

**ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE AS A FUNCTION OF TRANSFORMATIONAL
LEADERSHIP IN PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of transformational leadership in enhancing organisational resilience within private organisations in Nigeria. Organisational resilience, the ability of a company to anticipate, adapt, and respond effectively to challenges, is increasingly critical in today's dynamic business environment. The research investigates how transformational leaders through vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration foster resilience among employees and systems, enabling organisations to withstand disruptions and maintain performance. The study found out that transformational leadership significantly contributes to the development of adaptive strategies, proactive problem-solving, and a resilient organisational culture. The findings highlight the importance of leadership development programs and strategic interventions that embed transformational leadership practices, thereby strengthening organisational capacity to survive and thrive amid uncertainty. On this basis it was concluded that organisational resilience in Nigerian private organisations is deeply strengthened by the presence of transformational leadership. Leaders who inspire, motivate, and stimulate innovation create a culture that embraces adaptability and proactive problem-solving. One of the recommendations made was that private organisations should invest in continuous leadership development programmes to equip managers with transformational leadership skills such as vision-building, emotional intelligence, communication, and change management. This will strengthen leaders' capacity to motivate employees and navigate crises effectively.

KEYWORDS: Organisational Resilience, Transformational Leadership, Private Organisations, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Organizational resilience has become a central theme in contemporary management research, especially as private organizations in Nigeria continue to operate within a highly unpredictable and unstable environment. The Nigerian business landscape is characterized by recurring economic recessions, fluctuating exchange rates, insecurity, poor infrastructure, and policy inconsistencies that threaten organizational continuity. In such environments,

resilience—defined as the capability of an organisation to anticipate, absorb, respond to, and recover from disruptive events—becomes a critical determinant of survival and long-term competitiveness. According to Adebayo and Ojo (2021), resilient organisations are better positioned to maintain operational stability during crises and adapt quickly to emerging challenges in turbulent economies. For private organisations in Nigeria, organisational resilience is increasingly viewed as a strategic requirement rather than an optional managerial attribute. Within this context, transformational leadership has been widely identified as a fundamental driver of organisational resilience. Transformational leaders inspire employees with a compelling vision, stimulate innovation, and encourage positive attitudes toward change—all of which are essential in navigating disruptions. As Uzonwanne (2020) explained, transformational leadership enhances followers' commitment and strengthens their confidence during uncertain situations, thereby increasing organisational capacity to withstand external pressure. In Nigeria's private sector, where unexpected shocks such as inflation spikes, technological disruptions, and global market shifts frequently occur, leadership that motivates and empowers employees is crucial for sustaining performance and ensuring continuity.

Several studies affirm that transformational leadership promotes organisational resilience by enabling adaptability, fostering strategic flexibility, and driving learning-oriented cultures. Eneh and Nwokorie (2022) argue that transformational leaders cultivate open communication, creativity, and shared problem-solving, all of which enhance organisations' ability to predict risks and manage crises proactively. Similarly, Adeola and Elegbeleye (2023) found that Nigerian private organisations led by transformational leaders demonstrated stronger recovery capabilities and operational stability following economic downturns. Such leaders not only guide organisations through crises but also invest in systems, technologies, and human capital that strengthen long-term resilience.

Furthermore, transformational leadership supports the development of dynamic capabilities—such as continuous improvement, digital innovation, and workforce agility—which are essential for resilience in modern organizations. Olanrewaju and Okpara (2024) emphasized that resilient organizations are those whose leaders integrate vision-driven leadership with strategic resource management, helping them adapt faster to changing market realities. In Nigeria, where private organizations face intense competition and limited external support, leadership that encourages empowerment, collaboration, and innovation becomes a critical pillar for building resilience.

Therefore, examining organizational resilience as a function of transformational leadership is vital for understanding how Nigerian private organizations can thrive despite environmental volatility. This perspective highlights the significant role leader's play in shaping organizational culture, influencing employee behaviour, and developing internal capabilities that ensure sustainability. As global and local disruptions continue to shape the business environment, transformational leadership remains a strategic pathway for strengthening organizational resilience and securing long-term success in Nigeria's private sector.

CONCEPT OF RESILIENCE

Resilience is widely defined as the capacity of an individual, organization, or system to withstand adversity, recover from challenges, and adapt positively to changing or stressful conditions (Duchek, 2020). According to this definition, resilience is more than just the capacity to endure hardships; it is also the capacity to react positively, rearrange internal resources, and carry on with business as usual in the face of setbacks. According to contemporary researchers, resilience is a dynamic process that encompasses adaptability, learning, flexibility, and long-term adjustment at various levels of human and social systems.

According to recent psychology research, resilience is the ability of people to remain emotionally stable and operate well even in the face of severe stress, trauma, or unforeseen life events. According to recent research, resilience is developed by combining external resources like social networks and family ties with one's own qualities, such as coping mechanisms, emotional intelligence, and optimism. This indicates that resilience is a characteristic that develops over time through experience and ongoing engagement with the environment rather than a fixed personality attribute. As Yildirim and Solmaz (2020) explain, resilient individuals demonstrate higher mental endurance and recover more quickly from emotional distress.

The strategic ability of organizations to foresee disturbances, successfully handle crises, and modify operations to preserve stability and continuity is referred to as 'resilience'. Strong leadership, adaptable organizational structures, proactive planning, and a culture that promotes learning from previous setbacks are all necessary to build organizational resilience. Lengnick-Hall and Beck (2021) note that resilient organizations are able to innovate during uncertainty, maintain core functions under stress, and even emerge stronger after experiencing disruptions such as economic crises, technological failures, or global pandemics. This perspective reinforces the argument that resilience is essential for long-term organizational survival in unpredictable environments.

Resilience at the community level refers to people's ability to endure shocks, bounce back fast, and adjust to long-term changes such as natural catastrophes, unstable economies, or medical emergencies. According to Cohen et al. (2021), community resilience relies on strong social networks, trust, effective communication systems, and access to local resources because they share duties and work together for their shared well-being, communities with high resilience are better equipped for catastrophes, react to crises more quickly, and rebuild more successfully. Understanding resilience is also aided by social-ecological and environmental research. The ability of interrelated human and ecological systems to absorb shocks, reorganize, and maintain vital functions is referred to as 'resilience' in this context. Sharifi (2020) argues that resilience in ecosystems is strengthened through sustainable management, conservation practices, and adaptive governance. As environmental challenges such as climate change and resource depletion intensify, resilience becomes critical for protecting biodiversity and sustaining human development. In conclusion, resilience is a broad and dynamic notion that spans environmental science, community development, organizational studies, and psychology. Resilience, which is defined as the capacity to endure, bounce back from, and adjust to challenging circumstances, is essential for maintaining stability, wellbeing, and long-term sustainability in a world that is changing quickly. Current literature from 2020

to date consistently emphasizes that resilience is not static; rather, it grows through experience, collaboration, and proactive adaptation.

CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

Organizational resilience refers to the ability of an institution to anticipate disruptions, withstand shocks, recover quickly, and adapt to new realities while still maintaining essential operations. According to Vakilzadeh et al. (2021), from merely "bouncing back" from crises to implementing proactive tactics that bolster long-term stability, organizational resilience has changed. During worldwide disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought attention to the necessity for organizations to be flexible and able to operate in the face of significant uncertainty, the idea received fresh attention. As explained by Shepherd (2022), resilience is not a fixed attribute but a dynamic capability shaped by leadership, learning, and the organization's internal processes.

For instance, Zhang (2022) asserts that anticipation capabilities allow firms to reduce vulnerability by preparing structural and operational buffers that minimize the impact of shocks. This proactive approach guarantees that companies prepare ahead of time for unforeseen disruptions rather than just responding to them. In sectors such as health, finance, and manufacturing, anticipation has proven to be a strong predictor of service continuity and stability during crises (Ignatowicz, 2023).

The ability to react quickly and efficiently in times of crisis is another important aspect of organizational resilience. Swift decision-making, swift resource deployment, and efficient communication systems are all part of this reaction capability. According to Georgescu et al. (2024), decision autonomy, flexible work arrangements, and a culture of cooperation significantly enhance organizational response ability. The authors contend that organizational response is quicker and more coordinated when workers are empowered and there are clear routes of communication. Similarly, Ciasullo (2024) explains that response competence is strengthened by operational flexibility, strong leadership, and psychological safety—factors that enable employees to take decisive actions even under pressure.

Adaptation and long-term learning also form the backbone of organizational resilience. As highlighted by Ciasullo (2024), organizations that analyse their crisis experiences and incorporate these lessons into future planning tend to show higher resilience maturity. Redesigning organizational structures, revising standard procedures, and enhancing technology integration in light of previous disruptions are all part of this learning component. Shepherd (2022) emphasizes that adaptation not only improves post-crisis recovery but also enhances the organization's innovative capacity, allowing it to seize new opportunities emerging from turbulent environments. Organisations use ongoing learning to turn crises into opportunities for growth rather than deterioration.

Additionally, recent research emphasizes how important culture, HR procedures, and technology are in determining organizational resilience. According to Georgescu et al. (2024), strategic human resource management—such as cross-training, continuous learning, staff empowerment, and supportive leadership—strengthens the social capital needed for resilience. In addition, Ignatowicz (2023) notes that digital systems, including cloud-based tools, data analytics, and remote-work technologies, supported many organizations in

maintaining service delivery during the COVID-19 era. However, Zhang (2022) cautions that technology alone does not guarantee resilience; it must be combined with governance structures, staff training, and organizational trust to become effective.

In conclusion, organizational resilience is a multifaceted skill based on organizational learning, anticipation, quick reaction, and adaptation. According to recent studies, strategic planning, adaptive leadership, employee involvement, and digital preparedness are all necessary for resilience. According to Shepherd (2022), resilient organizations not only survive disruptions but emerge from them stronger due to improved capabilities and renewed strategic focus. The creation of organizational resilience has become a crucial concern for governmental institutions, private businesses, and non-profits looking for long-term survival in the face of ongoing uncertainty as global settings continue to change unpredictably.

CONCEPT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

According to Hanna & Needle (2024), transformational leadership is a leadership style that focuses on inspiring and motivating employees to innovate and find new ways to drive the organization's success. With this strategy, managers empower staff members to make choices, promote innovation, and create an atmosphere that inspires team members to support the company's goals. Since transformational leaders place a strong emphasis on flexibility, individual growth, and group dedication to common objectives, they are frequently linked to long-term growth and organizational transformation. Transformational leaders support employees' success and are committed to the organization's objective. These executives concentrate on changing corporate procedures in order to stay competitive and support the objectives of the organization. Based on team insights, personal experience, and organizational principles, they encourage measured risk-taking.

As mentioned by Ugochukwu (2025), transformational leadership is a leadership model that relies on a team's encouragement to realize overall success. A team can then connect itself with an overarching vision or shared purpose by boosting morale and self-confidence. A leader that practices transformational leadership inspires and motivates their team by developing a clear vision, promoting creativity, and cultivating personal development. They foster enthusiasm and trust, enabling individuals to surpass their own goals and work together to make significant, constructive improvements. Transformational leadership is committed to the success of each individual participating in the process and encourages positive changes in those it leads. The practice of engaging with and influencing others through attending to their needs, boosting their motivation, and offering an ethical foundation for choices is known as transformational leadership. By doing this, transformational leaders may bring about change in both individuals and organizations. Transformational leadership is often thought of in terms of organizations, and it is undoubtedly significant at this level. Critically though, transformational leaders help people to fulfil their potential by enabling them to reach their goals in ways that benefit themselves, their colleagues, the organization, and the societies within which the organizations are operating. (Newton, Alexander & Saone, 2025).

EXTENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE IN PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS IN NIGERIA

Organizational resilience in private organizations in Nigeria is gradually gaining recognition, particularly among SMEs and sector-specific firms. Research indicates that innovation and strategic diversity are major drivers of resilience, allowing firms to adapt to market fluctuations and competitive pressures effectively. For instance, SMEs in Lagos have demonstrated that entrepreneurial innovativeness and functional diversity correlate strongly with organizational resilience, enabling these businesses to survive economic uncertainties and operational challenges (Oiku et al., 2020).

In capital-intensive sectors such as oil and gas and insurance, relational factors like trust and competence are significant contributors to resilience. Firms that cultivate strong internal and external trust are better positioned to respond to disruptions, reduce vulnerability, and maintain operational continuity (Olu-Daniels & Nwibere, 2014). Similarly, manufacturing companies and private schools are increasingly adopting crisis management strategies, mentoring programs, and knowledge externalization to enhance their adaptive capacity, demonstrating that resilience is not limited to financial or technological resources (Igwe & Okwurume, 2025).

Despite these positive developments, the extent of resilience is uneven across industries. Many private organizations face resource constraints, regulatory uncertainties, and limited infrastructure, which restrict the institutionalization of resilience practices. Knowledge transfer remains a challenge, with tacit knowledge often unrecorded or poorly shared, limiting organizational learning and long-term adaptability. Additionally, risk management systems, particularly for cyber and operational risks, are not fully mature in most firms, creating vulnerabilities in an otherwise improving resilience landscape.

Overall, the evidence suggests that while organizational resilience is emerging and moderately strong in certain Nigerian private organizations, it is not yet uniform across all sectors. Firms that prioritize innovation, knowledge sharing, strategic diversity, and trust-based relationships tend to be more resilient, while systemic challenges such as economic volatility and infrastructural gaps continue to constrain wider adoption. Strengthening crisis preparedness, formalizing risk management, and fostering organizational learning remain essential strategies for improving resilience and ensuring sustainable business continuity in Nigeria (Folake, 2021).

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FEATURES OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

Organizational resilience is the ability of an organization to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and adapt to changes or disruptions while continuing to achieve its goals and grow stronger afterward (Duchek, 2020). In the modern business environment, organizations face increasingly complex and unpredictable disruptions such as economic instability, technological shifts, pandemics, and climate-related crises. These changes demand that organizations develop the capacity to survive, recover, and adapt in dynamic environments—a capability widely referred to as organizational resilience (Duchek, 2020). Organizational resilience extends beyond mere survival; it encompasses the proactive and adaptive abilities that enable firms to thrive amid uncertainty (Awad & Martín-Rojas, 2024). Organisations can create sustainable systems that can adapt to both abrupt shocks and gradual change by having a thorough understanding of these characteristics. These characteristics are:

- **Anticipation (Proactive Capability):** Anticipation represents the organization's ability to foresee potential disruptions and prepare accordingly. Duchek (2020) describes anticipation as the first stage of resilience, involving environmental scanning, identifying risks, and developing contingency plans before crises occur. Monitoring systems that identify early warning signals are maintained by organizations with strong anticipatory capabilities, enabling them to take action before a disruption worsens. Anticipation is supported by strategic foresight and risk intelligence, which

help firms allocate resources proactively (Radović-Marković, 2023).

- **Coping (Responsive Capability):** Coping refers to the organization's immediate response to unexpected challenges. This involves mobilizing resources, coordinating communication, and implementing emergency actions to maintain critical functions (Duchek, 2020). During crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, coping mechanisms allowed firms to quickly shift to remote operations, modify supply chains, and sustain essential services (Awad & Martín-Rojas, 2024). Schäffer (2020) emphasizes that effective coping depends on having flexible leadership, rapid decision-making, and sufficient operational buffers to absorb shocks.
- **Adaptation (Learning and Transformation Capability):** Adaptation occurs when an organization not only recovers but also transforms in response to adversity. It includes integrating lessons learnt from previous disruptions into future strategies (Duchek, 2020). According to Awad and Martín-Rojas (2024), adaptation is strengthened by digital transformation and innovation, which improve agility and responsiveness. A learning-orientated culture enables organizations to reassess their structures, update policies, and develop new capabilities that enhance future preparedness.
- **Resource Availability and Slack:** A resilient organization maintains adequate resources that act as buffers during disruptions. Schäffer (2020) identified resource slack — including financial, human, and social capital — as essential for supporting continuity. These resources guarantee the organization's ability to invest in recovery procedures, maintain operations, and reallocate assets. Flexibility and innovation are also supported by resource availability, which allows businesses to make swift adjustments without sacrificing their strategic objectives.
- **Flexible Operations and Structures:** Operational flexibility enables businesses to adapt their structures and processes to changing circumstances. Diversification, autonomy, and redundancy are structural enablers of resilience, according to Schäffer (2020). Flexibility makes guarantee that problems in one sector don't bring down the system as a whole. Additionally, fast reconfiguration of operations is made possible by technological improvements and digital tools, which encourages responsiveness in turbulent markets (Awad & Martín-Rojas, 2024).
- **Learning Culture and Knowledge Sharing:** Knowledge management and ongoing learning strengthen organizational resilience. Duchek (2020) and Radović-Marković (2023) emphasize that organizations might avoid similar disruptions in the future by learning from prior experiences. Employees are encouraged to share their thoughts, think back on their responses to crises, and incorporate those lessons into organizational structures when there is a learning culture. Resilience becomes a proactive capacity instead of a reactive one thanks to this dynamic feedback loop.
- **Leadership and Organizational Culture:** Building resilience is mostly dependent on culture and leadership. Particularly during uncertain times, effective leaders offer inspiration, stability, and vision (Schäffer, 2020). Resilient cultures foster creativity and group problem-solving by fostering psychological safety, open communication, and trust. Employee confidence is boosted by leaders who exhibit flexibility and openness, strengthening a sense of cohesion and common purpose in times of crisis (Radović-Marković, 2023).

- **Risk Management and Preparedness** Building resilience is mostly dependent on culture and leadership. Particularly during uncertain times, effective leaders offer inspiration, stability, and vision (Schäffer, 2020). Resilient cultures foster creativity and group problem-solving by fostering psychological safety, open communication, and trust. Employee confidence is boosted by leaders who exhibit flexibility and openness, strengthening a sense of cohesion and common purpose in times of crisis (Radović-Marković, 2023). Unforeseen circumstances. Uncertainty can be turned from a source of vulnerability into a strategic advantage through effective risk management.

FEATURES OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Leaders who possess the following qualities are not only effective leaders but also transformative leaders, which will enable your organization to expand efficiently and consistently:

- **Internal motivation and self-management:** In order to successfully manage the company's direction, transformational executives need internal motivation. Loving what you do and making sure your values coincide with those of the company you work for are the most natural sources of inspiration.
- **The ability to make difficult decisions:** Being a leader involves making tough choices. Transformational leaders don't back down or put off difficult choices. Decisions that are in line with a well-defined vision, values, goals, and objectives are easier to make.
- **Check their ego:** It is simple to let your ego overcome you when you are in a position of authority. Transformational leaders, on the other hand, control their ego and do not allow it to interfere with accomplishing what is best for the company. The benefit of checking your ego ensures you put the company first over personal gain and encourages the best input from others within the organization — because when the company succeeds, you as a leader also succeed (Hogg, 2012).
- **Willing to take the right risks:** A risk can be taken by anyone. Transformational leaders take calculated chances that, for the most part, pay off. It's critical to trust your gut and your team to obtain the required information. When you have taken the time to do your homework, assess your options, and get advice from others around you, it is simpler to trust your instincts. Change and your capacity to develop will be hampered if you don't take the necessary chances and make these tough choices.
- **Organizational consciousness:** The organization's collective consciousness is shared by transformational leaders. They know how to bring about change, encourage creativity, and make choices that will lead to expansion. They see their role in the firm as more than just a job because their own beliefs coincide with the organizations.
- **Adaptability:** Transformational leaders are flexible and continuously looking for fresh approaches to deal with an ever-evolving business environment. They are adaptable and lifelong learners because they understand that the moment they remain motionless, their rivals will pass them.

EFFECTS OF TRANSFORMATION LEADERSHIP ON ORGANIZATION RESILIENCE

Organizations must be more flexible, creative, and resilient in the current era of intense competition, digital disruption, and frequent crises. An organization with resilience can endure, bounce back, and prosper in the face of uncertainty or hardship (Carmeli et al., 2017). But building resilience depends on the caliber of leadership, not just structural adaptability. One of the best leadership strategies for boosting organizational resilience is transformational leadership, which is defined by the capacity to uplift, encourage, and intellectually excite followers (Bass & Riggio, 2019; Yu & Xiang, 2025). In order to help businesses endure and adjust to change, transformational leaders foster commitment, trust, and a common vision.

A compelling vision developed by transformational leaders unites staff members around a shared objective. This common goal aids organizations in staying focused in the face of unpredictability. According to Bai et al. (2025), during times of crisis, a clear vision promotes perseverance and increases group motivation. When faced with interruptions, employees that are guided by a common vision are more likely to react proactively and cohesively.

A crucial element of transformative leadership is intellectual stimulation, which inspires workers to experiment, think creatively, and learn from their failures (Carmeli et al., 2017). This innovative culture increases adaptability, enabling businesses to swiftly create fresh approaches in response to new problems. Consequently, innovation turns into a catalyst for organizational resilience (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2019).

Transformational leaders support individual growth and emotional well-being through individualized consideration (Abdul Salam et al., 2023). Employees are more optimistic, engaged, and confident in their ability to overcome challenges when they feel psychologically supported. Because employees work together to support organizational recovery and sustainability, individual resilience adds up to organizational-level resilience.

The cornerstones of organizational resilience are cooperation and trust. By acting with honesty and morality, transformational leaders foster trust (Bass & Riggio, 2019). Cooperation, open communication, and knowledge sharing are all improved by this trust and are crucial for crisis management and recovery (Varis et al., 2025). In the twenty-first century, organizational resilience is greatly aided by transformational leadership. Transformational leaders help businesses to effectively adapt to change and recover from disasters by cultivating creativity, trust, collaboration, and psychological safety. Transformational leadership improves organizational and human resilience across industries and cultures, according to empirical data from 2015 to 2025. The ability of leaders to motivate, empower, and transform their followers will continue to determine the resilience and longevity of contemporary organizations in a world of perpetual disruption.

CONCLUSSION

In conclusion organizational resilience in Nigerian private organizations is deeply strengthened by the presence of transformational leadership. Leaders who inspire, motivate, and stimulate innovation create a culture that embraces adaptability and proactive problem-solving. In an unpredictable business environment like Nigeria's, such leadership enhances strategic flexibility and supports rapid recovery from crises. Transformational leadership also empowers employees, builds trust, and promotes collaboration—key ingredients for

resilience. Ultimately, organizations led by transformational leaders are better positioned to withstand disruptions, maintain continuity, and achieve sustainable long-term growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Private organizations should invest in continuous leadership development programmes to equip managers with transformational leadership skills such as vision-building, emotional intelligence, communication, and change management. This will strengthen leaders' capacity to motivate employees and navigate crises effectively.
- Organizations should cultivate a learning-oriented and innovative workplace culture where employees are encouraged to share ideas, solve problems collaboratively, and adapt quickly to new challenges. This cultural shift enhances organizational resilience and supports proactive crisis management.
- Executives should implement strategic resilience frameworks including risk assessment mechanisms, crisis-preparedness plans, and scenario forecasting, to ensure that the organization remains stable during disruptions. Transformational leaders should oversee these frameworks to ensure effective implementation and alignment with organizational goals.
- Private organizations should adopt digital tools and technologies that support flexibility, information flow, and efficient decision-making. Transformational leaders must champion digital transformation initiatives to strengthen organizational adaptability in rapidly evolving markets.

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