

Transformational and Transactional Leadership as Predictors of Business Survival: Evidence from the Nigerian Telecommunications Industry

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of transformational and transactional leadership styles on business survival within the Nigerian telecommunications industry, a sector characterized by intense competition, rapid technological change, and regulatory uncertainty. Drawing on Bass's Transformational and Transactional Leadership Theories, the research investigates how leadership behaviors influence firms' ability to sustain operations, adapt to market disruptions, and maintain competitive advantage. A quantitative research design was adopted, utilizing structured questionnaires distributed to 383 employees across major telecommunications firms MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and 9mobile. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate the relationships between leadership styles and business survival.

Findings revealed that both transformational and transactional leadership styles have significant positive effects on business survival, though transformational leadership demonstrated a stronger influence by fostering adaptability, employee commitment, and innovative responses to environmental challenges. Transactional leadership, while more focused on performance monitoring and reward systems, contributed to short-term operational stability. The integration of both styles was found to enhance organizational resilience and adaptive capability, particularly in volatile and resource-constrained environments such as Nigeria's telecommunications sector.

Theoretically, this study contributes to leadership and strategic management literature by empirically validating the dual impact of transformational and transactional leadership on organizational survival in an emerging market context. Practically, it provides insights for industry leaders and policymakers on developing leadership competencies that balance inspiration and structure. The paper concludes with recommendations for leadership development, resilience enhancement, and adaptive strategy formulation aimed at improving the long-term sustainability of telecommunications firms in developing economies.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Transactional leadership, Business survival, Nigerian telecommunications, Organizational resilience, PLS-SEM.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership remains one of the most critical determinants of organizational success and sustainability in today's rapidly changing business environment. In the face of global economic uncertainties, technological disruptions, and competitive pressures, organisations must depend on effective leadership to sustain operations and achieve long-term survival. Within the Nigerian telecommunications industry, which serves as a key driver of economic growth and innovation, leadership plays a crucial role in maintaining business resilience and ensuring adaptability to constant environmental shifts.

Over the past decades, leadership studies have largely focused on how leaders influence employee performance, innovation, and organisational effectiveness. Two of the most widely studied leadership theories transformational and transactional leadership have shown strong impacts on motivation, creativity, and

productivity. However, in emerging economies such as Nigeria, the issue is not merely achieving short-term performance but ensuring that organisations survive and remain competitive amidst regulatory instability, market saturation, and infrastructure challenges. Despite this reality, there remains a limited understanding of how leadership behaviour contributes directly to business survival, particularly when considering both transformational and transactional leadership styles together.

While transformational leaders inspire and motivate followers through vision and shared purpose, transactional leaders ensure structure, performance monitoring, and reward-based accountability. Both leadership types are vital in dynamic industries such as telecommunications, where success depends on innovation, adaptation, and operational discipline. Yet, most existing research treats these leadership constructs as independent influences rather than exploring how their interaction enhances business longevity. Furthermore, much of the existing evidence originates from Western contexts, offering limited insight into how these leadership behaviours manifest and impact business survival in African environments, where cultural, institutional, and economic conditions differ significantly.

Background of the Study

Leadership remains a cornerstone of organisational success, particularly in dynamic and competitive industries such as telecommunications. In recent years, the Nigerian telecommunications industry has become a critical driver of the nation's economic development, contributing significantly to employment, connectivity, and innovation. However, the sector continues to face increasing challenges arising from market saturation, rapid technological evolution, fluctuating economic conditions, and regulatory uncertainties. In such volatile environments, leadership plays a decisive role in sustaining business survival and ensuring long-term organisational stability.

Among various leadership theories, transformational and transactional leadership have emerged as two dominant paradigms that influence organisational performance and adaptability. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate employees to pursue higher goals, stimulate innovation, and foster a sense of shared purpose. Transactional leaders, on the other hand, emphasize structure, supervision, and performance-based rewards, ensuring efficiency and goal attainment. Both leadership approaches are relevant in managing complexity, yet their combined influence on business survival remains underexplored in emerging economies such as Nigeria.

Existing Research and Identified Gaps

Previous studies (e.g., Bass & Riggio, 2006; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013) have examined how transformational and transactional leadership influence organisational outcomes such as innovation, job satisfaction, and performance. However, most of these studies have been conducted in Western contexts, with limited empirical evidence from African or Nigerian industries. Moreover, extant literature often treats these leadership styles in isolation, rather than exploring their interactive or complementary effects in promoting resilience and business continuity.

In addition, while the concept of business survival has gained increasing attention due to economic volatility and market competition, there remains a scarcity of empirical research that links leadership behaviours directly to business survival outcomes, particularly within Nigeria's telecommunications sector. This limitation constrains a holistic understanding of how leadership practices can mitigate business risk, enhance adaptability, and secure long-term viability.

Problem Statement

Despite the growing attention on leadership and business sustainability, many previous studies have examined transformational and transactional leadership separately, neglecting how these styles interact to influence business survival. Existing literature has mainly focused on leadership's effect on employee motivation, job satisfaction, or innovation performance, with limited empirical evidence directly linking leadership behaviours to long-term organisational survival, especially in developing economies like Nigeria.

This gap is significant because the Nigerian telecommunications sector faces a highly volatile environment characterised by rapid technological change, market competition, and policy fluctuations. Leaders in this context must simultaneously demonstrate transformational qualities that inspire innovation and transactional discipline that ensures performance and accountability. Without a comprehensive understanding of how these two leadership approaches jointly affect business survival, organisations risk adopting fragmented leadership strategies that fail to sustain operations over time.

Hence, this study addresses the research gap by developing and empirically testing an integrated model that explores how transformational and transactional leadership jointly predict business survival in the Nigerian telecommunications industry. By bridging theoretical and contextual gaps, this research offers both conceptual clarity and practical implications for leaders and policymakers aiming to enhance organisational longevity in volatile markets.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine how transformational and transactional leadership styles influence business survival in the Nigerian telecommunications industry. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Examine the influence of transformational leadership on business survival in the Nigerian telecommunications industry.
2. Investigate the effect of transactional leadership on business survival in the Nigerian telecommunications industry.
3. Compare the relative impact of transformational and transactional leadership on organisational sustainability and longevity.
4. Explore how leadership practices can be strengthened to enhance business survival in a highly competitive and dynamic environment.

Research Questions

1. How does transformational leadership influence business survival in the Nigerian telecommunications industry?
2. What is the effect of transactional leadership on business survival in the Nigerian telecommunications industry?
3. Which leadership style: transformational or transactional has a stronger impact on business survival?
4. In what ways can leadership practices be enhanced to improve organisational sustainability in the Nigerian telecommunications sector?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to both theoretical and practical understanding of leadership and business survival in several important ways.

From a theoretical perspective, the study bridges a key gap in the leadership literature by examining how transformational and transactional leadership styles jointly influence business survival in an emerging market context. While existing studies have often treated these constructs separately, this research emphasizes their interactive and complementary roles, offering an integrated model that links leadership behaviour to organisational endurance. The findings are expected to enrich the theoretical discourse on leadership effectiveness by extending transformational and transactional leadership theories into the domain of business survival, especially within the telecommunications industry of a developing economy like Nigeria.

From a practical standpoint, the study provides valuable insights for business leaders, managers, and policymakers seeking to strengthen organisational resilience in volatile environments. By identifying the specific leadership behaviours that promote adaptability and survival, the research offers actionable guidance for enhancing management practices, employee engagement, and strategic decision-making. Telecommunications firms and other organisations in similar industries can use the results to design leadership development programs

that combine visionary and performance-driven approaches, thereby improving their ability to sustain operations during economic and regulatory disruptions.

Furthermore, the study contributes to policy formulation and human resource strategy, as it highlights the need for leadership frameworks that foster innovation, accountability, and long-term competitiveness. The insights generated will also benefit academic researchers by providing an empirical basis for future studies on leadership dynamics and organisational sustainability in emerging markets

Research Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives and theoretical foundations, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Transformational leadership has a significant positive influence on business survival in the Nigerian telecommunications industry.

H2: Transactional leadership has a significant positive influence on business survival in the Nigerian telecommunications industry.

H3: Transformational leadership demonstrates a stronger effect on business survival than transactional leadership in the Nigerian telecommunications industry.

H4: Effective leadership practices enhance organisational adaptability, resilience, and sustainability in the Nigerian telecommunications sector

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provides a comprehensive examination of the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical foundations that connect leadership styles, creativity facets, and organizational resilience with business survival, particularly within volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environments. The aim of this section is to situate the study within a robust academic framework by critically reviewing existing scholarship and identifying key research gaps that justify the present investigation. Over the years, leadership style, creativity, and resilience have emerged as pivotal constructs in organizational behavior and strategic management studies, given their collective influence on organizational sustainability and competitiveness in rapidly changing environments.

While numerous studies have examined these variables individually, a more integrative understanding that explores how leadership style interacts with creativity and resilience to enhance business survival remains relatively underdeveloped, especially in developing economies. Many existing models are drawn from Western organizational contexts where environmental dynamics, governance structures, and institutional supports differ significantly from those of emerging markets such as Nigeria. Consequently, empirical insights generated in developed economies may not adequately reflect the realities of firms operating within the Nigerian telecommunications industry, which faces distinct challenges including regulatory instability, infrastructure deficits, market saturation, and economic volatility.

This section therefore underscores the necessity of examining leadership and organizational dynamics within context-specific frameworks. It highlights how transformational and transactional leadership theories provide complementary lenses for understanding how leaders influence employee creativity and organizational resilience two factors that are increasingly recognized as critical for survival in turbulent environments. Furthermore, the review integrates relevant theoretical models such as the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capabilities Theory to explain how internal organizational resources and leadership driven adaptive capacities contribute to long-term sustainability.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership, first conceptualized by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985), involves

inspiring and motivating followers to transcend self-interest for collective goals. Transformational leaders articulate a compelling vision, stimulate intellectual curiosity, and provide individualized consideration. Through these mechanisms, they cultivate innovative, adaptive, and resilient organizational cultures (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated the positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational outcomes such as innovation (García-Morales et al., 2012), employee engagement (Breevaart et al., 2014), and resilience (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012). In volatile markets like Nigeria's telecommunications industry, transformational leadership fosters adaptability by promoting open communication, learning, and proactive problem-solving among employees.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership, by contrast, emphasizes structured exchanges between leaders and subordinates through contingent rewards, corrective feedback, and performance monitoring (Bass, 1990). This leadership style ensures clarity, accountability, and operational discipline factors critical for short-term efficiency and performance stability (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

While transactional leadership is often portrayed as less dynamic, research shows that it complements transformational leadership, especially in contexts where operational reliability and compliance are paramount (Podsakoff et al., 2006). In the Nigerian telecommunications sector, transactional leadership can be vital in ensuring regulatory compliance, quality control, and consistent service delivery. Leaders who enforce standards and monitor performance help organizations maintain the operational foundation necessary for resilience and competitiveness.

Thus, rather than viewing transactional and transformational leadership as mutually exclusive, scholars advocate a balanced or hybrid leadership model (Antonakis & House, 2014), where transactional mechanisms support the efficiency needed to implement transformational visions. In turbulent environments, such integration is crucial for both adaptability and stability, which jointly underpin organizational survival.

Creativity Facets and Organizational Performance

Creativity is central to organizational renewal, adaptability, and long-term survival. It serves as the foundation upon which innovation and continuous improvement are built, allowing organizations to remain competitive in complex and rapidly changing business environments. Defined as the generation of ideas that are both novel and useful (Amabile, 1996), creativity transcends mere ideation and encompasses the processes through which individuals and teams transform imaginative thought into tangible organizational outcomes. It operates at multiple levels individual, group, and organizational each contributing uniquely to overall performance and sustainability.

One of the most influential frameworks for understanding creativity is Rhodes's (1961) 4Ps model, which conceptualizes creativity through four interrelated dimensions: Person (trait), Process, Press (environment), and Product. This holistic perspective provides a comprehensive foundation for examining how creativity manifests and contributes to organizational performance. The Person dimension relates to the individual's personality traits, cognitive abilities, motivation, and domain-specific expertise that enable creative thinking. Creative individuals often demonstrate openness to experience, intrinsic motivation, risk-taking, and persistence traits that are essential for generating new ideas and challenging conventional approaches (Feist, 1999). Within organizational settings, leaders play a crucial role in recognizing and nurturing these traits through empowerment, autonomy, and continuous learning opportunities.

The Process facet of creativity refers to the mental operations and problem-solving techniques that lead to idea generation and refinement (Torrance, 1974). It involves stages such as problem identification, incubation, illumination, and verification (Wallas, 1926). In the workplace, this process is often influenced by organizational culture, leadership style, and the availability of resources that facilitate experimentation and risk-taking.

Encouraging employees to question assumptions, explore alternatives, and engage in divergent thinking enhances the likelihood of developing innovative solutions that drive performance improvement.

The Press (environment) component emphasizes the contextual and organizational conditions that either foster or inhibit creative expression. According to Amabile's (1997) componential theory, creativity flourishes in environments that promote autonomy, psychological safety, and intrinsic motivation. Supportive climates that tolerate failure, reward experimentation, and provide constructive feedback tend to stimulate creative engagement. Conversely, rigid hierarchies, excessive control, and punitive feedback mechanisms stifle innovation and reduce the willingness of employees to contribute novel ideas. In the Nigerian telecommunications industry, where firms operate in dynamic and resource-constrained conditions, cultivating a supportive creative environment is particularly critical for sustaining competitiveness and resilience.

The Product dimension represents the tangible outcomes or manifestations of creative effort, such as new products, services, processes, or business models (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). The value of creativity in an organizational context ultimately depends on its translation into concrete innovations that contribute to strategic goals, efficiency, and customer satisfaction. In high-velocity sectors like telecommunications, the product of creativity often determines a firm's ability to differentiate itself, adapt to market shifts, and maintain operational excellence. Hence, the ability to convert creative ideas into implementable solutions is a crucial determinant of organizational performance and survival.

Empirical evidence supports the positive relationship between creativity and organizational performance across industries. Studies have shown that organizations fostering creativity report higher levels of innovation, productivity, and financial outcomes (Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004). In developing economies, creative capability is particularly vital as it compensates for structural weaknesses, limited infrastructure, and regulatory challenges. Nigerian firms, for example, can leverage creativity to develop context-specific innovations that address local market needs while maintaining competitiveness in the face of global technological disruptions.

Moreover, the interaction between leadership and creativity has been found to play a pivotal role in shaping organizational outcomes. Transformational leaders, by inspiring vision and intellectual stimulation, enhance employee creativity through empowerment and psychological safety (Gong et al., 2009). Transactional leaders, on the other hand, support creativity through structured processes and clear reward mechanisms that reinforce goal alignment. Therefore, leadership acts as both a facilitator and regulator of creativity, ensuring that creative energy is strategically channeled toward organizational objectives.

Business Survival in the Telecommunications Industry

Business survival refers to an organization's ability to sustain operations, maintain profitability, and adapt to changing environments over time (Wang et al., 2014). In developing economies, survival extends beyond financial performance to include strategic adaptability and institutional endurance. Nigeria's telecommunications firms operate in a complex environment shaped by regulatory uncertainty, infrastructural deficits, and fluctuating exchange rates (Tamarapreye, 2021).

Firms that survive and thrive under such conditions exhibit certain capabilities:

1. adaptive leadership, which ensures strategic flexibility;
2. creative capability, which drives innovation and differentiation;
3. organizational resilience, which enables continuous adjustment to disruptions. For instance, MTN Nigeria's sustained market leadership reflects its ability to integrate innovation (through mobile money and data services) with robust crisis management strategies.

Empirical research has shown that leadership and resilience jointly explain variations in survival outcomes across industries (Okechukwu, 2022; Slávik et al., 2022). However, few studies have empirically tested these relationships using a multidimensional model incorporating creativity facets as mediating mechanisms, particularly in African contexts. This study, therefore, addresses that gap by integrating leadership, creativity,

and resilience into a unified conceptual model and testing their combined effects on business survival in Nigeria's telecommunications sector.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is underpinned by two key theoretical foundations:

1. Transformational and Transactional Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985) provides the behavioral basis for understanding how leadership influences employee motivation, creativity, and adaptability.
2. Heuristic Framework for Creativity Measurement (Rhodes, 1961) offers a multidimensional understanding of creativity as a product of personal, processual, environmental, and output-related factors.

Additionally, the study draws conceptually from the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 2018), which posits that firms must continually integrate, build, and reconfigure internal competencies to respond to changing environments. Organizational resilience, in this regard, represents a dynamic capability enabling sustained competitiveness

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design using a survey strategy to empirically examine the influence of leadership style, creativity facets, and organizational resilience on business survival within the Nigerian telecommunications industry. The quantitative approach provides a structured framework for analyzing numerical data, facilitating the identification and testing of statistically significant relationships among the study variables. It also enables the objective measurement of respondents' perceptions and experiences, thereby minimizing researcher bias and enhancing the reliability of the findings (Creswell, 2014; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

The cross-sectional design allows data to be collected from a representative sample at a single point in time, reflecting the current organizational realities of Nigeria's dynamic telecommunications sector. This design is particularly appropriate given the rapidly evolving business environment in which telecom firms operate marked by technological disruption, competitive intensity, and shifting consumer demands. Collecting data within this temporal frame provides a snapshot of how leadership, creativity, and resilience collectively contribute to business sustainability and adaptive capacity.

According to Creswell (2014) and Bryman (2016), survey-based quantitative designs are highly suitable for studies that seek to examine relationships between latent constructs that are not directly observable but can be inferred through multiple measurement items. The present research aligns with this methodological logic by operationalizing complex constructs such as leadership styles (transformational and transactional), creativity facets (trait, process, press, and product), organizational resilience, and business survival using validated psychometric scales. This approach ensures both conceptual clarity and empirical rigor.

Overall, this design is well suited to the objectives of the present study, as it enables the systematic examination of the hypothesized interrelationships among leadership styles, creativity facets, and organizational resilience as determinants of business survival in Nigeria's telecommunications industry. By integrating established theoretical foundations with empirical measurement, the quantitative, cross-sectional survey approach provides a robust basis for drawing meaningful conclusions and offering actionable recommendations for both academic and managerial audiences

Population and Sample

The study population comprised employees in management and supervisory positions within major telecommunications companies operating in Nigeria, namely MTN Nigeria, Airtel Nigeria, Globacom, and 9mobile. These firms constitute the dominant players in the Nigerian telecommunications sector and collectively control more than 95% of the total market share (NCC, 2023). Their inclusion ensures that the sample accurately

reflects the dynamics, challenges, and strategic practices of the industry's leading organizations. Given their scale of operations and technological advancement, these firms provide a robust platform for assessing how leadership styles, creativity facets, and organizational resilience influence business survival in highly competitive and volatile environments.

The target population was carefully defined to include individuals occupying managerial, supervisory, and departmental leadership roles, as these categories of employees are typically responsible for operational decision-making, resource allocation, innovation management, and team performance coordination. They play pivotal roles in interpreting and implementing leadership directives, fostering creative thinking, and building resilient work systems capable of adapting to environmental disruptions. This focus aligns with the views of Bass and Riggio (2006) and Duchek (2020), who emphasized that managers and supervisors are central to driving creativity, implementing transformational leadership practices, and ensuring sustained organizational resilience.

Leadership Style

Leadership style was conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing both transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. These two styles, as posited by Bass (1985) and Bass and Avolio (1995), represent distinct yet complementary approaches to guiding and influencing organizational members. In this study, leadership style was operationalized through validated measurement instruments adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) a widely recognized and empirically supported tool for assessing leadership behavior across various organizational settings.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership refers to a leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and intellectually stimulate followers to exceed their normal levels of performance and commitment. The MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 1995) was utilized to measure this construct, drawing on four core components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

- Idealized influence captures the degree to which leaders serve as role models, demonstrate ethical conduct, and instill trust and admiration among subordinates.
- Inspirational motivation reflects the leader's ability to articulate a compelling vision, foster optimism, and create a shared sense of purpose within the team.
- Intellectual stimulation relates to the leader's encouragement of creativity, problem-solving, and innovative thinking by challenging assumptions and promoting diverse viewpoints.
- Individualized consideration measures the extent to which leaders attend to the personal and professional development needs of followers through coaching, mentoring, and empathy.

These dimensions collectively emphasize a leadership approach that transcends transactional exchanges, focusing instead on transforming followers' attitudes and aligning them with organizational goals.

This item reflects the intellectual stimulation aspect of transformational leadership, demonstrating how leaders inspire cognitive flexibility and innovative problem-solving.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership, on the other hand, emphasizes structured exchanges between leaders and followers, where compliance and performance are rewarded based on predetermined objectives. This sub-construct was also measured using items adapted from the MLQ, focusing on two key components: contingent reward and management-by-exception.

- Contingent reward represents the leader's ability to clarify expectations and provide recognition or rewards when employees meet or exceed defined performance targets. This component reflects a results-oriented leadership approach that reinforces accountability and performance consistency.

- Management-by-exception involves monitoring performance, identifying deviations from established standards, and implementing corrective actions when necessary. Leaders employing this style maintain operational discipline and ensure adherence to organizational procedures.

An example item from the transactional leadership subscale is: “My supervisor clarifies expectations and rewards me when I meet them.”

This statement captures the exchange-oriented nature of transactional leadership, where leader-follower interactions are primarily based on goal attainment and compliance.

Creativity Facets

Creativity in this study was conceptualized using Rhodes’s (1961) 4Ps model Person (Trait), Process, Press (Environment), and Product which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the multidimensional nature of creativity at individual and organizational levels. This model has been widely recognized in creativity research as a robust theoretical foundation for examining how personal attributes, cognitive processes, environmental conditions, and tangible outcomes collectively contribute to creative performance (Runco & Jaeger, 2012; Amabile et al., 1996).

To operationalize these dimensions empirically, the study adapted validated measurement scales from Amabile et al. (1996) and Tierney and Farmer (2002), ensuring both conceptual alignment and contextual relevance within the Nigerian telecommunications industry. Each facet was represented by a set of items measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), allowing respondents to indicate their level of agreement with statements reflecting different aspects of creativity.

Organizational Resilience

Organizational resilience represents an organization’s capacity to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and adapt to incremental change and sudden disruptions in order to survive and thrive (Duchek, 2020; Hillmann & Guenther, 2021). In this study, organizational resilience was measured using the Organizational Resilience Scale originally developed by Kantur and Iseri-Say (2012) and later refined by Duchek (2020) to capture the dynamic processes that enable organizations to maintain performance under adverse conditions. This construct was operationalized as a multidimensional capability comprising adaptive capacity, resourcefulness, and learning orientation, which together provide a holistic understanding of resilience within complex and turbulent environments such as Nigeria’s telecommunications sector.

Organizational resilience is particularly critical in industries characterized by rapid technological advancements, market volatility, regulatory pressures, and competitive intensity, all of which are prevalent in the Nigerian telecommunications industry. Firms that demonstrate resilience are not only able to recover from disruptions but can also leverage challenges as opportunities for innovation and growth. The construct thus plays both a stabilizing and transformative role, linking leadership effectiveness and creativity to long-term business survival.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure compliance with ethical standards governing human subject research. This approval confirmed that the study met requirements concerning informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data protection. Following this, official permission was also secured from the human resource (HR) departments of the participating telecommunications organizations, including MTN Nigeria, Airtel Nigeria, Globacom, and 9mobile. Each company was provided with a formal research introduction letter outlining the purpose, scope, and potential benefits of the study, as well as assurances that no proprietary or sensitive operational information would be disclosed.

Before administering the instruments, the research objectives, significance, and confidentiality measures were

clearly communicated to all prospective respondents. Participants were informed that their responses would be used strictly for academic purposes and that all data would be treated with anonymity ensuring that no individual or organization could be personally identified in the final report. Respondents were also notified of their right to withdraw from participation at any stage of the process without facing any consequences. This ethical protocol enhanced trust and encouraged honest and unbiased responses, thereby improving the overall data quality and validity.

Simultaneously, an online survey link was created using Google Forms and distributed electronically through official email channels and professional networks such as LinkedIn and WhatsApp business groups. The use of an online format was particularly beneficial in reaching geographically dispersed managers and supervisors, as many employees operated remotely or were stationed in regional service centers. This blended approach enhanced inclusivity, reduced geographical constraints, and improved the overall representativeness of the sample.

To maintain data accuracy and integrity, all completed questionnaires were checked manually and electronically for completeness and consistency before data entry. Incomplete or ambiguous responses were excluded from analysis. The collected data were then coded and entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for cleaning and preliminary analysis before being transferred to SmartPLS 4 for structural equation modeling (SEM).

Validity and Reliability

Ensuring validity and reliability is essential for the credibility and scientific rigor of quantitative research findings. In this study, meticulous steps were taken to ensure that all measurement instruments accurately captured the intended constructs—leadership style, creativity facets, organizational resilience, and business survival—and produced consistent, dependable results across respondents. The procedures for establishing validity and reliability were guided by established methodological standards (Creswell, 2014; Hair et al., 2019).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 software to apply Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). This analytical technique was selected because of its robustness in handling complex models that involve multiple latent constructs, interrelated variables, and mediation effects. PLS-SEM is particularly suitable for studies with small-to-medium sample sizes, non-normal data distributions, and predictive research objectives, making it appropriate for this investigation (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2019).

Data Preparation and Screening

Before analysis, the collected data were screened for completeness, accuracy, and outliers. Missing data were addressed using mean substitution for items with minimal missing values (less than 5%). Cases with substantial missing data were excluded to maintain the integrity of the dataset. Normality tests (skewness and kurtosis) were conducted to evaluate data distribution, confirming that while some variables deviated slightly from normality, PLS-SEM's nonparametric estimation technique adequately handled these deviations. Multicollinearity was checked using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with all values remaining below the acceptable threshold of 5.0, indicating no serious multicollinearity issues (Hair et al., 2019).

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, job role, and organizational tenure) and to understand general response trends across constructs.

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was evaluated first to confirm the reliability and validity of constructs. Criteria for assessment included:

Factor Loadings: ≥ 0.70

Composite Reliability (CR): ≥ 0.70

Average Variance Extracted (AVE): ≥ 0.50

Discriminant Validity: Assessed using Fornell–Larcker criterion and Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT < 0.85).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles guided all aspects of the research. Participation was voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Respondents were assured of confidentiality, and no personal identifiers were collected. Data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. The study complied fully with institutional ethical standards for research involving human participants.

SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

In summary, this study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to investigate the interrelationships between leadership styles, creativity facets, organizational resilience, and business survival within the Nigerian telecommunications industry. The research design was grounded in established theoretical frameworks specifically Bass's Transformational and Transactional Leadership Theory and Rhodes's 4Ps Model of Creativity providing a sound conceptual foundation for empirical examination. By focusing on managerial-level employees from major telecom operators such as MTN, Airtel, Globacom, and 9mobile, the study ensured a representative sample that reflects the strategic and operational realities of Nigeria's highly competitive telecommunications environment.

Data were collected through both paper-based and online survey instruments, enabling broader participation and minimizing geographical limitations. The structured questionnaire incorporated validated measurement scales drawn from previous seminal works (e.g., Bass & Avolio, 1995; Amabile et al., 1996; Kantur & Iseri-Say, 2012; Wang et al., 2014), ensuring content validity and cultural appropriateness through contextual adaptation for the Nigerian business environment. A pilot test was conducted to refine question wording, assess clarity, and enhance the reliability of responses.

The study placed significant emphasis on ethical compliance, obtaining clearance from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and securing organizational permissions prior to data collection. Participants were informed about their rights, including confidentiality, voluntariness, and the option to withdraw at any time, ensuring adherence to international research ethics standards (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4.0, chosen for its robustness in handling complex, multivariate models and its suitability for predictive, theory-building research in emerging market contexts. The analysis followed a two-stage approach involving measurement model assessment (to evaluate reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity) and structural model evaluation (to test hypothesized relationships, path coefficients, and mediation effects). The use of bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples enhanced the statistical rigor and reliability of inference, ensuring that conclusions drawn were both methodologically sound and empirically supported.

Overall, this methodological approach ensured a comprehensive, valid, and reliable assessment of how leadership behavior and creative dynamics foster resilience and long-term business survival. The rigor applied across sampling, data collection, and analytical stages enhances both the credibility and generalizability of the study's findings.

The next chapter presents the data analysis and results, including demographic characteristics of respondents, assessment of measurement reliability and validity, evaluation of structural relationships, and hypothesis testing outcomes. These results form the empirical foundation for the subsequent discussion and theoretical implications

Overview of Data Screening and Preparation

Before data analysis, preliminary screening was carried out to ensure completeness, consistency, and suitability for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis. Responses were checked for missing values, outliers, and response bias. Out of the 410 returned questionnaires, 392 valid responses were retained after removing incomplete entries and inconsistencies.

The cleaned dataset was imported into SmartPLS 4.0 for analysis. All constructs were measured using reflective indicators, and variables were standardized prior to analysis. Assessment of normality showed that the data slightly deviated from normal distribution a common feature in social science research (Hair et al., 2021) thus validating the choice of PLS-SEM, which is robust to non-normal data and suitable for prediction-oriented models.

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of the respondents. The sample covered a diverse range of managerial and supervisory employees across the four major telecommunications firms in Nigeria

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	235	59.9
	Female	157	40.1
Age	21–30 years	102	26.0
	31–40 years	183	46.7
	41 years and above	107	27.3
Education	Bachelor's Degree	215	54.8
	Master's Degree	148	37.8
	Doctorate/Professional	29	7.4
Job Role	Supervisory	154	39.3
	Middle Management	179	45.7
	Senior Management	59	15.0
Organizational Tenure	Less than 5 years	96	24.5
	5–10 years	201	51.3
	More than 10 years	95	24.2

The demographic data show a balanced representation across gender and age groups, indicating a fair distribution of managerial perspectives in Nigeria's telecom industry. The high percentage of respondents with postgraduate qualifications underscores the sector's professional competence and suitability for strategic-level analysis.

Measurement Model Assessment

Measurement model assessment ensures that the constructs exhibit satisfactory reliability and validity before proceeding to hypothesis testing. In this study, the reflective measurement model was evaluated based on indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, consistent with Hair et al. (2021).

Indicator Reliability

All standardized loadings exceeded the threshold value of 0.70, confirming that each item made a significant

contribution to its latent construct. This indicates that the survey items reliably measured their intended dimensions.

Internal Consistency Reliability

Cronbach's alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) values were computed to assess internal consistency. All constructs met the recommended cut-off of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity Results

Construct	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Transformational Leadership	0.912	0.934	0.669
Transactional Leadership	0.887	0.915	0.654
Creativity Facets (Trait)	0.864	0.901	0.607
Creativity Facets (Process)	0.879	0.918	0.639
Creativity Facets (Press)	0.901	0.928	0.653
Creativity Facets (Product)	0.926	0.944	0.711
Organizational Resilience	0.937	0.954	0.702
Business Survival	0.919	0.940	0.683

All Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeded 0.90, indicating strong reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were all greater than 0.50, confirming convergent validity, i.e., items within each construct shared substantial variance.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. Each construct's square root of AVE was greater than its correlations with other constructs, satisfying the Fornell–Larcker condition. Additionally, all HTMT ratios were below 0.85, confirming adequate discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). These results collectively validate the distinctiveness of all constructs.

Structural Model Assessment

After confirming the reliability and validity of the measurement model, the next step involved evaluating the structural model to test the hypothesized relationships among constructs. The key criteria assessed included multicollinearity (VIF), path coefficients, R^2 , effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and bootstrapping results.

Collinearity Assessment

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranged from 1.44 to 2.98, well below the critical value of 5.0, indicating no multicollinearity issues (Hair et al., 2021). This confirmed that independent constructs contributed uniquely to the model.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The R^2 values for the endogenous constructs demonstrated substantial explanatory power

Endogenous Construct	R^2 Value	Interpretation
Organizational Resilience	0.587	Moderate to strong
Business Survival	0.631	Strong

These results indicate that 58.7% of the variance in organizational resilience and 63.1% of the variance in business survival are explained by leadership styles and creativity facets, signifying strong model predictability.

Hypothesis Testing

Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was conducted to determine the significance of hypothesized relationships. Table 3 presents the standardized path coefficients (β), t-values, and p-values.

Table 3: Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Transformational Leadership → Business Survival	0.312	4.89	0.000	Supported
H2	Transactional Leadership → Business Survival	0.278	4.23	0.000	Supported
H3	Creativity Facets (Product) → Business Survival	0.291	5.04	0.000	Supported
H4	Organizational Resilience → Business Survival	0.333	5.81	0.000	Supported
H5	Transformational Leadership → Organizational Resilience	0.356	6.12	0.000	Supported
H6	Transactional Leadership → Organizational Resilience	0.217	3.89	0.000	Supported
H7	Creativity Facets (Press) → Organizational Resilience	0.263	4.41	0.000	Supported

All hypothesized relationships were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$, demonstrating strong positive effects among leadership styles, creativity facets, organizational resilience, and business survival.

Mediation Analysis

To assess the mediating role of organizational resilience, indirect effects were examined through bootstrapping. The results revealed that resilience significantly mediated the relationships between leadership styles and business survival, as well as between creativity facets and business survival.

Mediation Path	Indirect Effect	t-value	p-value	Mediation Type
Transformational Leadership → Resilience → Business Survival	0.118	4.72	0.000	Partial
Transactional Leadership → Resilience → Business Survival	0.081	3.96	0.000	Partial
Creativity Facets (Product) → Resilience → Business Survival	0.103	4.55	0.000	Partial

The results confirm that organizational resilience partially mediates the link between leadership and survival outcomes, emphasizing its strategic role as a conduit through which effective leadership and creative output enhance organizational longevity.

Model Predictive Relevance and Effect Sizes

The effect size (f^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2) were further analyzed. All f^2 values ranged from 0.15 to 0.32, indicating medium-to-large effect sizes (Cohen, 1988). The Q^2 values, obtained through blindfolding procedures, were positive for all endogenous constructs, confirming predictive relevance.

These results demonstrate that the model not only fits the data statistically but also possesses meaningful predictive power regarding the survival potential of telecommunications firms.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings provide strong empirical evidence supporting the conceptual model linking leadership, creativity, and resilience to business survival in the Nigerian telecommunications sector.

First, both transformational and transactional leadership styles were found to significantly enhance business survival. This aligns with prior studies (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2022) demonstrating that visionary leadership motivates innovation and performance sustainability. Transformational leaders, through inspiration and intellectual stimulation, cultivate adaptive organizational cultures, while transactional leaders maintain stability through structured performance and reward systems both vital in volatile markets like telecommunications.

Second, the creativity product facet emerged as the strongest predictor of business survival, consistent with Amabile's (1996) argument that tangible creative outputs (e.g., innovative products, customer solutions) directly contribute to organizational competitiveness.

Third, organizational resilience played a mediating role, supporting the views of Duchek (2020) and Kantur & Iseri-Say (2012) that resilience transforms leadership and creativity into sustained strategic outcomes. Telecom firms that rapidly adapt to technological disruptions, market fluctuations, and regulatory pressures are better positioned to sustain operations and achieve long-term success.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to provide a comprehensive overview of the respondents' demographic profiles and organizational characteristics, thereby establishing the contextual foundation for subsequent inferential analyses. The sample consisted of employees drawn from both multinational and indigenous telecommunications firms operating in Abuja, Nigeria, including MTN, Airtel, Globacom, and 9mobile. This diverse sample ensured the inclusion of perspectives from firms with varying ownership structures, organizational cultures, and operational scales, thereby enhancing the generalizability of findings across the Nigerian telecommunications landscape.

The demographic distribution revealed that a majority of respondents were aged between 25 and 40 years, representing a relatively young and dynamic workforce typical of the Nigerian telecom sector. Approximately 60% of the respondents were male, while 40% were female, reflecting the modest gender diversity prevalent in the industry. In terms of educational attainment, most participants possessed at least a bachelor's degree, while a notable proportion held postgraduate qualifications, indicating that the respondents were sufficiently knowledgeable and competent to provide informed evaluations of leadership practices, creativity dynamics, and resilience mechanisms within their organizations.

Regarding organizational experience, more than 70% of participants reported having over five years of professional experience in the telecommunications industry, suggesting a well-grounded understanding of sectoral trends, managerial processes, and operational challenges. This level of tenure also implies that the respondents had direct exposure to organizational decision-making and innovation processes, making their insights valuable for analyzing the interaction between leadership, creativity, and survival capabilities. Additionally, the respondents represented a wide range of functional departments such as operations, marketing, customer service, network management, and administration which further enhanced the diversity and representativeness of the sample.

The descriptive analysis of the main study constructs indicated that mean scores for all variables including transformational leadership, transactional leadership, creativity facets (trait, process, press, and product), organizational resilience, and business survival were consistently above the midpoint (3.0) of the five-point Likert scale. This suggests that, overall, participants perceived their organizations as exhibiting relatively strong leadership effectiveness, a supportive environment for creativity, and high adaptive capacity in the face of external and internal challenges.

Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was evaluated using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS. The assessment included checks for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

- Reliability: All constructs demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeding the threshold of 0.7.
- Convergent Validity: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct were above 0.5, confirming that the observed variables explained a substantial portion of their underlying latent constructs.
- Discriminant Validity: The Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio both confirmed discriminant validity, as the square roots of AVE exceeded inter-construct correlations, and HTMT values remained below 0.85.

These results validate that the measurement items reliably captured the intended constructs, allowing for accurate structural model analysis.

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model tested the hypothesized relationships among leadership styles, creativity facets, organizational resilience, and business survival. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was conducted to assess the significance of the path coefficients.

Key Findings:

- Transformational Leadership → Business Survival: $\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$ → Indicates that transformational leaders who inspire, motivate, and intellectually stimulate employees significantly enhance business survival.
- Transactional Leadership → Business Survival: $\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$ → Suggests that performance-based rewards and clear structures also contribute to organizational longevity, though to a lesser extent than transformational leadership.
- Creativity Facets → Business Survival: Among the four facets, Product Creativity had the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$), emphasizing the role of tangible creative outputs (e.g., innovative products or services) in sustaining competitiveness. The Process and Press facets had moderate positive effects, while Trait Creativity showed a weaker but still significant relationship.
- Organizational Resilience → Business Survival: $\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$ → Confirms resilience as a critical determinant of survival, enabling firms to adapt to technological, regulatory, and market disruptions.
- Mediating Role of Organizational Resilience: Mediation analysis revealed that organizational resilience partially mediates the relationships between both leadership styles and business survival, as well as between creativity facets and business survival. This implies that leadership and creativity influence survival outcomes through their impact on resilience-building mechanisms.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study provide robust empirical support for the proposition that effective leadership both transformational and transactional plays a pivotal role in enhancing organizational survival within Nigeria's telecommunications industry. The results reveal that both leadership styles contribute positively to business sustainability, though transformational leadership emerged as more influential in driving innovation, adaptability, and long-term competitiveness. This aligns with Bass's (1985) Transformational Leadership Theory, which posits that leaders who articulate a compelling vision, inspire commitment, and intellectually stimulate subordinates are more likely to cultivate organizational climates that foster creativity and resilience. Transformational leaders, through their charisma and individualized consideration, motivate employees to transcend self-interest for the collective good, which is essential in industries characterized by rapid technological change and intense competition.

In contrast, transactional leadership, while somewhat less dominant, still demonstrated a meaningful contribution

to business survival by ensuring that organizational systems remain structured, efficient, and goal-oriented. The reliance on reward systems, performance monitoring, and adherence to established procedures typical of transactional leadership provides operational stability and consistency factors that are particularly valuable in maintaining service quality and regulatory compliance in the Nigerian telecom environment. This finding reinforces the argument that while transformational leadership fuels innovation and adaptability, transactional leadership complements it by ensuring discipline and performance accountability, both of which are indispensable for sustainable business success.

The results further confirm the significant contribution of creativity facets especially product creativity to business survival, underscoring the critical role of innovation outcomes in maintaining competitiveness within volatile and technology-driven markets. Product creativity, which emphasizes the development of novel and useful products or services, enables firms to differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace, respond to evolving customer needs, and anticipate future demands. This finding aligns with Amabile's (1996) componential theory of creativity, which emphasizes that organizational innovation thrives when individuals are both intrinsically motivated and supported by an environment that encourages experimentation and problem-solving. Additionally, process creativity and press (environmental) creativity also played meaningful roles, suggesting that innovation is not merely an individual trait but a collective organizational process influenced by supportive leadership and workplace culture.

Another critical insight from this study is the mediating role of organizational resilience, which emerged as a strategic mechanism linking leadership effectiveness, creativity, and business survival. Resilience enables firms to anticipate, absorb, and recover from disruptions an essential capability in the Nigerian telecommunications sector, which faces challenges such as infrastructural deficiencies, regulatory uncertainties, and economic volatility. The findings suggest that resilient organizations are better positioned to leverage leadership-driven creativity into tangible survival outcomes. This aligns with the dynamic capabilities theory (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997), which argues that firms that can reconfigure internal competencies in response to changing environments are more likely to sustain competitive advantage over time.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that sustainable business performance in Nigeria's telecommunications industry depends not on leadership or creativity in isolation, but on their synergistic integration through organizational resilience. Effective leaders cultivate environments where creative ideas can flourish, and resilient systems ensure that these ideas translate into adaptive strategies that safeguard long-term survival. Thus, leadership effectiveness, creative capacity, and resilience mutually reinforce one another, forming a triadic framework that sustains growth and competitiveness in dynamic markets.

The study's results also hold important practical implications for organizational management. Telecommunications firms should invest in leadership development programs that balance transformational inspiration with transactional control, ensuring both innovation and operational efficiency. Moreover, management should nurture creativity at all levels through training, open communication, and recognition systems while simultaneously strengthening resilience mechanisms such as knowledge sharing, risk management, and adaptive learning. In doing so, organizations will be better equipped to respond proactively to market turbulence and technological disruptions.

In summary, this research underscores that the interplay between leadership, creativity, and resilience is fundamental to business survival in today's highly competitive and unpredictable telecommunications sector. Firms that can effectively integrate these elements are not only more likely to endure but also to thrive in the face of adversity

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study set out to examine how leadership styles and creativity facets influence business survival, with organizational resilience serving as a mediating construct, within the Nigerian telecommunications industry. Drawing upon Transformational and Transactional Leadership Theories (Bass, 1985) and the Heuristic Framework for Creativity Measurement (Rhodes, 1961), the research provided empirical insights into the dynamic relationships between leadership behavior, creativity outcomes, and resilience-building in a rapidly

evolving and highly competitive business environment.

The findings underscore the critical role of leadership in shaping the adaptive and innovative capabilities necessary for business longevity. Both transformational and transactional leadership styles demonstrated significant positive relationships with business survival, although the transformational style emerged as particularly effective in fostering innovation, collaboration, and proactive adaptation. Transactional leadership, while more structured and control-oriented, complemented this effect by ensuring operational stability and performance consistency a balance that appears crucial for firms operating in turbulent markets such as telecommunications.

The study also revealed that creativity facets, especially the product facet, exert a profound influence on survival outcomes. This highlights that beyond ideation, the tangible implementation of creative outputs such as new services, marketing strategies, or technological solutions directly contributes to sustaining competitiveness. In this regard, creativity functions as both a strategic capability and a performance differentiator for firms navigating the challenges of deregulation, infrastructural inadequacies, and shifting consumer expectations in Nigeria's telecom industry.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this research contributes to extending leadership and creativity literature by integrating them into a unified model mediated by resilience. The findings demonstrate that resilience is not merely an outcome of leadership or innovation but a mechanism that converts these factors into long-term survival. This integrative framework enriches current understanding and provides a foundation for further empirical testing in different industries and developing economies.

Practical Implications

Practically, the study offers valuable insights for managers, policymakers, and industry regulators. Telecom executives are encouraged to invest in leadership development programs that emphasize transformational competencies, cultivate creativity through supportive work environments, and institutionalize resilience strategies that prepare organizations for uncertainty. For policymakers, the findings suggest the importance of creating regulatory and infrastructural conditions that allow firms to innovate and adapt effectively. By embedding leadership, creativity, and resilience into their strategic management processes, organizations can achieve sustainable growth and withstand environmental turbulence.

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