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# Examining the Effects of Leadership Styles on Growth, Profitability, and Survival in Northeastern Nigeria's Bread-Bakery Sector

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## Abstract

This study examines the impact of leadership styles on the operational outcomes of bread bakeries in northeastern Nigeria, focusing on growth, profitability, and long-term survival. A survey of fifty-one bakery managers across Adamawa, Bauchi, and Taraba States was conducted using a descriptive, quantitative approach. The findings reveal that democratic leadership enhances performance through participatory decision-making, while autocratic leadership shows positive effects in specific contexts. Laissez-faire leadership presents risks to long-term viability unless applied in skilled environments. Interestingly, transformational leadership did not significantly affect measured outcomes, underscoring the complexity of leadership effectiveness in diverse settings. The study highlights the need for adaptive, context-specific leadership training to improve organizational performance in the bakery industry. These insights contribute to both leadership theory and practical management strategies within rapidly expanding industrial sectors in the region.

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*JEL Codes:* L21, L26, M12, M13

*Keywords:* leadership effectiveness; small and medium-sized enterprises; organizational performance; business survival; organizational growth

## **I. Introduction**

Bread, a universal dietary staple, has long held a significant place in the culinary tapestry of countless civilizations around the world (Ilktac, Ahmad, and Halim 2021). In the northeastern states of Nigeria, the bread-bakery industry has not only flourished but significantly contributed to the region's economic landscape (A Otekunrin and Sawicka, 2019). Over the years, the industry has evolved, now offering both employment opportunities and financial growth (A Otekunrin and Sawicka, 2019; Chidebe, 2021). Northeastern Nigeria, characterized by diverse climatic conditions and a history of agricultural excellence, has become fertile ground for the industry.

The industry provides an interesting case for studying the intersection of managerial economics and entrepreneurship. Small and medium enterprises such as bakeries are often influenced by economic factors including market demand, supply chain dynamics, and regulatory environments (Acs and Audretsch, 2008; OGUNDELE et al., 2013). Understanding how leadership styles adapt to these economic pressures can provide insight into their impacts on business outcomes (Abdullah et al., 2023; Barney, 2000; Soloduch-Pelc and Sulich, 2020). Leadership styles can significantly influence the efficiency and productivity of an organization. Transaction cost economics suggests that leadership styles can impact the costs associated with transactions within the firm, thereby affecting overall efficiency (Hasanah, 2024; Williamson, 1981). Additionally, human capital theory emphasizes the role of leadership in enhancing the skills and productivity of employees, which is crucial for the profitability and growth of small and medium enterprises (Ambad, 2022; Becker, 1964; Brynjolfsson et al., 2017; Sasso and Ritzen, 2019; Unger et al., 2011). The entrepreneurship literature also highlights the importance of leadership in fostering innovation and strategic decision-making in dynamic market environments (Audretsch and Link, 2012; Hajizadeh and Valliere, 2022; Schumpeter, 2010; Kirzner, 1973). This study aims to contribute to these theoretical frameworks by examining bread bakeries in northeastern Nigeria.

The significance of leadership in business, especially in sectors as dynamic as the food industry, cannot be overstated. In the world of bakeries, leadership determines the trajectory of growth, setting the

pace for production, ensuring quality control, anticipating market demands, overseeing distribution logistics, and establishing a brand's presence in a competitive marketplace (Linzalone and Lerro, 2021; Zahari and Zakuan, 2016). Effective leaders in this domain are those who strike a balance between maintaining traditional baking methods and embracing innovative techniques and business strategies (Barrett, Dooley, and Bogue 2021; Iqbal, Ahmad, and Halim 2021). They navigate the myriad challenges that come with daily operations and employ foresight to adapt to changing market trends, ensuring that their establishments not only remain relevant but also continue to grow and prosper (Wu, 2022). However, while the impact of leadership on business success is universally acknowledged, there is little research exploring leadership in the bread-bakery industry in northeastern Nigeria. This region, with its unique blend of sociocultural, economic, and political dynamics, presents a landscape in which leadership in the bakery business might face challenges and opportunities that differ from other regions (Owhor et al., 2021; Yusuf and Zubairu, 2022). For instance, local customs, consumer preferences, supply chain intricacies, and even geopolitical considerations could all play a role in how leadership styles manifest and influence bakery outcomes.

Thus, this study explores the degree to which leadership styles impact the profitability, growth, and long-term survival of small-scale bread bakeries in the Northeast of Nigeria. The study addresses the following critical questions:

- To what extent do leadership styles influence the profitability of small-scale bread bakeries in the Northeast of Nigeria?
- How do leadership approaches shape the growth dynamics of these bakeries?
- Most crucially, in an industry characterized by myriad challenges and opportunities, to what extent do leadership styles determine the survival prospects of small-scale bread bakeries in the region?

The remainder of this study is organized as follows: Section 2 provides an in-depth overview of the various leadership styles and their influence on small and medium-sized enterprises' performance. In section 3, we delve into our methodology. Section 4 brings forth the core results, while section 5 discusses their implications. Section 6 offers conclusions and recommendations for future research.

## **II. Literature Review**

Leadership, as an intricate mix of strategy, influence, and direction, plays a pivotal role in determining organizational trajectories. In the business domain, small and medium enterprises, particularly in niche sectors like bread bakeries in northeastern Nigeria, form a rich tapestry of leadership styles that invariably shape their growth and sustainability. These styles, ranging from democratic and autocratic to laissez-faire and transformational, each carve out distinct organizational dynamics, resonating differently across sectors, cultural contexts, and individual personalities. While certain styles may thrive in collaborative environments, others may be better suited for scenarios demanding swift, unambiguous decisions. The interplay between leadership and organizational performance, further modulated by the cultural ethos, industry demands, and global digital revolutions, forms the crux of this research. This literature review delves deep into the multifaceted realm of leadership, examining its profound impact on small and medium enterprises while also spotlighting the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the bread-bakery sector in northeastern Nigeria. Through this lens, we seek to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of leadership, its implications, and its transformative potential in shaping the future of business enterprises.

### *A. Leadership Styles*

Leadership, a multifaceted construct, is often understood through the lens of distinct styles that leaders employ to guide, influence, and manage their teams. These leadership styles, encompassing democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, and transformational, each present unique approaches to decision-making, team interaction, and vision setting. While some styles prioritize inclusivity and team consensus, others emphasize efficiency and top-down decision-making. The choice of leadership style often reflects the cultural, situational, and organizational context, as well as the personal values and experiences of the leader. This exploration delves into the intricacies, strengths, and potential pitfalls of these four leadership styles, drawing from historical figures, contemporary leaders, and empirical research. Through a comprehensive understanding of these styles, one gains insights into the dynamic nature of leadership and its profound impact on organizational success and team dynamics.

Economic theories, such as transaction cost economics, suggest that leadership styles influence organizational efficiency by affecting

transaction costs within the firm (Syed, Mehmood, and Qaiser 2023; Williamson, 1981). For example, autocratic leadership may reduce transaction costs by centralizing decision-making, which can be particularly effective in contexts requiring quick decisions. Conversely, democratic leadership, which involves participatory decision-making, can enhance organizational performance by leveraging collective intelligence and fostering a collaborative environment (Carmeli, Schaubroeck, and Tishler 2010). Similarly, human capital theory underscores the importance of leadership in developing employees' skills and productivity, thereby influencing organizational outcomes (Ambad, 2022; Becker, 1964). The entrepreneurship literature also highlights the critical role of leadership in driving innovation and strategic decision-making. Transformational leadership, in particular, is noted for its ability to inspire and motivate employees to achieve higher levels of performance and innovation (Abbas, Ul-Hassan, and Raza 2024). However, the effectiveness of different leadership styles may vary depending on the specific economic and cultural context. For instance, in northeastern Nigeria, where economic instability and cultural dynamics play a significant role, the applicability of transformational leadership might be limited (Bass and Riggio, 2005a).

### *1. Democratic Leadership Style*

Democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership, emphasizes collective decision-making, open dialogue, and inclusive task execution (Chikeleze and Baehrend, 2017; Raelin, 2012). This style values each team member's voice in decisions, aiming to harness collective intelligence (Jadhav et al., 2017). Prominent in sectors valuing innovation and collaboration, tech startups like those in Silicon Valley often adopt this approach. Google's initiative allowing employees 20 percent of their time for passion projects exemplifies this ethos (Tran, 2017). The democratic style resonates with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, addressing esteem and promoting belonging, often resulting in increased job satisfaction and reduced turnover (Tsai, Chen, and Tang 2021). While effective in creative industries, it might be less suitable where rapid decisions are paramount. Within academia, this style thrives in collaborative environments like curriculum planning (Matthews et al., 2019). Research consistently highlights its innovative potential (Hilton, Arkorful, and Martins 2021a). This is further emphasized by Odoardi et al. (2019), who suggested that organizations employing democratic leadership are more likely to drive innovation. However, potential drawbacks include prolonged decision-

making and the risk of appearing directionless to some team members (Kotamena, Senjaya, and Prasetya 2020; Woods, 2004). In general, while democratic leadership has its merits, its efficacy relies on a leader's ability to discern when to gather input, when to provide clear directives, and when to lead decisively.

### 2. *Autocratic Leadership Style*

Autocratic leadership is distinguished by its centralized, top-down decision-making approach, emphasizing control, decisiveness, and efficiency (Hassnain, 2023). This style is dominant in situations requiring swift decisions and clear authority, such as military combat scenarios. For instance, General George S. Patton's leadership during World War II exemplifies this style, ensuring swift strategy execution (Swain and Young, 2018). In business, figures like Apple's Steve Jobs, recognized for his hands-on and unilateral approach, have harnessed autocratic leadership effectively (Opara and Krigbode, 2023). Psychologically, this leadership provides clarity in ambiguous settings, benefiting sectors in which prompt action is paramount. However, it faces criticism for potentially stifling innovation and reducing employee satisfaction, leading to diminished morale and higher turnover (Mehraein, Visintin, and Pittino 2023; Pizzolitto, Verna, and Venditti 2023). Centralizing decisions also poses risks of consequential misjudgments. Yet, in crisis scenarios or precision-focused industries like manufacturing, autocratic leadership can be beneficial (Alhassan, 2022; Udin, 2023). Its effectiveness lies in a leader's discernment to employ it judiciously, understanding team dynamics and situational demands. While it is a specific tool on the leadership spectrum, when applied aptly, autocratic leadership can yield clear direction and strong organizational outcomes.

### 3. *Laissez-faire Leadership Style*

The laissez-faire leadership style, often labeled *hands-off*, allows for significant team autonomy (Ahmed Iqbal et al., 2021; Eggleton, 2020). Rooted in economic theories advocating minimal intervention, it extends the same principle to leadership, empowering team members to address challenges independently (Phelan and Dawes, 2018; Shondrick, Dinh, and Lord 2010). Notable figures, like Warren Buffet, demonstrate this style by granting wide independence to subsidiary managers (Gutterman, 2023). The creative sectors and initiatives like Google's "20% time" policy, which birthed Gmail and Google News, particularly benefit from this leadership approach (Holzmann, 2020; Tran, 2017). From an organizational stance, laissez-faire fosters trust,

enhancing motivation, job satisfaction, and alignment with company goals (Breevaart and Zacher, 2019; Diebig and Bormann, 2020). However, when improperly applied, especially among less experienced teams, it can result in stagnation, inconsistencies, and, in the extreme, leadership neglect (Diebig and Bormann, 2020; Skogstad et al., 2014; Zhang, Wang, and Gao 2023). Effective deployment necessitates a balance between autonomy and oversight, relying on clear communication and a culture of trust (Amagoh, 2021). Ultimately, discerning application of laissez-faire leadership can amplify creativity, job satisfaction, and team commitment, contingent on organizational context and team dynamics.

#### *4. Transformational Leadership Style*

Transformational leadership, originating from James V. Downton's "Rebel Leadership" (1973) and later expanded by James MacGregor Burns in "Leadership" (1978), aims to inspire followers beyond conventional expectations (Arnold et al., 2007; Goethals, Sorenson, and Burns 2004). Burns differentiates between transactional leaders, driven by follower self-interest, and transformational leaders, who elevate follower aspirations and leadership capacities (Bass and Riggio, 2005b). Eminent figures like Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Mahatma Gandhi exemplify this style, rallying individuals toward visionary futures (Alfoqahaa and Jones, 2020). Steve Jobs, cofounder of Apple, also embodies this approach, driving industry redefinitions through innovation (Sharma and Grant, 2011). Transformational leadership hinges on the four *i*'s:

- Inspirational motivation: providing a compelling future vision
- Intellectual stimulation: championing creativity and innovation
- Individualized consideration: addressing distinct follower needs
- Idealized influence (charisma): embodying ethical standards and commitment

Organizations with transformational leaders typically witness heightened satisfaction, engagement, and productivity (Akdere and Egan, 2020; Chang, Chang, and Chen 2017). These leaders foster adaptability, retaining top talent through their emphasis on individual growth. Yet, potential downsides include setting unrealistic goals and stifling dissent (Lin, Scott, and Matta 2019). Generally, transformational leadership, emphasizing vision and positive change,

remains efficacious across varied contexts. Though potent in boosting engagement and innovation, leaders must ensure realism and openness to diverse inputs. When adeptly applied, this leadership style can elevate organizations to unprecedented success.

### *B. The Interplay of Leadership Styles and Organizational Performance*

Leadership remains instrumental in guiding organizational success across various sectors, with its significance being underscored by a plethora of academic works (Adekoya et al., 2019; Boga and Ensari, 2009). Recent scholarship suggests that rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, leadership's impact is contingent upon its alignment with specific contextual factors, including the industry, locale, and organizational structure (Lee, 2022). Small and medium enterprises, as pivotal drivers of economic progress, warrant a deeper exploration into how leadership styles influence their growth, profitability, and longevity (Gamidullaeva, Vasin, and Wise 2020). Specifically, in sectors like bread bakeries in northeastern Nigeria, the interplay between leadership and organizational outcomes becomes especially pertinent.

In the vast arena of business studies, the nuanced intricacies of leadership, especially its influence on distinct sectors, stand as a testament to its significance. In extant literature, leadership's role within small and medium enterprises has been underscored as not just managerial but strategic, directly influencing organizational outcomes. Recent scholarly pursuits have probed these layers in commendable depth. Gökalp and Soran's (2022) foray into this realm brings to light an enlightening perspective. They present the case that leadership does not operate in isolation. Instead, it is intrinsically entwined with an organization's cultural fabric. Culture and leadership are not static entities merely coexisting side by side; they are dynamically engaged, shaping and reshaping each other. This dance determines how effective a leader can be within an organization's unique cultural ambiance. The narrative then moves to a dimension often overlooked, the human core of organizations. Qalati et al. (2022) spotlight this, emphasizing the vital role of interpersonal relationships, especially the bonds between leaders and their subordinates. The depth and quality of these bonds can make or break organizational performance, with trust and mutual respect being paramount. As the world steadily proceeds through a digital revolution, leadership dynamics, too, evolve. Borah, Iqbal, and Akhtar (2022) stand at the forefront of this exploration, shedding light on the rise and significance of digital leadership, a style imperative for the tech-driven era we are nestled in.



Parallely, the gig economy, an area that has grown exponentially and brought unique challenges to the fore, is explored by Nicken (2022). His insights into leadership within such a flexible yet demanding environment are invaluable.

The motivational frameworks within organizations receive a fresh lens of scrutiny by Ali, Ali, and Xue (2022). They unveil the transformative potential of leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, which can light the path to heightened intrinsic motivation among employees. Chaithanapat et al. (2022) delve into an often-underemphasized arena: knowledge-sharing cultures. They argue that servant leadership plays a pivotal role, serving as a cornerstone in fostering environments where collective intelligence thrives. Deepening the exploration, Anh Do and Bui (2022) bring to the table a refreshing perspective, underscoring leadership styles that prioritize and foster autonomy. Such an approach not only instills a sense of empowerment among team members but can be the catalyst for waves of innovation. At the intersection of leadership and psychology, Stremersch et al. (2022) chart the dynamics between leadership approaches and individual personality traits. Their findings resonate with the idea that when aligned, these elements can create harmony, but misalignment can lead to dissonance.

Bakker et al. (2022) turn our attention to scenarios in which stakes are high and decisions carry weighty implications. Here, the nimbleness and responsiveness of agile leadership can be the difference between success and failure. Simultaneously, the worlds of family-run businesses and microenterprises, with their unique demands and nuances, are brought into sharp focus by Flamini, Pittino, and Visintin (2022) and Dabić et al. (2021). These environments present their own leadership challenges, often distinct from larger corporate entities. Venturing into the cognitive dimensions of leadership, Nguyen et al. (2021) shine a spotlight on the indispensable value of intellectual agility, especially in the multifaceted and ever-evolving business landscapes of today. Combining these perspectives, it is evident that leadership is not a monolithic construct but a spectrum, demanding adaptability and awareness. Studies by Rehman et al. (2020) and Gao, Murphy, and Anderson (2020) echo this sentiment underlining the transformative power of leadership in sectors as varied as project management and sales. Beyond specific styles, the universality of inclusive leadership emerges, as championed by Siyal et al. (2023), with compensation alignment further bolstering its reach as suggested by Patiar and Wang (2020). And as crises loom, Alo et al. (2023) remind

us of the phoenix-like resilience offered by adaptive leadership, especially against the backdrop of global challenges like COVID-19.

Reflecting on the many facets of leadership and its profound impact on organizational trajectories, the literature highlights a symbiotic relationship between leadership styles and business outcomes, particularly within small and medium enterprises. While leadership is universally acknowledged as pivotal, its effectiveness is intricately bound to organizational culture, interpersonal dynamics, and the evolving nature of global business landscapes. Various studies highlight the importance of adapting leadership styles, be it digital leadership for a tech-centric world or agile leadership in high-stakes scenarios. Intellectual agility, interpersonal bonds, and adaptive capacities are championed as crucial dimensions in leadership efficacy. Particularly in niche sectors, alignment between leadership styles and the unique demands of the business environment can mean the difference between growth, profitability, and survival. Moreover, as global challenges intensify, the resilience inherent in adaptive leadership becomes paramount. In essence, leadership's multifaceted spectrum has one core tenet: its transformative power to drive organizational success in an ever-evolving world.

### **III. Methodology**

This study employs a descriptive research design with a quantitative research method. Descriptive research seeks to gain a better understanding of circumstances, people, or events (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2009). The choice of a quantitative research method was based on its ability to quantify, collect, and analyze data for generalization purposes. This section provides details on the sample size, data-collection process, research items, and data-analysis approach.

This study employs a quantitative research method to examine the economic implications of different leadership styles on the profitability and growth of small and medium enterprises. Quantitative methods are essential in managerial economics for identifying causal relationships and making data-driven decisions (Greene, 2018). The choice of a descriptive research design allows for a detailed analysis of the economic factors influencing bakery performance (Wooldridge, 2010). The initial batch of 330 questionnaires was distributed not only to bakery owners and managers but also to other key stakeholders in the bakery industry, including suppliers and distributors. This broader approach aimed to gather diverse perspectives on leadership styles and their impacts. The screening of responses underscores the commitment

to quality and precision in the research process, ensuring that subsequent analyses are rooted in thorough and reliable data.

#### *A. Data Collection*

A face-to-face survey was conducted to gather data and analyze the developed research framework. Following a brief pilot study, adjustments were made to the initial questionnaire to enhance comprehension and readability. The random sampling method was selected for this investigative effort, as it is praised for its unbiased approach and ability to obtain samples that serve as representative subsets of the broader population, ensuring statistical authenticity (Kazimierczuk et al., 2010).

The survey involved personal interactions with fifty-one bread-bakery owners or managers in northeastern Nigeria. A total of fifty-one respondents participated in the questionnaire, with nineteen respondents from Adamawa State, seventeen from Bauchi State, and fifteen from Taraba State. Table 1 outlines the distribution of data collection across these three states, while Table 2 presents the demographic profile.

The population sizes of the states where the bakeries are located are significant factors in understanding the demand for bakery products. According to the most recent census data, Adamawa State has a population of approximately 4.25 million, Bauchi State has around 6.53 million, and Taraba State has about 3.07 million people. The larger populations in Bauchi and Adamawa States likely contribute to higher demand and potentially higher profits for bakeries in these regions. This demographic context helps explain the variations in profitability observed among the bakeries surveyed.

As noted, the initial batch of 330 questionnaires was distributed not only to bakery owners and managers but also to key stakeholders in the bakery industry, including suppliers, distributors, and senior staff members. This approach was taken to gain a comprehensive understanding of the leadership styles and their impacts on various aspects of the bakery operations. The final data set comprised 317 completed questionnaires, ensuring a robust sample for analysis.

The survey revealed that the number of employees per bakery varied significantly. On average, each bakery employed about fifteen workers, with smaller bakeries having as few as five employees and larger ones employing up to fifty. The gender distribution among the employees was approximately 60 percent male and 40 percent female. These demographic details are crucial for understanding how

different leadership styles might affect operational dynamics and employee performance. For instance, larger bakeries with more employees may benefit from democratic or laissez-faire leadership styles that encourage employee participation and innovation, while smaller bakeries might find autocratic leadership more effective because of the need for clear and swift decision-making.

To make the profitability data more accessible to an international audience, the profits expressed in Nigerian naira (NGN) have been converted to US dollars (USD) using the current exchange rate, where NGN 1 is approximately equal to USD 0.0026. For example, a profit of NGN 5 million is approximately USD 13,000. In northeastern Nigeria, this figure represents a substantial amount. According to recent data, the average annual income in Nigeria is approximately NGN 1.8 million (about USD 4,800), and in the northeastern region, it can be even lower because of economic disparities. The median annual profit for bakeries in northeastern Nigeria, based on our survey, is approximately NGN 5 million, with some larger bakeries earning significantly higher profits, up to NGN 100 million (USD 260,000). This indicates that a profit of NGN 5 million places a bakery well above the average income level in the region, highlighting its economic significance and the potential for substantial financial stability and growth within this sector.

**Table 1. Summary of sample sizes**

State	Population	Sample Size (40%)	Additional Sample Size (5%)	Total
Adamawa	46	18	1	19
Bauchi	40	16	1	17
Taraba	34	14	1	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>51</b>

**Table 2. Demographic information about respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	40	80.1
Female	11	19.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 2. Demographic information about respondents** *(continued)*

<b>Age (years)</b>		
18–21	5	9.8
22–30	27	53.3
31–40	13	24.6
41–50	3	6.3
51 and above	3	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Educational qualification</b>		
Doctorate	3	5.4
Masters	7	13.6
Bachelors	10	18.6
Diploma	12	23.7
Nigeria Certificate in Education	6	11.7
Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination	7	14.5
School leaving certificate	6	12.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Working experience</b>		
2–5 years	11	20.8
6–10 years	16	32.2
11–15 years	5	10.4
16–20 years	10	18.6
21–25 years	2	4.1
26 years & above	7	13.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Profitability</b>		
Below ₦5 million (\$)	13	24.9
Above ₦5 million	21	41.3
₦10–₦40 million	5	10.4
₦50–₦90 million	5	9.8
₦100 million & above	3	5.7
₦200 million & above	1	2.5
₦500 million & above	3	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### *B. Research Instrument*

The research instrument is represented by a questionnaire that is divided into three sections, each addressing specific facets of the study. Section A, comprising seven queries, endeavors to collect personal information about the respondents. Delving deeper, section B, with twenty-two questions, explores leadership styles. Last, section C, encompassing twenty-seven questions, probes the operational performance of small-scale bread bakeries. The choice of a four-point Likert scale as the response mechanism is strategic. It not only streamlines the response process but also enables respondents to articulate their stance on the presented statements (Nemoto and Beglar, 2013). This particular scale was favored over the five-point variant primarily because of its unambiguous nature. By avoiding the nebulous middle ground of Undecided that a five-point scale offers, this approach eliminates potential indecision, thus driving respondents toward a more definitive response (Chomeya, 2010). The gradations of the scale are elucidated as follows: Strongly Agree is accorded 4 points, Agree gets 3 points, Disagree is assigned 2 points, and Strongly Disagree is allocated 1 point.

### *C. Data-Analysis Approach*

Bell and Bryman (2007) emphasize the importance of carefully determining how data are acquired and interpreted, as inaccuracies can significantly impact the final results. Aberdeen (2013) defines data analysis as the systematic process of appropriately assessing, categorizing, and organizing data. Once data are collected and prepared, the research methodology for further analysis needs to be chosen. Bell and Bryman (2007) highlight that quantitative data analysis involves two main approaches: mathematical formulas and computer software. Various quantitative data-processing methods, such as SPSS and SmartPLS 3.0 software, can be employed for analysis in quantitative studies. In this study, the choice of data-analysis methods depended on the research objectives. SPSS software (Malhotra, Nunan, and Birks 2003) was used for frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, and reliability analysis, while SmartPLS 3.0 (Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics 2009) was employed for measurement model assessments (internal consistency, convergent validity, discriminant validity) and structural model evaluations (coefficient determination, path coefficients, predictive accuracy).

IV. Results

This section presents the outcomes of the study through descriptive statistics, the measurement model, and the structural assessment model.

A. Descriptive Statistics

From an initial batch of 330 disseminated questionnaires, 320 were returned, translating to an impressive 96.97 percent response rate. However, upon scrutiny, 3 were excised because they were incomplete and showed indications of disengagement. Consequently, the actionable data set comprised 317 questionnaires, bringing the effective response rate to a robust 96.06 percent. This meticulous filtration ensures that subsequent analyses will be rooted in thorough and reliable data. Table 3 gives a summary of the response rates.

Table 3. Questionnaire response rates

States	Frequency	Percent
Adamawa (Yola)	19	35.6
Bauchi (Bauchi)	17	32.2
Taraba (Jalingo)	15	32.2
Total	51	100.0

1. Descriptive Analysis of Predominant Leadership Styles

Table 4 presents a comprehensive breakdown of the various leadership styles as observed in the study. With a cumulative mean score standing at 62.86 (ranging from 22 to 110), the average per-item score registers at 2.84. The democratic leadership style is the most prevalent, with its mean score of 3.02. The autocratic leadership style, with its mean score of 2.70, was less widely adopted among the evaluated entities. This analysis offers a clear, hierarchical understanding of leadership models within the study's context.

**Table 4. Descriptive analysis of leadership styles**

Indicator	Items	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Democratic leadership style</b>		<b>3.02</b>	
DL1	My manager allows ideas and discussion to flow freely within the enterprise.	3.26	1.04
DL2	My manager and his workers discuss issue before final decision is taken and feedback is also provided after implementation of such decisions.	3.13	0.95
DL3	My manager does not take unilateral decisions but seeks for ideas most times from his workers.	2.98	0.86
DL4	My manager is flexible to changes that may occur from within or outside the enterprise.	2.85	0.90
DL5	My supervisor allows discussions before final decisions are taken which allows the organization to implement the best ideas most times.	3.07	0.94
DL6	My manager allows free discussion of issues makes workers feel happy most times.	2.82	0.97
<i>Democratic Leadership Style Dimension total score (possible range 6–30)</i>		<b>18.11</b>	
<b>Autocratic leadership style</b>		<b>2.70</b>	
AULS1	My manager has absolute power over me, and I have little or no opportunity to make suggestions even if is to the best interest of the organization.	2.64	1.13
AULS2	My manager rarely praises but criticizes a lot and at times threatens with punishment.	2.57	1.06
AULS3	My manager gives all instructions and I have no say in how I should do my work.	2.71	0.89
AULS4	My manager takes unilateral decisions particularly when emergency issues arise that require prompt action.	2.77	0.97
AULS5	My manager possesses all the skills and competence required in discharge of duties in the enterprise.	2.79	0.99
<i>Autocratic Leadership Style Dimension total score (possible range 5–25)</i>		<b>13.48</b>	



**Table 4. Descriptive analysis of leadership styles** (*continued*)

Indicator	Items	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Laissez-faire leadership style</b>		<b>2.75</b>	
LLS1	My manager gives me full mandate to make decisions without intervention from the superior officer.	2.69	0.94
LLS2	My manager allows me to exercise sufficient control by setting my own deadlines and work on my own.	2.71	0.89
LLS3	My manager gives me liberty to take decisions without being monitored.	2.97	1.00
LLS4	My manager believes that he has skilled workforce and trained workers who can work and discharge responsibilities to the best of their ability.	2.73	0.83
LLS5	My manager believes that I can do independent work and wants to maximize the use of my potential.	2.68	1.16
<i>Laissez-faire Leadership Style Dimension total score (possible range 5–25)</i>		<b>13.77</b>	
<b>Transformation leadership style</b>		<b>2.90</b>	
TLS1	My manager sets vision of the future, articulates how to reach it, sets high standards, thus, instilling trust, confidence and pride and gets us committed to the dream of the future.	2.75	1.11
TLS2	My manager acts like a role model because he leads by example and encourages us to do likewise.	2.65	1.13
TLS3	My manager has encouraged me to look at problems in new perspective and same in like manner.	3.01	0.88
TLS4	My manager motivates us to strive to achieve superior performance and go beyond the set objectives.	3.07	0.93
TLS5	My manager is efficient and represents us adequately before higher authority.	3.01	0.88
TLS6	My manager has warm, nurturing, authentic, honest, and caring personality that draws satisfaction from his workers.	3.00	0.93
<i>Transformation Leadership Style Dimension total score (possible range 5–25)</i>		<b>17.50</b>	
Average item score for the leadership-style scale		2.84	
<b>Total score (possible range 22–110)</b>		<b>62.86</b>	

*2. Descriptive Analysis of Organizational Performance*

Table 5 reports the metrics pertaining to organizational performance. With an aggregate mean score of 58.17 on a spectrum from 31 to 155, the overarching organizational performance has an average score of 2.85. This score marginally surpasses the average of leadership styles, which stands at 2.84. The findings indicate that democratic leadership significantly enhances organizational performance by promoting participatory decision-making, which aligns with the principles of human capital theory (Becker, 1964). Conversely, autocratic leadership shows positive effects in certain operational contexts, consistent with transaction cost economics, which emphasizes the reduction of transaction costs through centralized decision-making (Williamson, 1981). The limited impact of transformational leadership highlights the need for context-specific leadership approaches in economically volatile environments (Schumpeter, 2010). The results suggest that while different leadership styles may be effective under certain conditions, their success heavily depends on the specific economic, cultural, and operational context of the bakery industry in northeastern Nigeria.

**Table 5. Descriptive analysis of organizational performance (N= 317)**

Indicator	Items	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Profitability</b>		<b>2.85</b>	
PROF1	My organization generates revenue sufficient to take care of expenditure.	3.00	0.93
PROF2	My enterprise makes huge amount of profit each year.	3.08	0.96
PROF3	Our business has access to financial capital and we are benefiting from it.	2.75	0.91
PROF4	Our business faces multiple levies and taxes.	2.43	0.91
PROF5	Huge interest rates inhibit our borrowing.	3.08	1.00
PROF6	The major reason behind establishment of bread bakery is to earn huge profit.	2.79	1.00
<i>Profitability Dimension total score (possible range 6–30)</i>		<b>17.13</b>	

**Table 5. Descriptive analysis of organizational performance (N= 317)**  
(continued)

Indicator	Items	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Growth</b>		<b>2.86</b>	
GRO1	Our business has been experiencing steady increase in revenue, profit and assets in recent times.	2.83	1.02
GRO2	Since the establishment of the enterprise, we have recorded expansion in size of the business such as; increase in product volume, increase in number of markets, increase in the number of workers employed, increase in use of raw materials, power and energy and increase its productivity and output.	2.82	1.00
GRO3	Our organization has experienced tremendous improvement in terms of opening of new markets, new branches, new customers, etc.	3.11	0.98
GRO4	Our business over the years has enjoyed high patronage in sales, numbers of workers have increased, and we have record huge increase in profit for the last one year.	2.91	0.97
GRO5	Finance is a set back to the expansion of our business.	2.74	0.83
GRO6	We have branches of the business and they are operating at full capacity.	2.75	0.98
<i>Growth Dimension total score (possible range 6–30)</i>		<b>17.17</b>	
<b>Survival</b>		<b>2.63</b>	
SUVS1	Our business in the recent years has experienced some difficulties for example unfair competition, double taxation, yet we believe that the business will continue to exist in the next ten or more years.	2.67	0.89
SUVS2	Our infrastructure is adequate.	2.79	0.90
SUVS3	In recent years our business adopted some strategies like cutting costs of goods, laying off employees off, reinvesting profits, changing of service delivery and innovation.	2.57	1.07
SUVS4	Our business experience changes in service delivery, processing, innovation and mode of delivery.	2.53	1.14
SUVS5	Our business has a business plan, books of accounts (that is, showing income and expenditure) and we keep our experience low.	2.71	0.87
SUVS6	Our infrastructure is adequate.	2.50	0.98
<i>Survival Dimension total score (possible range 6–30)</i>		<b>15.76</b>	

Delineating the performance metrics further:

- The Profitability Dimension has a mean score of 17.13, on a range of 6 to 30. Its average item score, 2.85, underscores its notable standing in the performance metrics.
- The Growth Dimension follows suit, with a cumulative score of 17.17, on a range from 6 to 30 and with an average score of 2.86, further attesting to its importance.
- The Survival Dimension shows a slightly subdued presence with an average score of 2.63, indicative of the challenges or lesser focus in this area.

Scrutinizing Table 5, one item, PROF4, spotlighting the hurdles posed by diverse levies and taxes, emerges as a significant concern. It is the least congruent factor, registering a mean score of 2.43. This insight points to the intrinsic challenges that organizations might be grappling with in the context of taxation and fiscal regulations.

### *B. Measurement Model*

In the initial phase, the measurement model underwent scrutiny to assess the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the constructs. The first step involved measuring the indicator loading of each construct. According to Hair et al. (2019), an outer loading value exceeding 0.70 is considered acceptable, indicating that the items of a construct represent 70 percent of that construct. In this study, all outer loading values, as shown in table 4, exceed 0.70, demonstrating reliability.

Internal consistency of constructs was examined using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and the rho\_A test. Hair et al. (2019) suggest that Cronbach's alpha should be above 0.7 to establish internal consistency. Table 4 reveals that the Cronbach's alpha for each latent construct surpasses 0.70, indicating high internal consistency. The second method, composite reliability, considers values above 0.7 as indicative of internal consistency (Gefen, Straub, and Boudreau 2000). Table 4 shows that the composite reliability for each latent construct exceeds 0.70, confirming internal consistency. The third method, rho\_A, considers values above 0.70 as acceptable for determining reliability (Dijkstra and Henseler, 2015). Table 4 shows that all rho A values exceed 0.70, establishing internal consistency.

Convergent validity, defined as the interrelatedness of indicators measuring each latent variable based on theoretical support, was

assessed using the average variance extracted. An average variance extracted greater than 0.5 indicates convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). In this study, the average variance extracted for all variables surpasses 0.50, confirming convergent validity. To check for multicollinearity among items, the variance inflation factor was utilized. A variance inflation factor below 3 suggests the absence of common-method bias and multicollinearity in the data. Table 6 demonstrates that all variation inflection factors are below 3, providing evidence that no multicollinearity exists in the data. Figure 1 depicts the final measurement model of the study.

**Table 6. Results of the internal consistency of the measurement model**

Constructs	Items	Loading	CA	CR	rho_A	AVE	VIF
DL			0.865	0.900	0.883	0.642	
	DL1	0.755					2.015
	DL2	0.822					3.880
	DL3	0.789					3.397
	DL4	0.825					2.538
	DL5	0.813					2.611
AULS			0.846	0.890	0.850	0.620	
	AULS1	0.756					1.741
	AULS2	0.752					1.813
	AULS3	0.776					2.574
	AULS4	0.874					3.669
	AULS5	0.772					2.135
LLS			0.873	0.907	0.877	0.663	
	LLS1	0.832					3.469
	LLS2	0.830					3.497
	LLS3	0.853					2.927
	LLS4	0.844					3.469
	LLS5	0.703					2.571
TLS			0.915	0.934	0.920	0.704	
	TLS1	0.851					3.219
	TLS3	0.830					2.586
	TLS4	0.901					3.789
	TLS5	0.901					4.139
	TLS6	0.740					1.879

**Table 6. Results of the internal consistency of the measurement mode** *(continued)*

Constructs	Items	Loading	CA	CR	rho_A	AVE	VIF
PROF			0.932	0.946	0.940	0.746	
	PROF1	0.928					4.326
	PROF2	0.835					3.420
	PROF3	0.807					2.643
	PROF4	0.913					3.533
	PROF5	0.882					3.580
	PROF6	0.810					3.338
GRO			0.920	0.937	0.928	0.714	
	GRO1	0.879					3.207
	GRO2	0.848					4.481
	GRO3	0.855					2.743
	GRO4	0.877					4.471
	GRO5	0.764					2.553
	GRO6	0.842					4.695
SUVS			0.903	0.926	0.909	0.675	
	SUVS1	0.766					2.245
	SUVS2	0.835					2.539
	SUVS3	0.779					2.299
	SUVS4	0.794					2.103
	SUVS5	0.874					4.004
	SUVS6	0.874					3.739

*Notes:* CA = Cronbach’s alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; VIF = variance inflection factor.

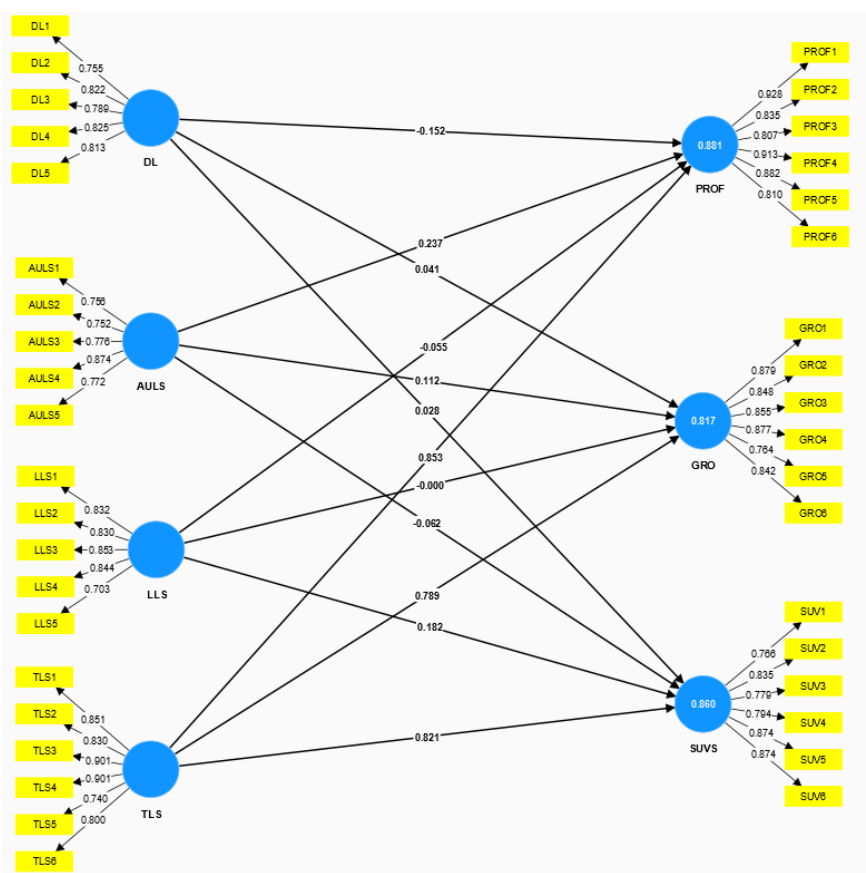
Discriminant validity concerns the differentiation of each latent variable from other variables. There are three methods to determine discriminant validity in SmartPLS: fornell and lacker criteria, cross loadings, and heterotrait-monotrait. This study utilizes the heterotrait-monotrait method for discriminant validity. The heterotrait-monotrait is calculated by dividing the mean of cross-construct item correlations by the (geometric) mean of average correlations across constructs. When heterotrait-monotrait values are high, discriminant-validity problems occur. Discriminant validity between two reflective constructs is established if the heterotrait-monotrait value is less than 0.90 (Ringle, Wende, and Becker 2024). Table 7 shows that all the construct values were less than 0.90. As a result, since all constructs met the heterotrait-monotrait threshold (<0.90), it is clear that discriminant validity for heterotrait-monotrait has been established.

**Table 7. Result of heterotrait-monotrait of the models**

DL	GRO	LLS	PROF	SUVS	TLS	AULS
DL	0.527					
GRO	0.756	0.550				
LLS	0.526	0.480	0.772			
PROF	0.693	0.375	0.789	0.788		
SUVS	0.772	0.531	0.858	0.827	0.749	
TLS	0.800	0.559	0.872	0.822	0.790	8.011

*Notes:* AULS = Autocratic Leadership Style Dimension; DL = Democratic Leadership Style Dimension; GRO = Growth Dimension; LLS = Laissez-faire Leadership Style Dimension; PROF = Profitability Dimension; SUVS = Survival Dimension; TLS = Transformational Leadership Style Dimension.

**Figure 1. Measurement model of the study**



### *C. Structural Assessment Model*

The structural equation model serves as a tool to illustrate the hypothesized relationships supported by a theoretical model. In essence, the model outlines the expected connections between independent and dependent variables within the projected research model. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) quantifies the proportion of variance in a dependent variable explained by independent factors. A higher  $R^2$  value enhances the predictive ability of the structural model (Hair et al. 2019). The  $R^2$  values in this study were computed using the SmartPLS algorithm, with results indicating an  $R^2$  of 0.881 for the Profitability Dimension, suggesting that 88.1 percent of the variance in dependent variables is explained. Similarly, Growth Dimension and Survival Dimension displayed  $R^2$  values of 0.817 and 0.860, signifying 81.7 and 86 percent variance, respectively. According to Chin (1998),  $R^2$  values between 0.19 and 0.33 are weak, 0.33 to 0.67 are moderate, and 0.67 and above are significant. With  $R^2$  values of 0.881, 0.817, and 0.860 for Profitability Dimension, Growth Dimension, and Survival Dimension, respectively, it can be concluded that the independent variables significantly explain these constructs.

The structural model's predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) was assessed to determine its ability to reproduce observed values.  $Q^2$  values for Profitability Dimension, Growth Dimension, and Survival Dimension were 0.887 (88.7 percent), 0.763 (76.3 percent), and 0.848 (84.8 percent), respectively. Hair et al. (2019) suggest  $Q^2$  values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate weak, moderate, and strong predictive relevance. As the  $Q^2$  values for Profitability Dimension, Growth Dimension, and Survival Dimension exceed 0.35, this indicates significant predictive capability for these constructs.

Following this evaluation, hypotheses were tested for significance and path coefficient. Results in Table 8 indicate that  $H_{01}$  ( $\beta=0.039$ ,  $p=0.678$ ),  $H_{02}$  ( $\beta=-0.159$ ,  $p=0.056$ ),  $H_{03}$  ( $\beta=0.027$ ,  $p=0.789$ ),  $H_{04}$  ( $\beta=0.112$ ,  $p=0.541$ ),  $H_{05}$  ( $\beta=0.246$ ,  $p=0.202$ ),  $H_{06}$  ( $\beta=0.069$ ,  $p=0.605$ ),  $H_{07}$  ( $\beta=-0.006$ ,  $p=0.973$ ),  $H_{08}$  ( $\beta=-0.064$ ,  $p=0.701$ ), and  $H_{09}$  ( $\beta=0.117$ ,  $p=0.112$ ) are not supported, as the  $p$ -values are greater than 0.05, suggesting that Democratic Leadership Style Dimension, Autocratic Leadership Style Dimension, Laissez-faire Leadership Style Dimension, and Transformational Leadership Style Dimension have no significant positive effects on Growth Dimension, Profitability Dimension, and Survival Dimension. However,  $H_{010}$  ( $\beta=0.795$ ,  $p=0.000$ ),  $H_{011}$  ( $\beta=0.835$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), and  $H_{012}$  ( $\beta=0.832$ ,  $p=0.000$ )



are supported, with p-values less than 0.05, indicating that Transformational Leadership Style Dimension has a positive effect on Growth Dimension, Profitability Dimension, and Survival Dimension.

**Table 8. Hypothesis testing**

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta	T-value	P-value	Decision
H <sub>01</sub>	DL > GRO	0.039	0.415	0.678	Rejected
H <sub>02</sub>	DL > PROF	−0.159	1.918	0.056	Rejected
H <sub>03</sub>	DL > SUVS	0.027	0.268	0.789	Rejected
H <sub>04</sub>	AULS > GRO	0.112	0.612	0.541	Rejected
H <sub>05</sub>	AULS > PROF	0.246	1.278	0.202	Rejected
H <sub>06</sub>	AULS > SUVS	0.069	0.518	0.605	Rejected
H <sub>07</sub>	LLS > GRO	−0.006	0.034	0.973	Rejected
H <sub>08</sub>	LLS > PROF	−0.064	0.385	0.701	Rejected
H <sub>09</sub>	LLS > SUV	0.117	1.549	0.112	Rejected
H <sub>010</sub>	TLS > GRO	0.795	5.284	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>011</sub>	TLS> PROF	0.835	9.061	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>
H <sub>012</sub>	TLS > SUVS	0.832	6.749	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Supported</b>

**V. Discussion**

Our study has delved into the impact of leadership styles—democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, and transformational—on growth, profitability, and survival within northeastern Nigeria’s bread-bakery industry. Rejecting hypotheses H<sub>01</sub> to H<sub>09</sub>, we found that democratic leadership style, autocratic leadership style, and laissez-faire leadership style significantly influence these organizational outcomes. Notably, democratic leadership positively impacts growth, profitability, and survival, suggesting participatory decision-making enhances organizational performance (Carmeli, Gelbard, and Gefen 2011). Hilton, Arkorful, and Martins (2021) further reveal that combining democratic leadership with contingent rewards boosts performance, a finding that complements our results and underscores the importance of reward mechanisms. Similarly, Emini, Ibraimi, and Rexhepi (2023) show democratic leadership fosters organizational learning and innovation, leading to improved financial performance, aligning with our findings on profitability. Moreover, studies like Jony et al. (2019) support the positive correlation between democratic leadership and organizational survival, highlighting the effectiveness of democratic practices in ensuring business longevity. These insights underscore the crucial role of leadership styles in shaping the future of businesses in the bakery sector and beyond.

The study's results underscore the importance of adaptive leadership styles in responding to economic pressures and market dynamics. While democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles positively influence profitability and survivability, the effectiveness of each style may vary depending on the specific characteristics of the bakery. Democratic leadership, by fostering a collaborative environment, enhances employee productivity and innovation, which are critical for sustaining competitive advantage in the bakery industry (Kirzner, 1973; Safner, 2020). Autocratic leadership, while often criticized, can be effective in reducing transaction costs and ensuring quick decision-making in high-pressure economic contexts (Lawson, 2019; Williamson, 1981). These insights are crucial for policy makers and business leaders aiming to improve the economic resilience and growth of small and medium enterprises (Gonzalez-Corzo and Justo, 2017; Schumpeter, 2010).

Moreover, the findings suggest that the effectiveness of different leadership styles may depend on the specific context and characteristics of the bakery industry. For instance, smaller bakeries with fewer employees might benefit more from authoritative leadership because of the need for clear, decisive direction. In contrast, larger bakeries with specialized roles and more experienced staff tend to thrive under democratic or laissez-faire leadership styles, which foster creativity and innovation by encouraging employee participation and autonomy, which can be crucial in larger organizations in which diverse ideas and initiatives can significantly impact performance. This nuanced understanding of leadership effectiveness highlights the importance of tailoring leadership styles to the specific operational, economic, and cultural contexts of small and medium enterprises.

The experience level of employees also plays a critical role in determining the most effective leadership style. Bakeries that rely heavily on apprenticeship programs might operate more effectively under autocratic leadership, in which the emphasis is on structured training and close supervision. On the other hand, bakeries with a more experienced workforce may thrive under democratic or laissez-faire leadership, which leverages the skills and expertise of seasoned employees to drive innovation and efficiency. This alignment between employee experience and leadership style is essential for optimizing organizational performance and achieving sustainable growth. Moreover, bakeries in northeastern Nigeria do more than just bake bread; they produce a variety of baked goods, including

patisseries. This specialization requires a division of labor, where larger bakeries may have different bakers specialized in different products. Such specialization further supports the need for adaptable leadership styles. In larger, more specialized bakeries, a democratic or laissez-faire leadership approach can foster an environment in which specialized teams can innovate and improve their specific products. Conversely, smaller bakeries with less specialization may benefit from the structured, top-down approach of autocratic leadership to maintain consistency and efficiency.

Rejecting null hypotheses H<sub>04</sub> through H<sub>06</sub>, we found autocratic leadership significantly influences growth, profitability, and survival in northeastern Nigeria's bakery industry. This suggests that the directive nature of the autocratic leadership style may be beneficial in contexts requiring quick decision-making and strict control, challenging the notion of autocratic leadership style stifling creativity and morale. Huang et al. (2015) and Asno and Sary (2023) support autocratic leadership style's effectiveness in harsh economic conditions and crisis management, respectively, underscoring its potential in driving profitability and ensuring business continuity during challenges. Al Khajeh (2018) further reveals the autocratic leadership style's positive impact on organizational performance, indicating its situational utility in promoting growth. These findings highlight the nuanced role of the autocratic leadership style across different operational and cultural contexts, suggesting its strategic application could foster organizational resilience and performance, particularly in industries like baking that face rapid market and operational changes.

The rejection of hypotheses H<sub>07</sub> through H<sub>09</sub> underscores a complex relationship between laissez-faire leadership and organizational outcomes in northeastern Nigeria's bread-bakery industry, indicating that the autonomy under laissez-faire leadership can impact growth, profitability, and survival. This suggests that in environments with highly skilled and motivated employees, the independence granted by laissez-faire leadership might foster innovation and enhance performance. Yet the lack of direction could also pose risks. Studies like Teresia, Damary, and Asimwe (2016) find a positive correlation between laissez-faire leadership and growth of small and medium enterprise in Kenya, suggesting that in specific contexts, the freedom under laissez-faire leadership encourages environments in which employees thrive, contributing to organizational growth. Similarly, Katsaros, Tsirikas, and Kosta (2020)

emphasize leadership's role in shaping employees' adaptability, indirectly highlighting how laissez-faire leadership might influence financial outcomes by fostering a culture ready for change. These findings suggest that laissez-faire leadership's effectiveness in promoting growth and profitability may depend on the operational dynamics and cultural context of the organization, particularly in dynamic sectors like the bakery industry in which innovation is crucial. This nuanced understanding of laissez-faire leadership highlights the importance of context in determining its impact on organizational outcomes, suggesting that a leadership style that empowers employees could be pivotal in achieving sustainable growth and adapting to market changes.

The confirmation of null hypotheses  $H_{010}$  through  $H_{012}$  suggests transformational leadership does not significantly affect growth, profitability, or survival of northeastern Nigeria's bread bakeries, contrary to the literature. This finding may imply transformation leadership's impacts are not universally applicable or may be influenced by factors outside this study's scope, such as organizational culture or external conditions. Despite studies like Nuel, Ifechi, and Emmanuella (2021) that highlight transformation leadership's positive effects

in different settings, the absence of a significant impact of transformational leadership in our context raises questions about its universal effectiveness. This discrepancy could stem from unique challenges in northeastern Nigeria, like socioeconomic instability and market volatility, which might diminish transformational leadership's effectiveness. Additionally, cultural norms and the bakery industry's operational demands may favor more directive leadership styles. These insights suggest a need for hybrid leadership approaches in small and medium enterprises facing complex challenges, underscoring the importance of contextual factors in determining leadership effectiveness. Further research is warranted to explore adaptations

of transformational leadership that might enhance its impact in challenging environments like northeastern Nigeria.

Ghaleb and Orabi (2016) illustrate the nuanced impact of transformational leadership within Jordanian banks, revealing that while some components of transformational leadership, such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, significantly boost organizational performance, idealized influence does not. The finding that transformational

leadership does not significantly influence growth, profitability, or survivability in the bakery industry can be understood within the context of the operational demands of this sector. Transformational leadership, which emphasizes vision, inspiration, and long-term change, may not align well with the immediate, hands-on nature of bakery operations. Bakeries often require managers and leaders to be directly involved in day-to-day activities, including early-morning baking, ensuring product quality, and managing supply chains. These tasks demand practical, directive approaches rather than visionary or inspirational leadership. Therefore, the lack of a significant impact of transformational leadership is not surprising given that the operational effectiveness in bakeries relies more on immediate decision-making and hands-on management rather than long-term visionary changes. This insight highlights the importance of context-specific leadership approaches and suggests that leadership styles that emphasize practical and immediate managerial tasks are more effective in the bakery industry. This underscores the complexity and context dependence of transformational leadership, aligning with our findings in the northeastern Nigerian bakery industry, in which transformational leadership did not uniformly influence growth, survival, and profitability. Ghaleb and Orabi's research supports the idea that the effectiveness of transformational leadership is contingent upon specific socioeconomic conditions, organizational cultures, and industry characteristics, which vary across settings. The lack of significant impact from idealized influence highlights that certain aspects of transformational leadership may resonate more in specific contexts. This suggests that the unique challenges and opportunities in northeastern Nigeria—marked by socioeconomic instability, cultural dynamics, and market demands—require a leadership approach that is adaptable to the local context. The context-dependent effectiveness of transformation leadership, as demonstrated by Ghaleb and Orabi, provides insight into why transformational leadership might not have delivered the expected outcomes in the bakery sector of northeastern Nigeria, suggesting the need for leadership strategies that are flexible and attuned to the distinct environmental conditions to optimize organizational outcomes. This calls for further research into adapting transformational leadership or integrating it with other leadership styles to meet the specific challenges and opportunities within emerging economies like Nigeria.

Future research should aim to explore these dynamics further, potentially incorporating qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into how these leadership styles are enacted and perceived in different contexts. Additionally, comparing these findings with studies conducted in other regions and industries could provide valuable insights into the universality or specificity of leadership effectiveness across various organizational and cultural settings.

This study contributes to a more differentiated understanding of leadership effectiveness, highlighting the importance of context in determining the impact of leadership styles on organizational outcomes. It challenges prevailing assumptions about the superiority of certain leadership styles over others, suggesting that the effectiveness of leadership is contingent upon a complex interplay of organizational, cultural, and environmental factors.

## **VI. Conclusion**

This study explored the influence of leadership styles on the profitability, growth, and survival of small-scale bread bakeries in northeastern Nigeria. Through a detailed survey and analysis, it aimed to uncover the relationship between leadership approaches and key organizational outcomes within this specific sociocultural and economic setting. The findings revealed a complex landscape in which the expected impact of transformational leadership on organizational metrics was not as pronounced, highlighting the importance of context in determining leadership effectiveness. The unexpected finding of transformational leadership's limited impact underscores the need for a context-sensitive approach to leadership in varying environments. This insight is crucial both for academic discourse, enriching the understanding of leadership's efficacy, and for practitioners within the industry and beyond, suggesting a more eclectic and adaptable leadership strategy to navigate specific challenges. The study invites future research to broaden the geographic and contextual scope by examining leadership's impact across different regions and industries. Investigating a broader array of leadership styles and organizational outcomes could uncover new insights, providing a comprehensive view of effective leadership.

This study contributes to the understanding of how leadership styles influence economic outcomes in small and medium enterprises, particularly in the bakery industry in northeastern Nigeria. By integrating economic and entrepreneurial perspectives, the findings provide valuable insights for enhancing organizational performance

and economic resilience (Berg, Markey-Towler, and Novak 2020; Omberg, 2020). Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to fully capture the economic implications of leadership styles (Lipford 2022; Salter, 2020). Adopting longitudinal designs in future studies could illuminate how leadership dynamics evolve over time and their sustained implications for organizations. This approach could offer invaluable strategic insights for fostering long-term growth and resilience in the small-scale-bread-bakeries industry and similar industries.

Moreover, a deeper, micro-level examination of individual dynamics within organizations could yield richer, stakeholder-specific understandings of leadership's resonance. Furthermore, adopting longitudinal designs in future studies could illuminate how leadership dynamics evolve over time and their sustained implications for organizations. This approach could offer invaluable strategic insights for fostering long-term growth and resilience in the bread-bakery and similar sectors. In conclusion, while this study has elucidated the role of leadership in the bread-bakery sector in northeastern Nigeria, it also highlights vast horizons for further exploration. Continuously probing these dimensions will deepen our comprehension of effective leadership, paving the way for actionable insights that bolster organizational success across diverse settings.

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