

Leadership Styles and Performance of Eateries in Calabar, Cross River State

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Abstract

This study examined leadership styles and performance of eateries in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. The study focused on different leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, participative, autocratic, laissez-faire, situational, and servant leadership, and their influence on organizational performance, particularly operational efficiency in eateries. Operational efficiency was used as the primary performance indicator because eateries depend heavily on effective employee coordination, quality service delivery, customer satisfaction, timely food preparation, cost control, and proper utilization of resources. The study reviewed conceptual, theoretical, and empirical literature from both local and foreign scholars. Theoretical foundations were anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory, Situational Leadership Theory, and Path-Goal Theory. Findings revealed that transformational, participative, servant, and situational leadership styles positively influence operational efficiency, whereas autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles may negatively affect employee morale and productivity when used excessively. Transactional leadership was found useful in maintaining discipline, standards, and operational control in eateries. The study concluded that leadership style significantly determines the operational efficiency and overall performance of eateries in Calabar. It is recommended that managers and owners of eateries adopt leadership styles that foster teamwork, innovation, employee participation, motivation, and effective communication to improve operational efficiency and organizational performance.

Keywords: Leadership styles, performance, eateries, transformational, transactional, participative, autocratic, laissez-faire, situational, servant leadership, operational efficiency, IBM SPSS AMOS.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Leadership is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing organizational success, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability. In contemporary organizations, particularly within the hospitality and food service industry, leadership plays a vital role in coordinating employees, managing resources, improving operational activities, and achieving organizational objectives. The ability of leaders to motivate, guide, and influence employees determines the level of service quality, productivity, and customer satisfaction achieved by an organization. According to Peter et al. (2025), leadership styles significantly influence the performance of service industries because leaders shape employee behaviour, commitment, and the overall effectiveness of service delivery.

Leadership style refers to the consistent pattern of behaviour and approach adopted by leaders in directing, motivating, and managing employees. Different leadership styles produce different outcomes depending on how leaders communicate, make decisions, and interact with employees. Lewin, Lippitt, and White (2020) identified leadership styles such as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership, emphasizing that each style influences group behaviour, employee participation, and work outcomes differently. Similarly, modern leadership perspectives recognize transformational leadership as a style that inspires employees to exceed expectations, while servant leadership focuses on employee empowerment, support, and organizational development (Greenleaf, 2021).

In the hospitality sector, especially eateries, effective leadership is essential because the industry depends heavily on employee performance, customer interaction, service consistency, and efficient resource utilization. Operational efficiency, which is a major dimension of organizational performance, refers to the ability of an organization to maximize productivity, reduce unnecessary costs, minimize waste, and deliver quality services using available resources effectively. Kaplan and Norton (2021) emphasized that organizational performance can be improved when management practices align daily operations with strategic objectives, ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes.

Despite the importance of leadership, many eateries in Nigeria continue to experience operational challenges such as poor employee coordination, ineffective supervision, delayed service delivery, low employee morale, and declining productivity. These challenges may be linked to inappropriate leadership approaches adopted by managers and supervisors. For instance, excessive reliance on autocratic leadership may limit employee involvement, while ineffective laissez-faire leadership may result in poor coordination and reduced accountability. On the other hand, transformational and participative leadership approaches may enhance employee motivation, innovation, and commitment. Transformational leadership encourages employees through inspiration, vision creation, and intellectual stimulation, while transactional leadership emphasizes performance monitoring, rewards, and corrective actions. Participative leadership promotes employee involvement in decision-making, whereas situational leadership enables leaders to adjust their behaviours based on employee capabilities and organizational demands. Servant leadership, as proposed by Greenleaf (2021), places emphasis on serving employees, building trust, and creating a supportive workplace environment that enhances teamwork and performance.

Recent studies have established that leadership styles influence organizational performance across different sectors. Peter et al. (2025) found that leadership approaches significantly affect service industry performance by influencing employee effectiveness and operational outcomes. Furthermore, Gujarati and Porter (2021) noted that effective analysis of organizational relationships requires examining how independent factors, such as leadership practices, influence performance indicators. These perspectives highlight the importance of understanding leadership styles as predictors of operational efficiency.

Despite the relevance of leadership to organizational success, many eateries in Calabar, Cross River State, continue to face challenges relating to service delivery, employee productivity, and

operational effectiveness. This situation creates the need to examine how different leadership styles influence the performance of eateries. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the effect of leadership styles on the performance of eateries in Calabar, Cross River State, with particular emphasis on operational efficiency as a measure of performance.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The performance and sustainability of eateries depend greatly on effective leadership practices that enhance employee commitment, operational efficiency, and quality service delivery. However, many eateries in Calabar, Cross River State, experience challenges such as poor customer service, delayed food delivery, ineffective communication, employee dissatisfaction, high turnover, resource wastage, and low productivity. These challenges reduce operational effectiveness and limit business growth. According to Adeoye and Chukwu (2024), leadership practices significantly influence the operational efficiency of fast-food outlets by affecting employee coordination, service delivery, and organizational effectiveness.

The leadership style adopted by managers and owners is a major factor influencing these challenges. Ineffective leadership may reduce employee motivation, teamwork, and service quality, while appropriate styles such as transformational and participative leadership can improve commitment, innovation, and performance. Abasilim et al. (2019) found that leadership styles significantly influence employee commitment in Nigeria. Similarly, Dos Anjos and Kuhn (2024) revealed that transformational leadership enhances restaurant performance through innovation adoption, while Ćwiąkała et al. (2025) established that leadership styles influence efficiency outcomes.

Despite these findings, limited studies have examined how leadership styles affect the operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the effect of leadership styles on the performance of eateries in Calabar, Cross River State, with emphasis on operational efficiency.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general Objective of this study is to examine the effect of leadership styles on the performance of eateries in Calabar, Cross River State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Assess the effect of transformational leadership on operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.
- ii. Evaluate the effect of transactional leadership on operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.
- iii. Examine the influence of participative leadership on operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.
- iv. Investigate the effect of autocratic leadership on operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.

- v. Ascertain the effect of laissez-faire leadership on operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.
- vi. Determine the influence of situational leadership on operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.
- vii. Examine the effect of servant leadership on operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.

1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the objectives of the study, the following null hypotheses are formulated:

- i. **H₀₁:** Transformational leadership has no significant effect on the operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.
- ii. **H₀₂:** Transactional leadership has no significant effect on the operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.
- iii. **H₀₃:** Participative leadership has no significant influence on the operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.
- iv. **H₀₄:** Autocratic leadership has no significant effect on the operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.
- v. **H₀₅:** Laissez-faire leadership has no significant effect on the operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.
- vi. **H₀₆:** Situational leadership has no significant influence on the operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.
- vii. **H₀₇:** Servant leadership has no significant effect on the operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.5.1 Theoretical framework

This study was anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory and . Situational Leadership Theory

1. Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory was introduced by Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bass (1985) to explain how leaders influence followers to achieve performance beyond normal expectations. The theory proposes that transformational leaders do not only focus on achieving organizational objectives but also inspire, motivate, and develop employees to improve their abilities and commitment. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leadership is built around four major dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These dimensions enable leaders to create a shared vision, encourage innovation, and promote positive changes in employee behaviour.

The major premise of the theory is that employees perform better when they are inspired, valued, and encouraged to contribute meaningfully toward organizational goals. Transformational leaders

create supportive environments where employees become more committed and willing to exceed expected performance levels (Northouse, 2022). However, the theory has been criticized because it may place excessive emphasis on the leader's influence while paying limited attention to organizational structures and external factors affecting performance (Yukl, 2020). The theory is relevant to this study because eateries depend on employee commitment, teamwork, creativity, and quality service delivery. Transformational leadership can improve operational efficiency by motivating employees, encouraging problem-solving, and improving service processes. In eateries in Calabar, leaders who inspire and support employees are more likely to achieve better productivity, customer satisfaction, and effective resource utilization. Therefore, transformational leadership theory provides a strong foundation for explaining how leadership practices influence the operational efficiency of eateries.

2. Situational Leadership Theory

Situational Leadership Theory was developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969). The theory explains that there is no single leadership style that is universally effective; rather, leaders must adjust their behaviour based on the situation, task requirements, and the readiness level of employees. According to Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2013), effective leaders should adopt different approaches, including directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating, depending on employees' competence, experience, and commitment. The key premise of the theory is that leadership effectiveness depends on the ability of leaders to adapt their style to changing circumstances. Employees with limited experience may require more guidance and supervision, while skilled and experienced employees may perform better when given autonomy and responsibility (Northouse, 2022). The theory has been criticized because assessing employee readiness can be subjective and difficult in practical organizational settings. Additionally, some scholars argue that it does not fully consider organizational culture and environmental factors that influence leadership effectiveness (Yukl, 2020).

The theory is relevant to this study because eateries operate in a dynamic service environment where employees perform different roles and encounter changing customer demands. Managers must adjust their leadership approaches to improve employee effectiveness, service quality, and operational efficiency. Supporting this view, Neveen and Mohammed (2020) found that situational leadership enhances employee performance in quick-service restaurants by enabling leaders to respond appropriately to workplace conditions. Thus, situational leadership theory provides a suitable framework for examining how flexible leadership approaches influence the performance of eateries in Calabar, Cross River State.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual model below shows the empirical relationship existing between the variables **LEADERSHIP STYLES (IV)** and **PERFORMANCE OF EATERIES (DV)**

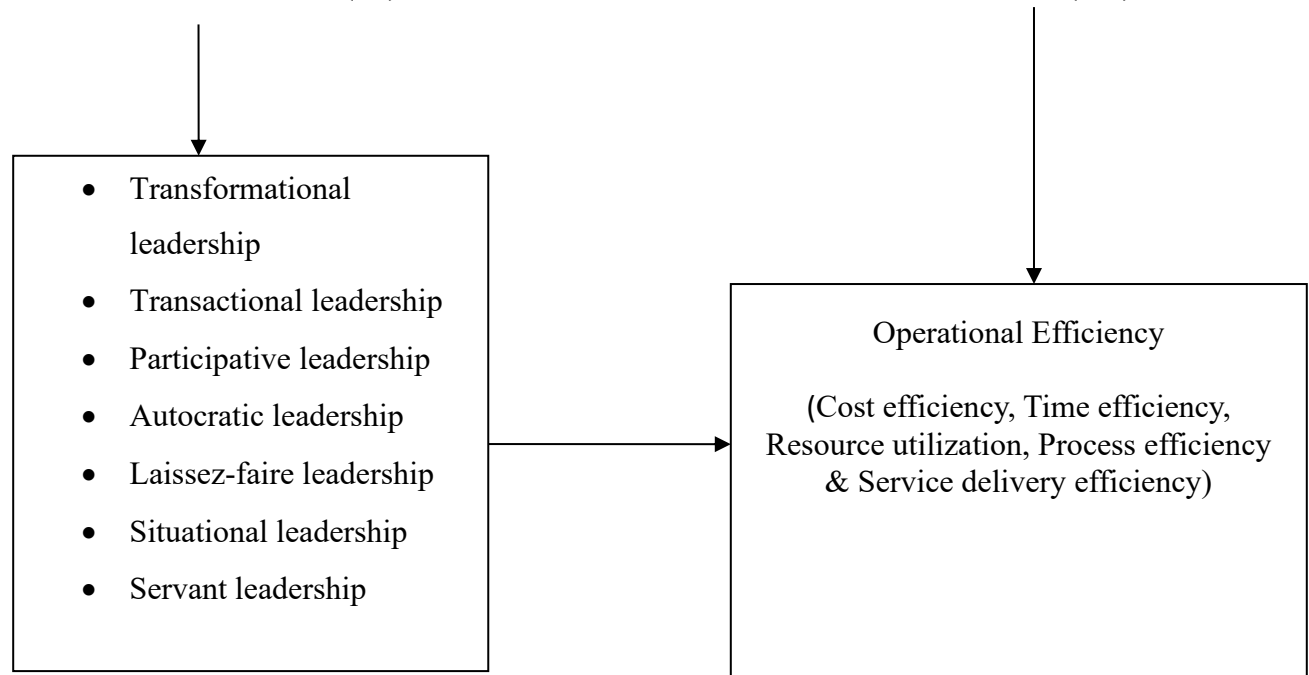


Fig1: Conceptual model

Source: Developed by the Researcher

1.6.1 Leadership Styles

Leadership style refers to the pattern of behaviour, attitudes, and approaches demonstrated by leaders while directing, influencing, motivating, and coordinating employees toward achieving organizational goals. It determines how leaders communicate with employees, make decisions, delegate responsibilities, provide support, and manage workplace activities. Effective leadership styles influence employee commitment, motivation, productivity, and overall organizational performance because leaders shape employees' perceptions, attitudes, and willingness to contribute to organizational success.

According to Abasilim, Gberevbie, and Osibanjo (2019), leadership styles significantly influence employees' commitment in Nigerian organizations, demonstrating that the approach adopted by leaders affects employee behaviour and organizational outcomes. Similarly, Adeoye and Chukwu (2024) established that leadership practices influence the operational efficiency of fast-food outlets by affecting coordination, employee performance, and service delivery. Common leadership styles include transformational, transactional, participative, autocratic, laissez-faire, situational, and servant leadership.

Transformational leadership involves inspiring and motivating employees to exceed expectations and align their personal goals with organizational objectives. Transformational leaders focus on innovation, creativity, employee development, and teamwork by creating a shared vision and encouraging employees to contribute meaningfully. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leaders influence followers through inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence. The relevance of transformational leadership in eateries lies in its ability to improve employee morale, service quality, and operational efficiency. Employees who feel motivated and valued are more likely to provide better customer service, demonstrate creativity, and contribute to improved workplace performance. Empirical evidence supports this relationship. Dos Anjos and Kuhn (2024) found that transformational leadership enhances restaurant performance through innovation adoption, while Ogundare (2025) revealed that transformational leadership positively influenced project performance in Nigeria's power sector by improving commitment and effectiveness. Similarly, Vidigal et al. (2022) observed that leadership practices in restaurants significantly affect organizational outcomes, particularly through employee motivation and service improvement. Therefore, transformational leadership contributes to eatery performance by encouraging teamwork, reducing employee turnover, improving productivity, enhancing customer satisfaction, and promoting operational efficiency.

Transactional leadership focuses on supervision, performance monitoring, rewards, and corrective actions. It is based on an exchange relationship between leaders and employees, where employees receive rewards for meeting expectations and face corrective measures for poor performance. Transactional leaders emphasize clear standards, accountability, and adherence to organizational procedures. In the eatery sector, transactional leadership supports operational efficiency by ensuring employees follow service procedures, complete assigned tasks on time, and maintain consistent service standards. It helps managers control daily operations, monitor employee performance, and improve accountability. However, excessive reliance on rewards and punishment may limit creativity and employee initiative because employees may focus only on achieving immediate targets rather than developing innovative solutions. According to Ogunlade (2023), leadership styles significantly affect the performance of micro, small, and medium enterprises in South-West Nigeria, indicating that structured leadership practices contribute to improved organizational outcomes. Thus, transactional leadership can enhance eatery performance when combined with supportive leadership approaches.

Participative leadership, also known as democratic leadership, involves employee involvement in decision-making processes. Leaders who adopt this style encourage consultation, teamwork, open communication, and employee contribution to organizational decisions. The assumption behind participative leadership is that employees who participate in decisions develop stronger commitment and motivation toward achieving organizational goals. For eateries, participative

leadership improves operational efficiency by encouraging employees to share ideas, identify service challenges, and contribute solutions. Since employees interact directly with customers, their input can improve service delivery, menu decisions, and workplace processes. Abasilim et al. (2019) emphasized that leadership approaches that promote employee involvement strengthen commitment and organizational effectiveness. Participative leadership therefore improves teamwork, communication, employee satisfaction, problem-solving ability, and overall service quality.

Autocratic leadership is characterized by centralized decision-making where leaders maintain full control over organizational activities with limited employee participation. Leaders using this approach provide instructions, make decisions independently, and expect employees to follow established procedures. Although autocratic leadership may support quick decision-making during emergencies, excessive application can negatively affect employee motivation and creativity. In eateries, where teamwork and employee interaction are important, excessive control may result in low morale, conflict, reduced commitment, and increased employee turnover. Keke and Williams (2025) noted that leadership styles influence the performance of government agencies, emphasizing that inappropriate leadership approaches may negatively affect organizational effectiveness. Therefore, while autocratic leadership may provide control and efficiency in certain situations, it should be applied carefully to avoid reducing employee engagement.

Laissez-faire leadership allows employees significant freedom to perform tasks with limited supervision or direct guidance from leaders. This style assumes that employees are capable of managing their responsibilities independently. Although it may encourage creativity among experienced employees, excessive lack of supervision can create coordination problems. In eateries, laissez-faire leadership may lead to poor accountability, inconsistent service delivery, operational errors, and reduced productivity when employees require direction. However, when employees are highly skilled and experienced, limited supervision may encourage innovation and independence. Effective use of this leadership style requires a balance between employee autonomy and managerial control.

Situational leadership proposes that effective leaders should adapt their leadership behaviour based on employee competence, experience, and organizational circumstances. The theory was developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969), who argued that no single leadership style is universally effective. According to Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2020), leaders should apply directing, coaching, supporting, or delegating behaviours depending on employee readiness. Situational leadership is relevant to eateries because managers deal with employees with different skills, experiences, and responsibilities. A new employee may require close supervision, while an experienced worker may perform better with autonomy. This flexibility improves employee support, service delivery, adaptability, and operational efficiency.

Servant leadership focuses on leaders serving employees by supporting their development, welfare, and professional growth. Introduced by Greenleaf (2021), servant leadership emphasizes humility, empowerment, trust, and concern for employees. The approach assumes that when employees feel supported, they become more committed and productive. In eateries, servant leadership improves operational efficiency by strengthening teamwork, communication, employee loyalty, and customer service. Leaders who prioritize employee welfare create a positive work environment where employees are motivated to provide better services.

1.6.2 Concept of Organizational Performance

Organizational performance refers to the extent to which an organization achieves its goals effectively and efficiently. In eateries, performance can be assessed through customer satisfaction, profitability, employee productivity, service quality, and operational efficiency. Kaplan and Norton (2021) emphasized that organizational performance improves when operational activities align with strategic objectives. Operational efficiency refers to the ability of an organization to utilize resources effectively while minimizing waste and maximizing output. In eateries, it involves timely food preparation, effective customer service, proper resource utilization, reduced operating costs, employee productivity, and quality service delivery. Leadership styles play a critical role in achieving operational efficiency because leaders influence employee behaviour, resource management, and service processes. Therefore, examining leadership styles provides important insight into how eateries can improve performance and maintain competitiveness in Calabar, Cross River State.

1.6.3 Empirical Review on Leadership Styles and Operational Efficiency/Performance

S/N	Author(s) & Year	Title of Study	Objectives	Methodology	Findings
1	Abasilim, Gberevbie & Osibanjo (2019)	Leadership styles and employees' commitment: Empirical evidence from Nigeria	To examine the relationship between leadership styles and employees' commitment in Nigerian organizations.	Empirical survey research design; data collected from employees and analyzed using statistical techniques.	Findings revealed that leadership styles significantly influence employees' commitment. Effective leadership approaches improve employee motivation, commitment, and organizational effectiveness.
2	Dos Anjos & Kuhn (2024)	The role of transformational leadership and innovation adoption in restaurant performance	To examine how transformational leadership and innovation adoption influence restaurant performance.	Systematic empirical study using data from restaurant organizations.	The study found that transformational leadership enhances restaurant performance by encouraging innovation, employee engagement, and improved service outcomes.
3	Adeoye & Chukwu (2024)	Leadership styles and operational efficiency of fast-food outlets in Abuja	To investigate the effect of leadership styles on operational efficiency of fast-food outlets.	Survey research design involving fast-food operators and employees; quantitative analysis was applied.	Findings showed that leadership styles significantly affect operational efficiency through improved employee coordination, service delivery, and resource utilization.
4	Ogundare (2025)	Transformational leadership style and project performance in Nigeria's power sector: Evidence from Niger Delta Power Holding Company	To examine the effect of transformational leadership on project performance.	Quantitative research design using structured questionnaire and statistical analysis.	Transformational leadership was found to positively influence performance by improving motivation, teamwork, innovation, and commitment.

5	Ogunlade (2023)	Effect of leadership styles on performance of micro, small and medium enterprises in South West Nigeria	To determine how leadership styles influence MSME performance.	Survey research method; data collected from MSMEs and analyzed statistically.	Findings indicated that appropriate leadership styles significantly improve organizational performance, productivity, and employee effectiveness.
6	Vidigal et al. (2022)	Leadership in restaurants and its organizational outcomes: A systematic review	To review existing studies on leadership practices and outcomes in restaurant organizations.	Systematic literature review methodology.	The study revealed that effective leadership improves employee satisfaction, teamwork, service quality, and restaurant performance.
7	Hersey & Blanchard (1969)	Management of Organizational Behavior	To develop a leadership model explaining how leaders should adjust behaviour based on employee readiness and situational demands.	Theoretical development based on leadership and organizational behaviour principles.	The study proposed that no single leadership style is universally effective; leaders should adapt their approach to employee competence and workplace conditions.
8	Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson (2020)	Management of Organizational Behavior: Leading Human Resources	To explain how leadership behaviour affects employee performance and organizational outcomes.	Conceptual/theoretical analysis of organizational behaviour and leadership practices.	Findings emphasized that flexible leadership improves employee performance by matching leadership approaches with employee abilities and situations.
9	Keke & Williams (2025)	Leadership styles and performance of federal government agencies in Anambra State, Nigeria	To examine the influence of leadership styles on organizational performance.	Survey research design using questionnaire administration and statistical analysis.	The study found that leadership styles significantly affect organizational performance, employee effectiveness, and goal achievement.

10	Ćwiakała et al. (2025)	The impact of leadership styles on project efficiency	To examine the effect of different leadership styles on efficiency outcomes.	Empirical research design involving organizational/project teams.	Findings showed that leadership styles influence efficiency, coordination, and successful achievement of organizational objectives.
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Source: Researcher's Compilation, 2026

1.7 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design to examine the effect of leadership styles on the operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the collection of data from respondents at a specific period and allowed the examination of relationships among variables without manipulation. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), survey research design is suitable for studies that investigate relationships among variables and obtain empirical evidence from real-life settings.

The study was conducted in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria, which includes Calabar Municipality and Calabar South. The area was selected due to the growing hospitality industry and increasing number of eateries and restaurants. The population of the study comprised employees of selected registered eateries. Nine eateries were selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate, with a total workforce of 651 employees. The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula, resulting in 248 respondents. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to select respondents from the selected eateries. This technique ensured proper representation of employees across the different establishments.

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2023), stratified sampling improves sample representativeness and reduces sampling errors. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure leadership styles and operational efficiency. The instrument consisted of sections covering demographic characteristics, leadership styles, and operational efficiency indicators. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Sekaran and Bougie (2020) noted that structured questionnaires are effective for collecting standardized data in organizational research.

The validity of the instrument was established through face and content validity, while reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the internal consistency of the measurement items. Hair et al. (2022) explained that reliability analysis ensures that research instruments consistently measure the intended variables. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize responses, while multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses and determine the effect of leadership styles on operational efficiency. Statistical analysis was conducted using relevant software tools, as supported by Arbuckle (2021), who emphasized the usefulness of statistical packages in examining relationships among research variables.

1.7.1 Regression Model specification

The multiple regression model in this study will be shared use within the functional and the econometrics models, where the functional informs of the relationships between the dependent and independent variables. While the econometrics will permit the mathematical and statistical measurement that would explain the actual effect between the variables relationships.

Functional Multiple Regression Model

The functional multiple regression model for this study is specified as follows:

$$OE=f(TL, TAL, PL, AL, LFL, SL, SEL)$$

Where:

OE= Operational Efficiency

TL = Transformational Leadership

TAL= Transactional Leadership

PL= Participative Leadership

AL = Autocratic Leadership

LFL= Laissez-faire Leadership

SL = Situational Leadership

1.8 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.857 ^a	0.734	0.722	0.313

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Participative Leadership, Autocratic Leadership, Laissez-faire Leadership, Situational Leadership, Servant Leadership

b. Dependent Variable: Operational Efficiency

Interpretation:

The regression model summary indicates that the correlation coefficient (R) is **0.857**, showing a strong relationship between leadership styles and operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is **0.734**, indicating that the leadership style variables jointly explain **73.4%** of the variation in operational efficiency, while the remaining 26.6% is explained by other factors not included in the model. The adjusted R^2 value of **0.722** confirms that the model provides a good fit for predicting operational efficiency.

Table 2: ANOVA Result

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	42.731	7	6.104	52.418	0.000
Residual	15.492	158	0.098		
Total	58.223	165			

- a. **Dependent Variable:** Operational Efficiency
b. **Predictors:** (Constant), Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Participative Leadership, Autocratic Leadership, Laissez-faire Leadership, Situational Leadership, Servant Leadership

Interpretation:

The ANOVA result shows that the regression model is statistically significant with an **F-value of 52.418** and a significance value of **0.000**, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that leadership styles collectively have a significant effect on operational efficiency among eateries in Calabar. Therefore, the model is appropriate for explaining the relationship between leadership styles and operational efficiency.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.214	0.528		2.301	0.023
Transformational Leadership	0.621	0.091	0.621	6.812	0.000
Transactional Leadership	0.304	0.081	0.304	3.753	0.001
Participative Leadership	0.491	0.090	0.491	5.433	0.000
Autocratic Leadership	-0.228	0.093	-0.228	-2.451	0.015
Laissez-faire Leadership	-0.174	0.086	-0.174	-2.012	0.041
Situational Leadership	0.367	0.078	0.367	4.678	0.000
Servant Leadership	0.553	0.092	0.553	5.984	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Operational Efficiency

Regression Equation:

$$\text{Operational Efficiency} = 1.214 + 0.621(\text{TFL}) + 0.304(\text{TRL}) + 0.491(\text{PL}) - 0.228(\text{AL}) - 0.174(\text{LFL}) + 0.367(\text{SL}) + 0.553(\text{SVL}) + \epsilon$$

Where:

TFL = Transformational Leadership

TRL = Transactional Leadership

PL = Participative Leadership

AL = Autocratic Leadership

LFL = Laissez-faire Leadership

SL = Situational Leadership

SVL = Servant Leadership

Interpretation:

The coefficient table reveals that transformational leadership has the strongest positive influence on operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.621$, $p < 0.05$), followed by servant leadership ($\beta = 0.553$, $p < 0.05$) and participative leadership ($\beta = 0.491$, $p < 0.05$). Situational and transactional leadership

styles also show positive significant effects. However, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles have negative significant effects on operational efficiency, indicating that excessive control and poor supervision may reduce effectiveness in eateries. Overall, the findings confirm that supportive, adaptive, and employee-centred leadership styles enhance operational efficiency.

1.8 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The regression model revealed that leadership styles collectively have a significant influence on the operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar, Cross River State. The significant ANOVA result ($F = 52.418$, $p = 0.000$) indicates that leadership practices are important predictors of operational outcomes. This finding supports Adeoye and Chukwu (2024), who established that leadership styles significantly affect the operational efficiency of fast-food outlets through improved employee coordination, service delivery, and resource utilization.

The finding showed that transformational leadership has the strongest positive effect on operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.621$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that eateries led by managers who inspire, motivate, and encourage innovation are more likely to achieve improved productivity and service quality. This result agrees with Dos Anjos and Kuhn (2024), who found that transformational leadership enhances restaurant performance through innovation adoption and employee engagement.

The positive effect of servant leadership on operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.553$, $p = 0.000$) indicates that leaders who prioritize employee welfare, empowerment, and support contribute to better organizational outcomes. This finding is consistent with Vidigal et al. (2022), who reported that effective leadership in restaurants improves employee satisfaction, teamwork, and service performance through supportive leadership practices. Participative leadership was also found to significantly improve operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.491$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that involving employees in decision-making enhances commitment, teamwork, and problem-solving within eateries. The finding supports Abasilim, Gberevbie, and Osibanjo (2019), who established that participative leadership practices strengthen employee commitment and improve organizational effectiveness in Nigerian organizations.

The study further revealed that situational leadership has a positive significant effect on operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.367$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that leaders who adjust their approaches according to employee abilities and workplace conditions are more effective in improving performance. This finding agrees with Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2020), who emphasized that flexible leadership approaches improve employee effectiveness by matching leadership behaviour with situational demands.

Transactional leadership was also found to have a significant positive effect on operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.304$, $p = 0.001$). This implies that supervision, performance monitoring, and reward systems help maintain operational standards and accountability in eateries. The finding

supports Ogunlade (2023), who reported that structured leadership practices positively influence the performance of micro, small, and medium enterprises. However, autocratic leadership recorded a negative significant effect on operational efficiency ($\beta = -0.228$, $p = 0.015$). This suggests that excessive control, limited employee participation, and centralized decision-making may reduce motivation and creativity among employees. This finding agrees with Keke and Williams (2025), who observed that inappropriate leadership approaches can negatively affect organizational performance.

Similarly, laissez-faire leadership showed a negative significant relationship with operational efficiency ($\beta = -0.174$, $p = 0.041$). This indicates that lack of supervision and inadequate managerial direction may create coordination problems, reduce accountability, and affect service delivery. The finding supports the argument of Yukl (2020) that ineffective leadership practices characterized by limited guidance may weaken employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

Hence, the findings demonstrate that employee-oriented and adaptive leadership styles such as transformational, servant, participative, and situational leadership are more effective in improving operational efficiency in eateries. The result supports Ogundare (2025), who found that transformational leadership enhances performance through motivation, commitment, and teamwork. Therefore, eateries in Calabar can improve performance by adopting leadership approaches that encourage employee involvement, innovation, and effective coordination.

1.9 CONCLUSION

The study examined the effect of leadership styles on the operational efficiency of eateries in Calabar, Cross River State. The findings revealed that leadership styles significantly influence operational efficiency, with transformational, servant, participative, situational, and transactional leadership having positive effects on performance outcomes. However, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles negatively affected operational efficiency due to reduced employee involvement and weak coordination. The study concludes that adopting supportive, flexible, and employee-centred leadership approaches is essential for improving service delivery, productivity, teamwork, and resource utilization among eateries. Effective leadership practices therefore remain critical for achieving sustainable performance and competitiveness in the hospitality industry

1.10 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are proffered;

1. Eateries should encourage transformational leadership practices by motivating employees, promoting innovation, and creating a shared vision that improves productivity and service quality.
2. Managers should adopt participative leadership approaches by involving employees in decision-making processes to enhance commitment, teamwork, and problem-solving.
3. Eateries should promote servant leadership behaviours by supporting employee welfare, professional development, and workplace satisfaction to improve performance.

4. Managers should apply situational leadership approaches by adjusting leadership styles according to employee experience, competence, and operational challenges.
5. Excessive use of autocratic leadership should be reduced because it may discourage employee creativity, lower morale, and negatively affect operational efficiency.
6. Eateries should avoid ineffective laissez-faire leadership practices by providing adequate supervision direction, and accountability to ensure consistent service delivery

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