

Building Resilient Organizations through Creativity and Adaptive Leadership: Lessons from Nigeria's Telecommunications Industry

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ABSTRACT

In an era of unprecedented uncertainty and disruption, the survival of organizations in emerging economies increasingly depends on their ability to adapt, innovate, and remain resilient. This study examines the combined influence of leadership and creativity on building organizational resilience and sustaining business performance within the Nigerian telecommunications industry, a sector marked by intense competition, regulatory complexity, and technological volatility. Drawing on theories of adaptive and transformational leadership as well as creativity and resilience frameworks, the study explores how leadership behaviors stimulate creativity-driven resilience that enables firms to withstand and recover from environmental shocks.

A quantitative research design was employed using data collected from 383 employees across major multinational and indigenous telecommunications firms in Nigeria. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was applied to test the hypothesized relationships among leadership, creativity, resilience, and business survival. The results revealed that adaptive and transformational leadership styles significantly predict organisational resilience through the mediating role of creativity. Leaders who encourage experimentation, inspire innovation, and provide intellectual stimulation were found to enhance employees' capacity to respond creatively to uncertainty. Furthermore, resilient firms demonstrated superior operational stability, stronger customer loyalty, and greater adaptability to technological and regulatory disruptions.

Theoretically, this study contributes to leadership and resilience literature by integrating creativity as a central mechanism linking leadership behaviours with long-term organisational adaptability. It advances understanding of how adaptive leadership functions within emerging market contexts, where structural constraints and resource limitations intensify the need for creative problem-solving. Practically, the findings underscore the necessity for leadership development programmes, HR strategies, and organisational policies that institutionalise creativity and resilience as strategic imperatives. Policymakers are also urged to design supportive regulatory frameworks that foster innovation and capacity building across the telecommunications ecosystem. Ultimately, this research provides both scholars and practitioners with actionable insights into how adaptive leadership and creativity can serve as twin pillars for building resilient organisations in volatile business environments.

Keywords: Adaptive leadership, transformational leadership, creativity, organisational resilience, business survival, telecommunications, Nigeria, PLS-SEM.

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and unpredictable global environment, organisations across industries face unprecedented challenges arising from rapid technological change, economic instability, and evolving consumer expectations. The Nigerian telecommunications industry, one of the fastest-growing sectors in Africa, provides a compelling context for examining how businesses sustain competitiveness and continuity amid constant disruption. Over the past two decades, telecom firms in Nigeria have experienced intense competition, regulatory pressures, infrastructural deficiencies, and fluctuating market conditions. Despite these adversities, certain organisations have demonstrated remarkable resilience the ability to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to challenges while maintaining operational effectiveness and strategic direction.

Resilience has therefore become a cornerstone of long-term business survival and success. However, organisational resilience does not emerge spontaneously; it is cultivated through effective leadership and creativity-driven adaptation. Leaders who exhibit adaptive and transformational qualities play a pivotal role in shaping the mindset and culture necessary for innovation and flexibility. Adaptive leadership, in particular, enables organisations to recognise shifts in the external environment, adjust their strategies, and mobilise employees toward constructive problem-solving in the face of uncertainty. When combined with creativity—the ability to generate novel and useful ideas adaptive leadership creates an enabling environment for learning, experimentation, and continuous improvement.

In Nigeria's telecommunications sector, creativity and adaptive leadership are not only desirable but essential. The sector's volatility demands leaders who can navigate complex regulatory landscapes, motivate diverse workforces, and drive creative solutions to persistent infrastructural and service delivery challenges. For instance, as competition intensifies among major telecom operators such as MTN, Airtel, and Glo, sustaining customer satisfaction and technological innovation requires more than routine management; it demands visionary and adaptive leadership anchored in resilience-building practices. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic, economic fluctuations, and digital transformation trends have further underscored the need for organisations to be innovative and resilient to survive.

Despite growing scholarly interest in organisational resilience, limited empirical research has explored how adaptive leadership and creativity interact to foster resilience within developing economies like Nigeria. Most existing studies focus on developed contexts, overlooking the unique structural and institutional barriers that shape organisational behaviour in emerging markets. Hence, this study fills a critical research gap by investigating how creativity mediates the relationship between leadership and resilience, and how these dynamics contribute to business survival in Nigeria's telecommunications industry.

Although prior studies have examined leadership and organisational performance, few have empirically connected adaptive leadership, creativity, and resilience within a single integrated framework particularly in the context of developing economies. Existing research tends to analyze these constructs in isolation, overlooking how their interaction dynamically influences business survival in turbulent environments. Furthermore, most prior studies have been conducted in developed economies, where institutional stability differs significantly from the uncertainty prevalent in Nigeria's business landscape. This gap limits the applicability of established theories to emerging markets. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by providing an empirical model that explains how adaptive leadership fosters creativity and resilience, ultimately enhancing business survival in Nigeria's telecommunications industry. By focusing on a developing economy, this research extends the theoretical boundaries of leadership and resilience studies and offers practical insights for organisations operating in volatile environments.

Problem Statement

The survival of organisations in today's volatile business environment increasingly depends on their ability to adapt, innovate, and remain resilient in the face of uncertainty. In Nigeria's telecommunications industry, firms operate under conditions of high market competition, infrastructural inadequacies, and fluctuating regulatory policies that threaten their long-term sustainability. Although leadership and creativity have been widely recognized as key enablers of resilience and performance, there remains limited empirical understanding of how adaptive leadership specifically drives creativity and resilience to ensure business survival in developing economies such as Nigeria.

Previous studies on leadership and organisational resilience have predominantly focused on developed economies (e.g., the United States, Europe, and parts of Asia) with relatively stable institutional environments (Duchek, 2020; Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2005). These studies often overlook the contextual challenges such as weak infrastructure, inconsistent policies, and cultural diversity that shape leadership effectiveness in emerging markets. Furthermore, existing research tends to examine leadership, creativity, and resilience as independent constructs, neglecting the dynamic interaction among them and their combined effect on business survival. This has created a theoretical and practical gap in understanding how these factors jointly contribute to organisational continuity under volatile conditions.

Additionally, most studies adopt a one-dimensional view of resilience, focusing solely on crisis recovery rather than continuous adaptation and learning. Few studies have explored the mediating role of creativity in translating adaptive leadership into sustained organisational resilience. The absence of such integrated models limits both scholarly understanding and managerial application of how organisations can effectively prepare for and respond to disruptions.

This study therefore seeks to address these gaps by developing and empirically testing a model that links adaptive leadership, creativity, and organisational resilience as predictors of business survival within the Nigerian telecommunications industry. By doing so, it contributes to both theory and practice by contextualizing adaptive leadership and resilience within a developing economy, examining creativity as a key mediating mechanism providing practical insights for managers on how to build resilient organisations capable of sustaining long-term performance despite environmental turbulence.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine how adaptive leadership and creativity influence organisational resilience and business survival in the Nigerian telecommunications industry. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Assess the influence of adaptive leadership on organisational creativity.
2. Examine the relationship between creativity and organisational resilience.
3. Determine the mediating role of creativity in the relationship between adaptive leadership and organisational resilience.
4. Evaluate the impact of organisational resilience on business survival.
5. Develop a conceptual framework that integrates adaptive leadership, creativity, and resilience as mechanisms for achieving business survival in dynamic environments.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives above, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How does adaptive leadership influence organisational creativity in the Nigerian telecommunications sector?
2. What is the relationship between creativity and organisational resilience?
3. Does creativity mediate the relationship between adaptive leadership and organisational resilience?
4. How does organisational resilience affect business survival among Nigerian telecommunications firms?
5. How can the integration of adaptive leadership, creativity, and resilience enhance business survival in volatile and uncertain environments?

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant theoretical and practical value. From a theoretical perspective, it enriches the growing body of literature on organisational resilience by integrating adaptive and transformational leadership with creativity as a mediating construct. While prior studies have examined these variables independently, this research advances the understanding of how leadership behaviours and creativity interact to influence resilience and business survival particularly within the unique socio-economic realities of an emerging market like Nigeria. The findings provide empirical evidence that helps to bridge the contextual research gap in resilience and leadership studies, offering a nuanced understanding relevant to developing economies.

Practically, this study provides valuable insights for business leaders, policymakers, and practitioners in the Nigerian telecommunications sector. It highlights the importance of adaptive and creative approaches in navigating complex regulatory environments, competitive markets, and technological disruptions. By identifying leadership strategies that foster organisational resilience, the study serves as a guide for managers seeking to enhance their organizations' long-term sustainability and performance. Furthermore, the study's

findings can inform leadership development programs, policy formulation, and capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening the resilience of Nigerian businesses and other firms operating in volatile environments.

Finally, this research offers a foundation for future scholars to expand the discussion on the dynamic interplay between leadership, creativity, and resilience. It encourages longitudinal and cross-industry investigations to deepen understanding and improve the generalizability of resilience-building frameworks in diverse contexts

Theoretical Significance

First, the study extends existing leadership and resilience theories by integrating adaptive leadership and creativity into a single conceptual framework that explains how organisations can sustain performance under volatile conditions. While prior research has explored transformational and transactional leadership styles, limited attention has been given to adaptive leadership as a dynamic capability in developing economies. This study therefore advances theoretical understanding by positioning creativity as a mediating mechanism that links leadership behaviour to organisational resilience.

Second, the study contributes to the body of knowledge on organisational resilience by contextualizing it within the realities of emerging markets such as Nigeria, where environmental instability, infrastructure gaps, and regulatory inconsistencies challenge business continuity. By doing so, it broadens the theoretical scope of resilience beyond developed-country contexts and provides empirical evidence from a developing economy perspective.

Finally, the research adds to creativity and innovation literature by demonstrating how creative processes foster adaptability and long-term survival. It highlights creativity not only as a source of innovation but as a strategic tool that strengthens resilience and enhances firms' ability to recover and thrive during crises.

Practical Significance

From a managerial standpoint, the study provides actionable insights for leaders and policymakers within the Nigerian telecommunications sector. By identifying the leadership behaviours that stimulate creativity and resilience, the findings offer practical strategies for enhancing decision-making, innovation, and adaptability in fast-changing environments. Telecom managers can apply these insights to develop more resilient organisational cultures, improve employee engagement, and sustain business operations in the face of disruption.

Additionally, the study's findings are valuable to regulatory agencies and policymakers, who can design supportive policies that encourage leadership development, innovation, and crisis preparedness in the telecommunications industry. For business practitioners, understanding the interplay between adaptive leadership, creativity, and resilience will help build more sustainable and competitive enterprises capable of surviving economic, technological, and regulatory challenges

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on examining the influence of transformational and transactional leadership styles on business survival within the context of the Nigerian telecommunications industry. The research also investigates the mediating role of organisational resilience and creativity, recognizing their critical importance in enabling firms to sustain operations amid external turbulence and competitive pressures.

The study is limited to major and emerging telecommunications companies operating in Nigeria, such as MTN Nigeria, Airtel Nigeria, Globacom, and 9mobile, as well as selected smaller firms providing telecom-related services. These organisations were chosen because they represent the most dynamic segment of Nigeria's service sector and operate within a highly competitive and technologically volatile environment.

The investigation primarily targets managerial and supervisory staff who are directly involved in leadership, innovation, and strategic decision-making processes. This focus allows for a deeper understanding of how leadership behaviours influence employee creativity, organisational adaptability, and long-term survival strategies.

Geographically, the study is restricted to key urban centers Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt where most major telecom headquarters and operations are located. These areas were selected due to their economic significance and the concentration of industry activities.

Conceptually, the scope of this research is confined to exploring the relationships among leadership styles (transformational and transactional), creativity, organisational resilience, and business survival. Other factors that may influence survival, such as macroeconomic policy changes, political instability, or global market shocks, are acknowledged but remain outside the direct focus of this study.

Definition of Terms

Transformational Leadership:

A leadership style that inspires and motivates followers to exceed expectations by creating a shared vision, fostering innovation, and encouraging personal and professional growth. It focuses on intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence.

Transactional Leadership:

A leadership approach based on structured tasks, performance monitoring, and rewards or penalties tied to achieving specific objectives. It emphasizes maintaining order, compliance, and short-term goals through clear exchanges between leaders and subordinates.

Creativity:

The ability of individuals or teams within an organisation to generate novel and useful ideas that can improve processes, products, or strategies. In this study, creativity represents a mediating factor that connects leadership behaviours with organisational adaptability and performance.

Organisational Resilience:

The capability of an organization to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and adapt effectively to disruptions and environmental changes while maintaining continuous operations and growth.

Business Survival:

The sustained ability of a firm to remain competitive and operational over time, despite external or internal challenges. In this research, business survival refers to the perceived continuity, adaptability, and long-term sustainability of telecom firms in Nigeria.

Telecommunications Industry:

The sector that encompasses companies providing communication services such as mobile networks, internet connectivity, and digital data solutions. In Nigeria, it includes major operators like MTN, Airtel, Globacom, and 9mobile.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership, introduced by Heifetz and Linsky (2002), is a leadership framework that emphasizes the capacity to mobilize people to tackle complex challenges and thrive in changing environments. Unlike transactional leadership, which focuses on maintaining order through control and compliance, or transformational leadership, which seeks to inspire followers through vision and charisma, adaptive leadership centers on the practical realities of organizational learning and flexibility. It involves diagnosing problems, experimenting with solutions, and encouraging employees to adjust to new circumstances without losing sight of core organizational values.

In volatile business environments like Nigeria's telecommunications industry, adaptive leaders play a pivotal role in helping organizations navigate uncertainty. They create conditions for experimentation, foster open communication, and encourage employees to challenge existing assumptions. Adaptive leaders do not merely react to change; they proactively interpret signals from the environment and align organizational resources to meet emerging demands. This leadership style is particularly relevant in the telecommunications sector, where technological disruptions, regulatory reforms, and consumer expectations constantly reshape the competitive landscape.

Moreover, adaptive leaders understand that organizational survival depends on fostering collective intelligence and emotional resilience. They motivate teams to embrace discomfort, view failures as learning opportunities, and stay engaged in problem-solving. In doing so, they transform moments of crisis into opportunities for innovation and growth – a skill indispensable for business survival in Nigeria's turbulent market context.

Creativity in Organizations

Creativity, as defined by Amabile (1996), is the production of ideas or solutions that are both novel and useful. In the organizational context, creativity is not restricted to a few individuals with artistic tendencies but represents a collective capability that influences problem-solving, innovation, and long-term adaptability. The concept of creativity can be understood through Amabile's Componential Theory of Creativity, which identifies three core elements: domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes, and intrinsic motivation.

Within telecommunications organizations, creativity manifests in diverse forms from developing new service delivery models and improving customer engagement strategies to introducing innovative technologies that enhance connectivity and efficiency. Employees' ability to think creatively is often influenced by leadership behaviors, organizational culture, and the extent to which experimentation and risk-taking are encouraged.

In Nigeria's telecom sector, creativity has become an engine for competitive differentiation. For instance, firms that creatively design localized services and pricing strategies often outperform those that rely solely on imported business models. Leaders who foster a psychologically safe environment, reward innovative thinking, and support autonomy enable their employees to contribute meaningfully to problem-solving and organizational renewal. Consequently, creativity is not merely a desirable attribute but a strategic resource that sustains innovation and resilience in challenging environments.

Organisational Resilience

Organisational resilience refers to a firm's capacity to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptions while maintaining its core functions and identity (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). Resilient organisations possess both robustness – the strength to absorb shocks – and adaptability – the agility to evolve in response to changing conditions. In the Nigerian telecommunications context, resilience determines whether firms can sustain operations amid infrastructural deficiencies, policy fluctuations, and market volatility.

Resilience is often conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, behavioral, and contextual capabilities. Cognitively, resilient organizations possess strong situational awareness and the ability to interpret signals from their environments accurately. Behaviorally, they demonstrate flexibility through rapid decision-making and resource reconfiguration. Contextually, resilience is embedded within organizational culture, leadership practices, and communication patterns.

Leadership plays a crucial role in cultivating resilience by shaping the organizational climate that supports recovery and adaptation. Adaptive leaders, through empathy, empowerment, and strategic foresight, strengthen employees' confidence in the organization's ability to overcome adversity. Moreover, creative thinking enhances resilience by providing innovative pathways for overcoming obstacles and leveraging crises as opportunities for reinvention.

Adaptive Leadership, Creativity, and Organisational Resilience: Conceptual Linkages

The interplay between adaptive leadership, creativity, and organisational resilience forms the conceptual foundation of this study. Adaptive leadership creates the psychological and structural conditions for creativity to

flourish, which in turn strengthens resilience. When leaders encourage experimentation, tolerate ambiguity, and reward creative risk-taking, employees are more likely to generate novel solutions to complex challenges. These solutions enhance the organisation's capacity to respond effectively to disruptions, thereby reinforcing resilience.

Creativity functions as both a mediating mechanism and a strategic resource. It mediates the relationship between leadership and resilience by transforming leaders' adaptive behaviors into tangible innovative outcomes. Simultaneously, it serves as a resource that enables organisations to remain competitive in uncertain environments. In the Nigerian telecommunications industry, where firms face systemic infrastructural and economic challenges, creativity becomes the bridge that converts leadership vision into practical resilience-building strategies.

Empirical studies (e.g., Caniëls & Rietzschel, 2015; Bakker et al., 2020) have shown that leaders who stimulate intellectual engagement and foster supportive work climates enhance both individual and collective creativity. This creative momentum, when institutionalized through processes and systems, strengthens organisational adaptability and long-term survival. Thus, adaptive leadership and creativity together constitute a dual capability essential for sustaining resilience in volatile business landscapes.

Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by Adaptive Leadership Theory (Heifetz, 1994) and the Componential Theory of Creativity (Amabile, 1996), integrated with concepts from Organisational Resilience Theory (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011).

- Adaptive Leadership Theory posits that leaders must mobilize people to confront challenges, experiment with solutions, and learn in real time. The theory highlights flexibility, emotional intelligence, and collective problem-solving as core leadership attributes that support resilience.
- Componential Theory of Creativity explains how individual skills, creative processes, and intrinsic motivation contribute to creative performance. In organizational settings, leaders can influence these components by shaping culture, incentives, and autonomy.
- Organisational Resilience Theory emphasizes a firm's ability to endure and evolve amid disruption. It provides the overarching lens through which the outcomes of adaptive leadership and creativity are evaluated in this study.

The integration of these theories forms a holistic framework linking leadership behavior, creativity mechanisms, and resilience outcomes. This framework suggests that adaptive leadership fosters creative processes that strengthen organisational resilience and, ultimately, ensure sustained business survival in dynamic markets

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to empirically examine the interrelationships among adaptive leadership, creativity, and organisational resilience within Nigeria's telecommunications industry. The quantitative approach was selected because it enables objective measurement, statistical testing, and evaluation of theoretical relationships among latent constructs, providing empirical evidence to support or refute hypothesised linkages (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hair et al., 2021). Through the use of numerical data, this approach enhances precision, replicability, and generalisability of findings across organisational contexts.

The cross-sectional design was particularly appropriate given the study's aim to capture the perceptions of employees and managers at a specific point in time regarding leadership behaviour, creative engagement, and resilience capacity within their organisations. The Nigerian telecommunications industry operates in a highly dynamic and competitive environment, where technological innovations, market volatility, and regulatory shifts continually reshape business operations. This design allows the researcher to obtain a "snapshot" of organisational functioning under these conditions, reflecting how adaptive leadership and creativity contribute to resilience within a defined timeframe.

Furthermore, the design facilitated the use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), a statistical technique suitable for predictive and exploratory research involving complex models with multiple constructs and mediation effects (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2019). PLS-SEM was particularly advantageous for this study because it accommodates smaller sample sizes, non-normal data distributions, and multi-dimensional variables such as leadership styles, creativity facets, and resilience components. This method also supports the simultaneous estimation of measurement and structural models, ensuring the robustness and validity of the findings.

The design integrates insights from prior empirical studies that have employed quantitative cross-sectional approaches to explore leadership and resilience in turbulent environments (Duchek, 2020; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). By adopting this methodological framework, the study provides a systematic and data-driven investigation into how adaptive and creative leadership behaviours enhance organisational resilience and business continuity within Nigeria's telecommunications landscape.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised managerial, supervisory, and professional-level employees working in leading telecommunications firms operating within Nigeria namely MTN Nigeria, Airtel Nigeria, Globacom, and 9mobile. These organisations collectively account for over 95% of the total market share within the Nigerian telecommunications sector (NCC, 2023), making them the most representative entities for examining leadership dynamics, creative practices, and organisational resilience in the industry.

The inclusion of both multinational (MTN and Airtel) and indigenous (Globacom and 9mobile) firms ensured diversity in leadership structures, organisational culture, and strategic orientation, thereby improving the external validity and generalisability of findings. This diversity captures variations in adaptive behaviour, resource deployment, and creative response mechanisms between globally networked corporations and locally managed enterprises, reflecting the broader spectrum of leadership and resilience realities in the Nigerian telecommunications ecosystem.

Given the research focus, the study specifically targeted middle and upper management employees actively involved in strategic decision-making, innovation management, and organisational transformation. Middle managers serve as crucial links between top leadership and operational teams, translating strategic visions into actionable initiatives, while upper managers set the tone for creative problem-solving and resilience-building. Prior studies affirm that these individuals possess the competencies to influence organisational adaptability and innovation outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Duchek, 2020; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

A total of 450 structured questionnaires were distributed across the four major telecommunications companies. Of these, 383 valid responses were retrieved and deemed usable, representing an effective response rate of approximately 85%, which is considered satisfactory in organisational research (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). This sample size exceeds the minimum threshold recommended for PLS-SEM, which typically requires at least ten times the largest number of structural paths pointing to any latent variable in the model (Hair et al., 2021).

Data Collection Procedures

Respondents were briefed on the nature and purpose of the study before participation. The cover page of the questionnaire stated that participation was voluntary and that respondents could withdraw at any point without consequences. All responses were treated confidentially, and anonymity was maintained by excluding identifying information such as names, job titles, or company identifiers. Participants were informed that responses would be aggregated for analysis to ensure privacy and protect against organisational repercussions.

The data collection process combined both online and physical distribution to ensure a wide reach and convenience. Out of 450 distributed questionnaires, 383 were valid for analysis, representing a high response rate of 85%. This outcome reflects the strong engagement of respondents and the practical relevance of the research to their professional environments.

Ethical considerations and methodological rigour were maintained throughout data collection, thereby enhancing validity, credibility, and reliability of the dataset.

Validity and Reliability

Ensuring validity and reliability was a critical step toward enhancing the credibility, accuracy, and generalisability of the study's findings. Since the study relied on self-reported survey data to measure abstract constructs such as adaptive leadership, creativity, organisational resilience, and business survival, rigorous statistical and expert validation procedures were implemented.

To establish content and construct validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by three academic experts in leadership and organisational behaviour, and two practitioners in Nigeria's telecommunications sector. Their feedback improved the clarity, relevance, and contextual fit of each item, ensuring alignment with both theory and practice. Minor wording adjustments were made to improve comprehension and local applicability without altering the meaning of items.

Reliability was evaluated through internal consistency measures using Cronbach's alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR), with all values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2021). Convergent validity was confirmed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50, and discriminant validity was verified using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. These metrics demonstrated that the measurement model was statistically robust and conceptually coherent.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0, employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to test the hypothesised relationships among adaptive leadership, creativity, organisational resilience, and business survival. This analytical approach is well-suited for models involving multiple latent constructs, mediating effects, and predictive relationships (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2019).

PLS-SEM provides advantages such as accommodating non-normal data, moderate sample sizes, and both reflective and formative constructs. It is particularly appropriate for exploratory studies like this one, where prediction and theory development are primary objectives. Bootstrapping procedures (5,000 resamples) were applied to test the significance of path coefficients, while R^2 , Q^2 , and f^2 values were used to assess model fit, predictive relevance, and effect size respectively (Henseler et al., 2015).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical compliance was a core component of this study. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously upheld; no identifying data were collected, and all responses were coded for analysis. The collected data were stored securely in password-protected files and locked cabinets, accessible only to the principal researcher and supervisory team. All physical documents were destroyed after data analysis to ensure data protection.

The research design and data collection procedures adhered to established ethical guidelines for human subject research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Summary of Methodology

In summary, this chapter detailed the methodological procedures used to explore the interrelationships among adaptive leadership, creativity, organisational resilience, and business survival in Nigeria's telecommunications industry. The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional design and collected data from 383 respondents across major telecom firms. Through the use of validated instruments and PLS-SEM analysis, the research ensured methodological rigour and empirical credibility. Ethical standards were fully observed, ensuring reliability and trustworthiness of the study's findings.

Data Analysis and Results

The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS version 4.0, employing the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique. This advanced statistical approach was deemed appropriate due to

its capacity to handle complex models with multiple latent constructs and its suitability for studies focusing on prediction and theory development. PLS-SEM is particularly advantageous for social science research as it does not require stringent normality assumptions and can efficiently analyze models with smaller sample sizes and multiple mediating variables (Hair et al., 2021).

The data analysis process followed a structured and multi-stage procedure to ensure methodological rigor and the accuracy of results. Initially, the collected data underwent data screening and cleaning to address missing values, outliers, and potential inconsistencies. This was followed by the generation of descriptive statistics to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics such as gender, age, educational qualification, work experience, and organizational position. These preliminary analyses provided a foundational understanding of the sample composition and its relevance to the study objectives.

Data Screening and Preliminary Analysis

Before proceeding with statistical testing and model estimation, the dataset underwent rigorous data screening and preliminary analysis to ensure its accuracy, completeness, and overall suitability for advanced statistical procedures. This stage was essential to enhance the quality, credibility, and reliability of the results obtained through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM).

The data screening process involved several steps, beginning with the examination of missing values, inconsistencies, and potential data entry errors. Missing data were found to be minimal less than 2% across all items indicating a high level of response completeness. To preserve the sample size and maintain the representativeness of the data, missing values were treated using the mean substitution method, a widely accepted technique for handling low levels of missing data without introducing significant bias (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

After screening for outliers, a total of 383 valid responses were retained from the original dataset, meeting the minimum sample size requirement for PLS-SEM. This sample size was deemed adequate based on Hair et al.'s (2021) guidelines, which recommend a minimum of ten times the maximum number of structural paths directed at a latent construct in the model. The relatively high response rate (approximately 85%) further strengthened the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

Overall, the data screening and preliminary analysis confirmed that the dataset was clean, valid, and statistically appropriate for subsequent PLS-SEM analysis. These preparatory steps provided a strong methodological foundation for assessing the measurement model and testing the structural relationships hypothesized in this study.

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

The demographic profile of the respondents reflected a diverse and representative sample of the Nigerian telecommunications workforce.

- **Gender Distribution:** 59% male and 41% female, suggesting a relatively balanced gender representation in managerial and supervisory positions.
- **Age Range:** The majority (67%) were between the ages of 25 and 40, indicating a youthful and dynamic workforce with strong exposure to technological innovation and adaptive change.
- **Educational Background:** 78% of respondents possessed a bachelor's degree or higher qualification, reflecting high educational attainment typical of the telecommunications industry.
- **Work Experience:** Approximately 72% of respondents had over five years of industry experience, indicating deep familiarity with operational challenges and leadership practices.
- **Organizational Type:** 62% were from multinational firms (e.g., MTN, Airtel), while 38% were from indigenous firms (e.g., Globacom, 9mobile).

These demographics suggest that the respondents were well-positioned to provide credible insights into leadership effectiveness, creativity dynamics, and organisational resilience.

Descriptive Statistics of Constructs

The mean and standard deviation scores of the major constructs adaptive leadership, creativity, organisational resilience, and business survival were computed to assess respondents' general perceptions.

All constructs recorded mean values above the midpoint (3.0) on the five-point Likert scale, indicating positive perceptions toward adaptive leadership behaviors, creative engagement, and organisational resilience.

- Adaptive Leadership: Mean = 4.15, SD = 0.62
- Creativity: Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.67
- Organisational Resilience: Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.65
- Business Survival: Mean = 4.10, SD = 0.60

These findings suggest that Nigerian telecom firms demonstrate relatively strong leadership adaptability and creative capacity, which align with their ability to withstand competitive and environmental challenges.

Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) values for all constructs exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency:

- Adaptive Leadership ($\alpha = 0.90$; CR = 0.92)
- Creativity ($\alpha = 0.88$; CR = 0.91)
- Organisational Resilience ($\alpha = 0.87$; CR = 0.90)
- Business Survival ($\alpha = 0.89$; CR = 0.91)

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model examined the hypothesized relationships between adaptive leadership, creativity, organisational resilience, and business survival. The model's predictive accuracy was evaluated using the Coefficient of Determination (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2).

- R^2 for Creativity: 0.54: indicating that adaptive leadership explains 54% of the variance in creativity.
- R^2 for Organisational Resilience: 0.63: suggesting that leadership and creativity jointly explain 63% of resilience variance.
- R^2 for Business Survival: 0.59: implying that resilience and creativity account for 59% of the variance in survival outcomes.

These results demonstrate substantial explanatory power, underscoring the strength of the proposed model

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Adaptive Leadership $\rightarrow$ Creativity	0.61	12.43	<0.001	Supported
H2	Creativity $\rightarrow$ Organisational Resilience	0.57	10.28	<0.001	Supported
H3	Adaptive Leadership $\rightarrow$ Organisational Resilience	0.38	7.19	<0.001	Supported
H4	Organisational Resilience $\rightarrow$ Business Survival	0.49	8.12	<0.001	Supported
H5	Creativity $\rightarrow$ Business Survival	0.27	4.95	<0.001	Supported
H6	Adaptive Leadership $\rightarrow$ Business Survival (via Resilience)	0.18	3.92	<0.001	Supported

The findings indicate that all hypothesized relationships were statistically significant. Notably, creativity mediated the relationship between adaptive leadership and organisational resilience, while resilience mediated the link between creativity and business survival.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Results

The findings of this study provide compelling empirical evidence that adaptive leadership serves as a critical driver of organisational creativity, which in turn significantly enhances organisational resilience and ultimately contributes to sustained business survival in Nigeria's telecommunications sector. The results validate the study's conceptual framework, demonstrating that leadership adaptability, creative thinking, and resilience capacity are not isolated constructs but interdependent mechanisms that collectively determine an organization's ability to thrive amid environmental turbulence.

The structural model analysis confirmed that adaptive leadership exerts a strong positive influence on creativity, suggesting that when leaders encourage experimentation, learning, and innovation, employees become more capable of generating novel ideas and solutions. This aligns with the view of Heifetz and Laurie (1997) that adaptive leaders empower followers to navigate complex challenges through continuous learning and problem-solving. The study also established that creativity acts as a mediating mechanism, linking leadership behaviour to resilience outcomes. In essence, creativity provides the cognitive and behavioural tools through which adaptive leadership translates strategic vision into tangible resilience capabilities.

Discussion of Key Findings

The findings of this study provide robust empirical evidence demonstrating that adaptive leadership and creativity are foundational drivers of organisational resilience and business survival in the Nigerian telecommunications sector. Consistent with prior theoretical assertions (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017; Bass, 1985; Duchek, 2020), the results highlight that leaders who exhibit adaptability, flexibility, and responsiveness to uncertainty are more likely to foster a culture of creative thinking and collective learning critical components of resilience.

The study revealed that adaptive leadership significantly predicts creativity. This aligns with Amabile's (1996) model of creativity, which emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation and supportive environments in stimulating innovation. Adaptive leaders, by encouraging open communication, experimentation, and problem reframing, empower employees to explore unconventional solutions. In the Nigerian telecommunications context characterized by erratic power supply, fluctuating regulations, and intense market rivalry such leadership behaviours are vital for sustaining innovative performance.

Moreover, creativity was found to be a strong predictor of organisational resilience, reinforcing the view that creative capacity enables firms to transform challenges into opportunities (Carmeli et al., 2014). Telecom firms that actively promote creative problem-solving are better equipped to anticipate disruptions, devise strategic alternatives, and maintain operational continuity. This finding corresponds with the dynamic capabilities theory (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997), which posits that innovation and adaptability together underpin sustained competitive advantage.

The results further showed that organisational resilience mediates the relationship between leadership and business survival. This implies that leadership alone is insufficient for long-term survival unless it cultivates resilience as a strategic organizational capability. Adaptive leaders achieve this by building trust, promoting learning agility, and ensuring that teams remain cohesive under stress (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). Additionally, the significant pathway from creativity to business survival confirms the strategic relevance of innovative products, services, and processes in ensuring market competitiveness. In Nigeria's telecommunications industry where customer expectations, technology adoption, and digital services evolve rapidly creative initiatives such as mobile money platforms, loyalty schemes, and self-service apps have become key differentiators.

Overall, this study reinforces the interconnectedness of leadership, creativity, and resilience as mutually reinforcing mechanisms that determine business longevity in volatile and resource-constrained environments.

Addressing the Research Gap and Contribution

Despite the growing body of literature linking leadership, creativity, and organisational resilience, past studies have often examined these constructs independently rather than as part of an integrated model. Most prior works focused on transformational or transactional leadership without explicitly accounting for the adaptive leadership behaviours that drive creativity and resilience under volatile conditions. This limited perspective has resulted in an incomplete understanding of how leadership styles interact with internal creative processes to influence long-term business survival particularly within the context of emerging economies like Nigeria.

This study addresses that gap by empirically integrating adaptive leadership, creativity, and organisational resilience into a unified framework and testing their dynamic interrelationships using structural equation modelling. By situating the analysis within the Nigerian telecommunications sector, this research contributes to contextual leadership scholarship and provides empirical justification that adaptive leadership indirectly sustains business survival through the mediating roles of creativity and resilience. Thus, the study not only fills a theoretical void but also offers a contextually relevant model for understanding leadership effectiveness in turbulent business environments.

Theoretical Implications

The study contributes meaningfully to the literature by extending the theoretical understanding of leadership and resilience within the context of emerging economies.

First, it integrates adaptive and transformational leadership theories with the creativity–resilience nexus, offering a unified conceptual framework that elucidates how leadership behaviours stimulate creative responses that, in turn, drive resilience and business continuity.

Second, the study empirically validates the mediating role of creativity and resilience, advancing the proposition that creative engagement acts as a pathway through which leadership translates into adaptive organizational capacity. This finding strengthens arguments within resilience theory (Duchek, 2020; Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2005) that innovation and learning are integral to sustaining resilience over time.

Third, by applying this model within the Nigerian telecommunications industry, the research extends leadership and resilience discourse to an underexplored context characterized by environmental volatility and institutional weakness. This contributes to contextual leadership theory (Osland et al., 2020), which emphasizes that leadership effectiveness is contingent on local sociocultural and economic realities.

Finally, the integration of PLS-SEM methodology provides a methodological contribution, demonstrating the robustness of structural modeling in capturing multidimensional relationships across behavioural and organizational constructs.

Managerial Implications

The findings have several practical implications for organizational leaders and managers within Nigeria's telecommunications sector and other dynamic industries.

1. Fostering Adaptive Leadership Competence

Organizations should prioritize leadership development programs that emphasize flexibility, emotional intelligence, and systems thinking. Adaptive leaders must be equipped to respond swiftly to change while maintaining a strategic vision that aligns teams toward common goals.

2. Embedding Creativity in Organizational Culture

Firms must institutionalize creativity as a core organizational value. This can be achieved through innovation labs, cross-functional collaboration, and reward systems that recognize creative contributions. Empowering employees to experiment and learn from failure enhances both individual and collective creative capacity.

3. Building Resilience Systems

Resilience-building should be viewed as a continuous process involving proactive risk management, resource optimization, and learning from past disruptions. Managers should promote scenario planning and encourage knowledge sharing to enhance organizational adaptability.

4. Leveraging Technology and Data

Digital transformation initiatives should not only focus on operational efficiency but also on enabling creativity and innovation. Leveraging data analytics for predictive insights can strengthen resilience by allowing early detection of threats and opportunities.

5. Human Resource and Policy Implications

HR departments should integrate resilience and creativity metrics into performance appraisals. This would encourage a shift from purely output-based evaluation to one that values adaptability, innovation, and learning agility traits essential for thriving in uncertainty.

Policy Implications

At the policy level, the results highlight the need for regulatory frameworks that encourage innovation and adaptive leadership practices across industries. Policymakers in Nigeria should consider initiatives such as:

- Creating leadership capacity-building programs tailored for digital-era challenges.
- Establishing innovation grants and incentives for telecom firms investing in R&D and creative solutions.
- Promoting public-private collaborations that enhance industry-wide resilience and knowledge sharing.

Furthermore, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) can play a pivotal role by fostering environments that reward innovation while maintaining fair competition. By embedding creativity and resilience principles into sectoral policy, the telecommunications ecosystem can become more sustainable and globally competitive.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of adaptive leadership and creativity on organisational resilience and business survival within the Nigerian telecommunications industry. Drawing upon both theoretical foundations and empirical evidence, the study established that adaptive leadership, when effectively implemented, cultivates a culture of creativity that serves as a catalyst for resilience and long-term organisational sustainability.

The findings revealed that adaptive leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping employee behaviour, fostering innovation, and facilitating strategic responsiveness to change. Leaders who exhibit flexibility, empathy, and situational awareness are more likely to guide their teams successfully through periods of uncertainty and turbulence. By encouraging open communication, shared decision-making, and learning-oriented practices, adaptive leaders nurture a supportive environment where creativity can flourish.

Creativity, in turn, emerged as a critical mediating mechanism linking leadership and organisational resilience. In an industry as dynamic as telecommunications where technology, customer expectations, and regulatory landscapes evolve rapidly creative problem-solving and innovation become essential tools for maintaining relevance and competitiveness. Employees who are empowered to think creatively contribute not only to incremental improvements but also to breakthrough innovations that sustain business continuity and differentiation in the market.

The study also established that organisational resilience acts as a vital bridge between creative capabilities and business survival. Resilient firms demonstrate the ability to anticipate disruptions, adapt to external shocks, and recover swiftly from crises while maintaining operational performance. In the Nigerian telecommunications

sector, resilience translates into sustained service delivery, customer retention, and market adaptability key components of enduring business success.

From a broader perspective, the research underscores the synergistic interaction among adaptive leadership, creativity, and resilience as the foundation for sustainable business survival in volatile environments. The empirical results affirm that these constructs do not operate in isolation but rather interact dynamically to build organisations capable of continuous learning, strategic agility, and long-term growth. This interconnection offers a holistic framework for understanding how leadership behaviours translate into organisational outcomes through creativity and resilience pathways.

The theoretical contributions of this study extend existing leadership and resilience frameworks by situating them within the context of an emerging economy. By validating established theories in Nigeria's telecommunications industry, the research demonstrates their cross-cultural and contextual applicability. Furthermore, it introduces creativity as a central mediating construct, thereby enriching leadership and organisational behaviour literature with new insights on how creative processes sustain resilience in uncertain business landscapes. From a managerial standpoint, the study provides practical strategies for fostering adaptive leadership, cultivating creativity, and embedding resilience within organisational structures. Managers are encouraged to invest in leadership development, promote open communication, and design flexible systems that empower employees to innovate. Firms that integrate these principles into their operations are more likely to achieve sustainable performance, even amid economic or technological disruptions.

At the policy level, the findings advocate for a supportive ecosystem that promotes innovation, leadership training, and resilience building. Government agencies, industry regulators, and educational institutions must collaborate to design frameworks that nurture creativity and adaptive leadership across sectors. Such policies are essential for strengthening national capacity to withstand external shocks and drive sustainable economic transformation.

In conclusion, the study reaffirms that adaptive leadership and creativity are twin engines of organisational resilience and business survival. Organisations that cultivate these capabilities will not only withstand adversity but also emerge stronger, more innovative, and strategically positioned for long-term success. The lessons drawn from Nigeria's telecommunications industry extend beyond national boundaries, offering valuable insights for organisations operating in other emerging markets and volatile global environments.

Future research could explore additional moderating or mediating variables such as digital transformation, organisational culture, or knowledge management that may further enhance the understanding of how leadership and creativity drive resilience. Longitudinal and cross-industry studies could also provide deeper insights into the temporal and contextual dimensions of these relationships.

Ultimately, this study contributes to both theory and practice by demonstrating that in an era of constant disruption, leadership adaptability and creativity are not optional virtues but strategic necessities. Together, they provide a resilient foundation upon which organisations can build enduring success, navigate uncertainty, and sustain growth in an ever-changing world

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