrence	Qualifications and Exclusions	Reference
1	Respect	Exhibiting acts valuing others and engaging in activities that do not compromise the dignity of the other.	The organisation provides is transparent to both internal and external stakeholders. Information is made available through various communication channels.	<u>Qualification:</u> Formal meetings are held, community road shows; Media is used to reach out to stakeholders, including social media. <u>Exclusion:</u> Communication not intended for an audience.	Rudolph, et al. (2021); Blader and Yu (2017).
2	Care	A display of genuine for another party, and also a show of actions that protect or ensure the well-being of the other.	Cultivating trust through ensuring confidentiality. Responsiveness to stakeholder issues.	<u>Qualification:</u> Statements assuring confidentiality, solutions provided or suggested to stakeholders.	Tomkins and Simpson (2015); Younger (2021).
3	Honesty	Refers to honesty and trustworthiness which direct effect on the morality of an individual. These	The organisation declares to all relevant stakeholders its activities, including planned	<u>Qualification:</u> Formal reporting in various platforms such as meetings, newspapers, website, community meeting,	Brown, et al. (2005); Lexico (2022);

		attributes are virtue that could be likened to wisdom, compassion, justice, generosity and courage.	projects, budgets, progress updates and scope change.	institutional forums and on social media.	Wells and Molina (2017).
4	Accountability	Accountability is a consistent behaviour of answering to authorities.	The organisation reporting regulators and displaying transparency.	<u>Qualification:</u> Statements confirming reporting to the department of energy. <u>Exclusion:</u> Reporting to local authorities.	Khotami, (2017).
5	Humility	Humility is a willingness to view oneself accurately, an appreciation of others' strengths and contributions, and teachability or openness to new ideas and feedback. Furthermore, it refers to an individual's ability to control their ego by prioritising collective achievements	The organisation displaying acts of willingness to listen to stakeholders. Officials being approachable and accessible to stakeholders. Providing constructive criticism where the need arises.	<u>Qualification:</u> Organisational platforms and processes to hear stakeholders' views. <u>Exclusion:</u> Informal engagement.	Burton (2018); Xu, et al. (2019); Van Tongeren, et al. (2019).

		and willingly putting personal interest behind them.			
6	Trust	Trust refers to one party being willing to be vulnerable to the conduct of another party based on the assumption that the other party is genuine and sincere, regardless of the trustor's ability to control the others conduct.	The organisation providing consistent and accurate information and delivering on their promises the make to stakeholders.	<u>Qualification:</u> Project delivery, funding provision and general deliverables. <u>Exclusion:</u> Public relations activities.	Mayer, et al. (1995); Rousseau, et al. (1998); Das and Teng (2004).
7	Active Citizenship	The concept is described as a role business plays in society and includes ethical and participatory conduct to promote justice.	The interventions the organisation is making to solves issues affecting communities where it operates.	<u>Qualification:</u> Service delivery, human rights interventions. <u>Exclusion:</u> Recreational interventions.	Jeurissen (2004); Schwab (2015).
8	Integrity	Integrity is the ability to establish a set of values and principles that are morally justified and that	The transparency and compliance to regulations as per the power purchase	<u>Qualification:</u> Reporting; community meetings; responsiveness to issues raised by stakeholders.	Van Niekerk and May (2019).

		prioritise the preservation of core values within a society.	agreement the organisation has with the State.	<u>Exclusion:</u> Events not intended to enhance the credibility of the organisation.	
9	Benevolence	Is defined “the confidence that another party has the other’s best interests at heart and will protect them by demonstrating caring, sincerity, discreteness, fairness, goodwill, empathy, a lack of opportunism, equitability, and altruism”.	Provision of both financial and non-financial support to stakeholders, including guidance on issue that maybe complex or disadvantaging some stakeholders.	<u>Qualification:</u> Funding, mentorship and coaching, branding requirements. <u>Exclusion:</u> Institutional support.	Di Battista, et al. (2020).
10	Ability	Having ability refers to establishing legitimacy by shaping the perception of others towards themselves through being effective in their tasks.	The organisations execution of its tasks through its officials, including their ability to effectively deliver to their stakeholders.	<u>Qualification:</u> Technical advice; guidance; professional execution of responsibilities.	Treviño, et al. (2003); Pless and Maak (2011); I.G.I.

					Global (2022).
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APPENDIX E – VALIDATING AND USING THE CODE

(Testing reliability of codes through interview questions and interviews)

Code No.	Label	Definition	Description of Occurrence	Interview Evidence
1	Respect	Exhibiting acts valuing others and engaging in activities that do not compromise the dignity of the other.	The organisation provides is transparent to both internal and external stakeholders. Information is made available through various communication channels.	This organisation displays respect through its various stakeholder engagement processes. This is done to cultivate a trusting relationship that is envisioned to ensure fruitful collaborations. Internally, the organisation guarantees employee confidentiality. This helps to create a work environment where each employee feels safe.
2	Care	A display of genuine for another party, and also a show of actions that protect or ensure the well-being of the other.	Cultivating trust through ensuring confidentiality. Responsiveness to stakeholder issues.	This organisation attempts to show that it cares about its stakeholders. Communication and constructive consultation are prioritised to ensure that the relationships remain

				cordial. This organisation uses various means to make stakeholders always feel valued.
3	Honesty	Refers to honesty and trustworthiness which direct effect on the morality of an individual. These attributes are virtue that could be likened to wisdom, compassion, justice, generosity and courage.	The organisation declares to all relevant stakeholders its activities, including planned projects, budgets, progress updates and scope change.	The organisation prioritises transparency and openness, and these virtues are embedded in its goals and objectives.
4	Accountability	Accountability is a consistent behaviour of answering to authorities.	The organisation reporting regulators and displaying transparency.	The organisation has invested in establishing a grievance line for the public to submit compliments or complaints. They state that this strategy's objective is to promote accountability and respect to their stakeholders.
5	Humility	Humility is a willingness to view oneself accurately, an	The organisation displaying acts of willingness to listen to	This organisation attempts to embark on a series of activities to

		appreciation of others' strengths and contributions, and teachability or openness to new ideas and feedback. Furthermore, it refers to an individual's ability to control their ego by prioritising collective achievements and willingly putting personal interest behind them.	stakeholders. Officials being approachable and accessible to stakeholders. Providing constructive criticism where the need arises.	enhance stakeholder relations by listening to their views through the grievance hotline. Willingness to receive complaints to learn and improve on whatever issue that a stakeholder identifies indicates humility.
6	Trust	Trust refers to one party being willing to be vulnerable to the conduct of another party based on the assumption that the other party is genuine and sincere, regardless of the trustor's ability to control the others conduct.	The organisation providing consistent and accurate information and delivering on their promises the make to stakeholders.	The organisation contributes to socio-economic development initiatives within the communities it supports to cultivate and enhance the trust.
7	Active Citizenship	The concept is described as a role business plays in society and includes ethical and	The interventions the organisations is making to solves issues affecting communities where it operates.	The wind farm collaborates with the municipality to construct boreholes to address drought in the surrounding communities. The

		participatory conduct to promote justice.		current situation is that food security is also threatened since farmers cannot produce adequate volumes to meet the local demand.
8	Integrity	Integrity is the ability to establish a set of values and principles that are morally justified and that prioritise the preservation of core values within a society.	The transparency and compliance to regulations as per the power purchase agreement the organisation has with the State.	The wind farm bore the cost of installing signing signage of a farmer whom their renting land from. The gate was once left closed, his cattle couldn't access water and died.
9	Benevolence	Is defined "the confidence that another party has the other's best interests at heart and will protect them by demonstrating caring, sincerity, discreteness, fairness, goodwill, empathy, a lack of opportunism, equitability, and altruism".	Provision of both financial and non-financial support to stakeholders, including guidance on issue that maybe complex or disadvantaging some stakeholders.	Senior management visits organisations they support and are committed to ensuring they play meaning in making a structural with their communities.

10	Ability	Having ability refers to establishing legitimacy by shaping the perception of others towards themselves through being effective in their tasks.	The organisation's execution of its tasks through its officials, including their ability to effectively deliver to their stakeholders.	All employees interviewed have university qualifications and are specialists in their fields.
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