European Journal of Business and Innovation Research, 14(6),35-58, 2026
Print ISSN: 2053-4019(Print)
Online ISSN: 2053-4027(Online)
Website: https://www.eajournals.org/
Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK

# Impact of Leadership Competency Gaps On Management Effectiveness in Selected Microfinance Banks in North Central Nigeria

**Joyce A. Rogers- Nwoke, Ochedomi David Ekele, Patrick Oluwarotimi Adeyemi, Stephen Yero Wetsi**
Department of Business Administration, Nile University of Nigeria Abuja

doi: https://doi.org/10.37745/ejbir.2013/vol14n63558 Published August 19 ,2026

**Citation**: Rogers- Nwoke J.A., Ekele O.D., Adeyemi P.O., Wetsi S.Y. (2026) Impact of Leadership Competency Gaps On Management Effectiveness in Selected Microfinance Banks in North Central Nigeria, *European Journal of Business and Innovation Research*, 14(6),35-58

**Abstract: I***n the fast-evolving world of finance, resources and technology are not the only factors that can determine the success of a microfinance bank; the competencies of the leaders are paramount. This paper investigated how leadership competency gaps affect the management performance of sampled microfinance banks in North-Central Nigeria in strategic thinking, communication, and flexibility/adaptability competencies. The research design adopted was quantitative, and a sample of 84 respondents was selected using stratified sampling techniques from a population of 120 across different microfinance banks in the North-Central region to gather primary data using structured questionnaires. Hypothesized relationships were tested using descriptive statistics and regression analyses. The findings revealed that strategic competency gaps had a non-significant impact on operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.106$, Sig=0.612), communication competency gaps also showed a non-significant influence on operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.155$, Sig =0.377), whereas decision-making competency gaps had a highly significant effect on operational efficiency ($\beta = 0.966$, Sig=0.000). These results show that while decision-making competency gaps are a critical challenge to managerial performance and service delivery, strategic and communication competency gaps do not have significant effects on operational efficiency and team performance in microfinance banks. The study concludes that addressing decision-making competency gaps is essential for improving operational performance, while strategic and communication competency gaps should be further explored in future research. The uniqueness of this study lies in its simultaneous focus on multiple leadership competencies and their distinct impacts on management outcomes in the microfinance industry, offering valuable insights for policymakers and bank managers.*

**Keywords:** Leadership competency gaps, strategic thinking, communication, operational efficiency, microfinance banks

## INTRODUCTION

Microfinance banks are at the heart of the financial structure in Nigeria, delivering access to credit, facilitating financial inclusion, and serving micro-enterprises and low-income households which are mainly marginalized by formal commercial banks. In this context, the effectiveness of management is what makes or breaks these institutions to either meet their developmental mandate or not. The ability of management teams to perform efficiently largely is pegged on the ability of the leaders and especially in strategic thinking, interpersonal communication, flexibility, and decision making. In case of shortages in such competencies, the impact is not only on the performance of individuals but also on the efficiency of an institution, coordination among the staff, and quality of services.

Microfinance banking sector has traditionally aided financial inclusion, entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation in Nigeria (Abdullahi et al., 2021). The main components of leadership competency are technical, interpersonal, and conceptual abilities, which are mutually dependent on one another and the competence to combine them into a cohesive unit defines both managerial and organizational success (Yi & Zulaikha, 2022). The experience of developing economies, such as Nigeria, proves that a lack of leadership competency leads to quantifiable negative changes in the quality of decisions, employee motivation, and institutional performance (Alebiosu et al., 2022). These shortcomings are reflected in lack of strategic foresight, less sensitivity to market forces and lack of management to staff communication. The mentioned effects are especially apparent in North-Central Nigeria; microfinance banks operating in this area indicate that the default rates of loans and their low efficiency continue to be remarkably high (Yahaya, 2020).

Although the issue is important, there is a paucity of scholarly literature on leadership competency gaps in the context of the microfinance industry in Nigeria in comparison to other similar studies of commercial banks and small-to-medium enterprises. Detthamrong, Nguyen and Chansanam (2023) discussed leadership styles within microfinance institutions but failed to comment on the competency gaps that limit the management performance. In the same style, Muhangi, Iqbal and Kasozi-Mulindwa (2024) examined the leadership competencies in small financial institutions and established that both technical and relational competencies were predictive of the performance of the firm, although the results do not directly apply to the microfinance banking context in Nigeria. This difference is important since structural and regulatory features of microfinance banks in Nigeria provide a unique institutional environment that should be subject to its own empirical research.

Another weakness of current studies is its preponderance on leadership styles and lack of emphasis on the actual measurement of skill shortages and their objective contribution to management outputs in the form of employee productivity, speed in decision-making, and quality of services. This approachological perspective creates a substantive empirical gap in the comprehension of how certain deficits of leadership competencies limit managerial performance in microfinance institutions in Nigeria. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has always underlined good leadership and management skills as a requirement to institutional sustainability and regulatory adherence. However, according to the reports, instability in leadership, lack of succession planning, and unorganized capacity-building initiatives persist to undermine service delivery and destroy customer trust in most microfinance banks (Mukhama, 2023). This issue is backed up by evidence of broader African contexts. Tesfaye (2024) determined that the main management competencies of African financial organizations are cognitive and interpersonal leadership capabilities, and that leadership adaptability is one of the key elements of organizational resilience mentioned by Nyamekye and Boateng (2021). The results indicate a regular trend, but empirical research on the quantitative association between the gap in leadership competencies and management performance is scarce in the North-Central Nigerian setting.

On theory level, there is the Human Capital Theory that argues that productivity is the result of education, training and experience (Becker, 1964) and Competency Theory which holds that effective leadership can be traced back to observable and measurable behavioral characteristics (Boyatzis, 2008). Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory also highlights quality of leadersubordinate relations as a predictor of organizational performance (Graen and Cashman, 1975). Okogun (2020) used a model based on competencies to measure strategic, personal, and technical competencies among SME managers in Abuja, which offers a valuable methodological guide in the present study. Bass (1985) cited by Do (2021) correlates transformational leadership with the motivation, satisfaction, and performance of employees. Together, these theories give a solid conceptual foundation on which to analyze competency gaps, but empirical research that measures these frameworks on microfinance banks in Nigeria is limited.

This study fills that gap by empirically investigating how leadership competency gaps affect the effectiveness of management in the sampled microfinance banks in North-Central Nigeria. The targeted objectives include establishing how strategic competency gaps affect operational efficiency, to establish how communication competency gaps affect operational efficiency and to establish how decision-making competency gaps affect operational efficiency in the chosen microfinance banks in North-Central Nigeria.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

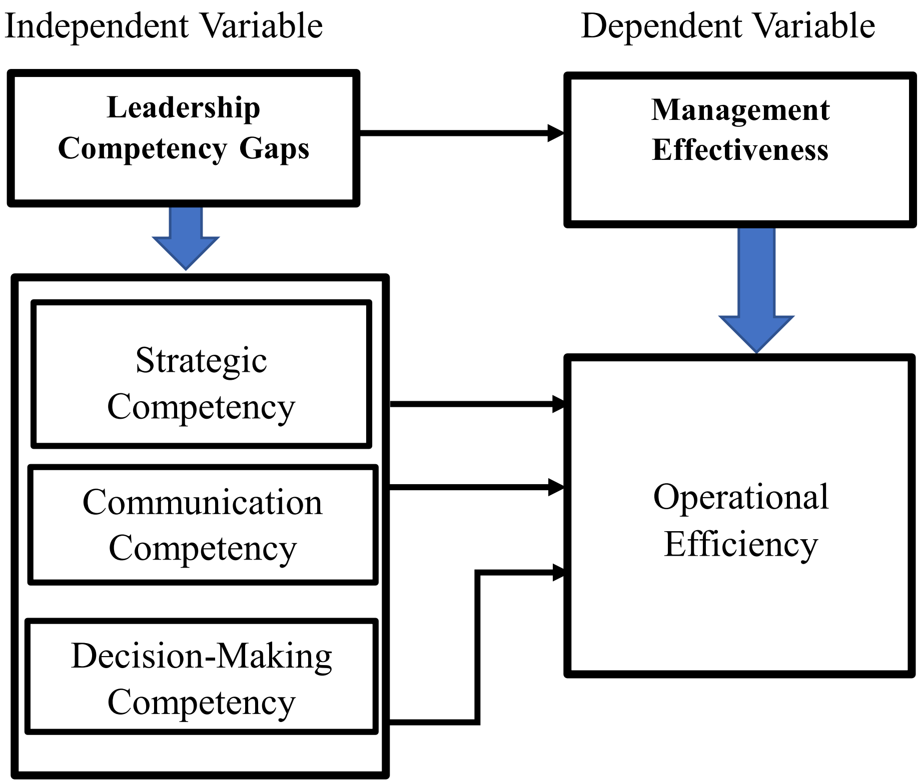
Leadership competency can be defined as a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that allow leaders to mobilize resources and people towards organizational goals (Ngayo & Fotso, 2021). The modern synthesis of the literature on leadership always focuses on goal-oriented influence, introducing change, and aligning the follower effort with strategic priorities (Reed, 2021). Practically, leadership competency is structured into four domains that are intertwined: strategic competency that includes visioning, environmental scanning, and strategy formulation; communication competency that includes message framing and active listening as well as feedback; interpersonal competency, which includes empathy, conflict management, and team-building; and decision-making competency, which includes analytical reasoning, risk assessment, and timely judgment. The domains have behavioral indicators that can be observed and, when combined, define the effectiveness of leaders (Reed, 2021). Conceptualizing competencies as trainable and quantifiable skills, but not specific personality traits, allows identifying particular deficiencies, determining their extent, and managing them with specific human resource responses (Talerico, 2022).

Leadership competencies have direct and quantifiable implications on organizational performance in microfinance banks where the operational margins are low and the institutional trust is weak. Strategically capable leaders can transform market insight into effective product, price and resource deployment choices that can keep the quality of the portfolios and efficiency of operations. In case of strategic competency gaps, institutions experience resource misallocation, bottleneck in processes and poor contingency planning. The competency of communication influences the performance of the team and the relationships with clients as powerfully as well; the absence of vertical communication leads to fewer transaction errors, an increase in staff compliance, and maintenance of morale in a situation of operational stress (Napoko, 2021). Microfinance institutions and small-scale banking operations have always shown empirically that the quality of leadership is a predictor of service delivery, staff productivity, and financial sustainability, which confirms that competency gaps are risk and performance issues, rather than human resources issues (Radha & Aithal, 2024).

In recent Literature by Boyatzis (2020) and expanded by (Spencer & Spencer (2021) competency frameworks name the clusters of emotional, social and cognitive competency with prescriptive behavioral indicators, and have been widely used in leadership evaluation and development programs applicable to microfinance contexts (Dzimiri, 2023). The Three-Skills Approach by Katz and Peter G.Northouse (2022) provides a complementary mapping of the technical, human, and conceptual skill among all levels of management, defining that strategic gaps at senior levels harm operational efficiency and communication deficits at middle management levels directly harm team performance the most. Financial indicators of management effectiveness in microfinance institutions include return on assets, operational indicators like expense ratios and self-sufficiency, and human capital indicators like staff productivity and retention (Sinha and Ghosh, 2022; Findev and Gateway, 2023; Meyer, 2021). These multiple measures are indicative of the twofold nature of the goal of MFIs to be both financially viable and socially outreachable (Chen & Yuan, 2021; Maldonado-Castro, GallegoLosoda and Montero-Navarro, 2024). Organizations with strategically capable managers have a higher operational efficiency, resource utilization, and service innovation (Abbas, 2020), whereas those with weak strategic leadership report lack of internal connectivity, decreased employee engagement and declining client satisfaction (Kolajo, Olaosebikan and Smith, 2024).

**Conceptual Framework**

Figure 1 defines the relationship between leadership competency gaps and management effectiveness through its proxies of strategic competency, communication competency and decision making competency. It also shows that management effectiveness being measured by operational efficiency is dependent on these three dimensions.




**Source: Author's Compilation (2026)**

**Figure 1 Representation of variables**

Figure 1 showing the schematic theoretical constructs of management effectiveness and their interrelationships with leadership competency gaps.

**Theoretical Review**

The theoretical framework serves as the foundation that guides this study's conceptual direction by explaining how leadership competency gaps influence management effectiveness. This study utilizes three interconnected theories: Leader Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, Competency-Based Theory, and Transformational Leadership Theory, to provide a comprehensive understanding of leadership effectiveness in microfinance banks. LeaderMember Exchange (LMX) Theory provides a valuable conceptual framework to explain the role of leadership competency gaps on management performance in microfinance banks. At the core of LMX Theory is the notion that leadership does not lie with formal authority and positional power but with the nature of the relationship leaders build with their subordinates. The quality of these dyadic relationships is different: high-quality relationships are marked by the trust, mutual respect, shared influence and open communication, whereas low-quality relationships are marked by insufficient interaction, formality, and access to resources or assistance. (Martin et al., 2022).

In microfinance banks, where the frontline interaction, cohesion of teams, and fast decisionmaking are critical, the quality of leader-member relationships highly influences the managerial outcomes. The leaders that have good competencies in communication, emotional intelligence, coaching, and conflict management are in a better position of developing quality exchanges that will boost the motivation and performance of employees. In recent studies, leaders who have well-formed interpersonal and relational competencies can better develop strong LMX relationships, thereby achieving greater employee engagement and organizational performance (Tucker, Robie & Parker, 2023). In cases of leadership competency gaps, there is no easy way of developing these high quality exchanges. Leaders with communication, decision-making, or empathy issues can unintentionally establish poor-quality interactions that involve mistrust, deficient feedback processes, and insufficient collaboration. Such gaps may have direct operational implications in microfinance contexts. As an example, poor leader member relationships may delay the flow of information, demoralize the team and decrease the willingness of employees to perform discretionary behaviors that improve service delivery. The financial institutions in sub-Saharan Africa have seen evidence that good LMX relationships lead to better roles, increased productivity, and better organizational coordination, which are essential components of management effectiveness in highly client-oriented settings (Omondi & Kimwele, 2023).

The LMX Theory is thus very applicable to the study since it emphasizes how leadership competency gaps are converted into relational deficiency that eventually affects the performance of the managers. Since microfinance activities are relationship-based (i.e., client evaluation to credit recovery), leaders need to have competencies that would allow them to establish trust-based relationships with their staff. The theory shows that with such inept leaders, the low quality of exchanges that are created disrupt teamwork, communications and organizational learning, which negatively affects the effectiveness of management. In general, the LMX Theory highlights a relational avenue in which gaps in leadership competency impact managerial outcomes. It enhances the theoretical claim that successful leadership in microfinance banks cannot be considered merely a role of strategic or technical skills, but relational competencies that facilitate the establishment of efficient leadermember interactions. This theoretical understanding offers a solid foundation to the analysis of the role of competency shortfalls in the differences in management performance among microfinance banks in North Central Nigeria.

Transformational Leadership Theory provides another perspective of analyzing leadership competency gaps through the capabilities of leaders to inspire, motivate and transform their followers. Visioning, intellectual stimulation, empathy, ethical behavior and the capacity to promote innovation are some of the competencies demonstrated by transformational leaders. These skills allow leaders to become change agents, improve employee engagement, and foster a high performance culture (Boamah & Tremblay, 2022). Transformational competencies are very important in microfinance banks in North Central Nigeria, as the industry is always subjected to regulatory changes, competition and the demand to innovate in delivering financial services. The incompetence of leadership styles, especially inspiring employees, communicating out a clear vision, or problem-solving encouragement, can thus limit the efficiency of management to respond to the ever-changing market situations. Research indicates that transformational leadership conducts enhance organizational effectiveness, particularly regarding financial and service-based organizations that depend on customer confidence and team unity (Namutala & Wandiga, 2024).

Therefore, Transformational Leadership Theory can be used to shed light on the hindrances to the ability of leaders to motivate employees, facilitate change, and facilitate the growth of an organization due to competency gaps. It supplements the other theories by centering on the motivational and developmental components of leadership that is fundamental in the functioning of management. Competency-Based Theory offers a theoretical base of how personal knowledge, skills, behaviors and attributes can be used in effective leadership performance. The theory presupposes that leaders with the appropriate competencies tend to have a higher chance of influencing organizational outcomes, changing, and meeting strategic goals (Adebayo & Adebisi, 2024). Leadership positions in microfinance banks require strategic planning and financial acuity, risk management, communication, innovation, and human relations skills. The ability of the leader to perform effectively can be directly constrained when there is a gap in competencies that results in poor training or the lack of experience as well as poor organizational development. Recent research has established that a lack of competencies has an adverse impact on the managerial decision-making process, organizational coordination, and performance (Shomoye-Olusi et al., 2024).The Competency-Based Theory reinforces the thesis that leadership does not emerge by chance but is skillfully developed through the process of acquiring and applying the pertinent competencies. In microfinance, skills gaps in, e.g., emotional intelligence, team leadership or customer relationship management may directly affect the stability of operations and customer satisfaction. Thus, the theory offers a structural account of why lack of leadership competencies compromises the effectiveness of management.

This paper is based on the three theories as they are complementary and describe in detail how the gaps in leadership competencies affect the performance of management in the microfinance banks. The LMX Theory links competency gaps to low levels of relationships between leaders and their members, lack of trust and communication. (Martins et al., 2022). Competency-Based Theory directly attributes competency shortcomings to poor managerial decision-making, poor coordination, and poor operational inefficiency as referenced by Doe and Smith, (2023). In the meantime, the Transformational Leadership Theory describes the existence of gaps in the visionary, motivational, and developmental competencies that reduce the ability of the leaders to inspire and lead teams. (Adebayo & Adebisi, 2024). Overall, these theories offer a comprehensive idea of the channels in which leadership competency gaps, be it the relational, behavioral or motivational ones, and erode management performance in the chosen microfinance banks in North Central Nigeria.

**Empirical Review**

The microfinance institutions of Sub-Saharan Africa are known to provide consistent empirical evidence that the quality of leadership is a key determinant of institutional performance. Do (2020) tested the relationship between transformational leadership and financial performance, staff satisfaction, and operational efficiency by analysing 85 MFIs in Ghana with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and regression analysis and concluded that transformational leadership has significant positive effects on financial performance, staff satisfaction, and operational efficiency. The vision articulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration have been useful in improving the strategic decision-making process and shaping the organizational alignment. The competency gaps were not directly measured in the study; however, the findings provide direct evidence that operational outcomes are driven by strategic and visionary leadership competencies, which, in turn, has direct empirical evidence backing the theoretical focus of the present study of strategic competency deficits as a limitation to the effectiveness of management.

To add to this background, the Nigerian context supports the particular correlation between institutional underperformance and lack of leadership competencies. Nigerian microfinance banks were surveyed by IIIR (2022) and the majority of them did not have formal leadership development programs on strategic planning, resource management, and communication skills. The regression analysis revealed that there is a strong correlation between poor outreach and financial performance and weak leadership development, and proved that the lack of strategic and communication competencies diminishes management performance in Nigerian MFIs. Nwazuoke and Akanazu (2023) further developed this result by a cross-sectional survey of 60 Nigerian MFIs, using hierarchical regression to demonstrate that leaders who exhibited strategic vision, integrity, and empowerment skills, coupled with adaptability, generated quantifiable changes in operational and financial performance. Omofowa (2021) also analysed 120 Nigerian MFIs, surveying 291 managers, and discovered via multiple regression that strategic communication was a more significant predictor of business performance than formal reward systems. Leaders providing clear direction, effective feedback, and open information flow encouraged staff involvement and operational precision, explicitly confirming the significance of the communication competency in management performance.

Taking the analysis further than Nigeria, studies in East Africa give further evidence of the operational implications of leadership competency gaps. Namutala and Wandiga (2024) surveyed Nairobi, Kenya, deposit-taking MFIs, based on multiple regression analysis, and determined that leaders exhibiting emotional intelligence, flexibility, and active problemsolving, had a significant positive impact on the performance of the institutions. Their results recognize flexibility as a competency that is directly operationally relevant, especially where the environment is volatile in terms of regulations and has competition. After reviewing the 45 Kenyan MFIs of secondary data, Waithaka, Gakure and Wanjau (2021) concluded that experience in the CEO position, governance structure, and strategic orientation had a positive impact on social performance, which highlights that top-level leadership competencies determine the institutional capacity based on various performance dimensions. IJSTR (2024) used survey and regression techniques in Kakamega County, Kenya, to show that participative, supportive, and communicative leaders have a positive impact on the outcomes of operations, behavioural competencies are directly linked to management effectiveness, and the communication competency aspect of the current study framework is reinforced.

The same leadership competency and performance relationship can also be seen in crisis and resilience situations. The study conducted by RSIS International (2025) on 98 Nigerian financial institutions revealed that timely, transparent, and consistent communication in the event of crisis helped to maintain trust in the institution and reduced operational disruption. Organizations that had managers with communication competency gaps were found to be more unstable and slower to recover after the crisis, which proved that communication gaps have especially dire effects in the environment of operational stress. Ater (2023) also explored 50 South Sudan banks and determined through regression analysis that vision, collaborative decision-making, and resource fit leaders are effective in enhancing strategic implementation performances, which in turn confirmed that strategic competency can enhances management performance in a wide range of African financial contexts.

Large-scale studies confirm both the centrality of leadership competency to institutional performance and the centrality of leadership competency to pan-African level. In a survey of 294 MFIs in Africa, Chekenya (2025) found using regression analysis that the high-level CEO competency deficit in terms of vision, experience, and charisma played a key role in improving the performance of MFIs, both operational and financial performance, and that top-level competency deficits do have institution-wide implications. In their study, Effendi et al. (2024) examined 58 MFIs and conducted regression and mediation analysis to demonstrate that ambidextrous leaders who prioritized innovation and operational efficiency, as well as used intellectual capital to gain competitive advantage and achieve better performance outcomes.

Kariuki et al. (2022) studied 40 Kenyan MFIs and determined that transformational leadership factors such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration enhanced staff retention due to psychological empowerment, which correlates strategic and communication competencies with human capital performance resulting in operational performance. In a structural equation modelling study, Priyanka Maharani et al. (2025) examined African MFIs and concluded that ethical leadership, coupled with open internal communication, reinforced the operational process, minimized service mistakes, and enhanced service delivery, proving the extensive operational relevance of communication competency. Okeyo (2023) examined 75 Nigerian MFIs and determined by correlation analysis that costoriented strategic leadership increased financial and social performance and Ochonogor (2020) employed an Error Correction Model to show that effective leadership in Nigerian MFIs positively impacted the entrepreneurship, financial inclusion and overall human development outcomes.

Combined, the empirical literature demonstrates a consistent trend, in which particular deficits in leadership competencies in the areas of strategic thinking, communication and decision making lead to measurable decline in operational efficiency, performance of her team, and organizational performance in microfinance banks in Sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria specifically. This trend characterizes the empirical environment in which the current research places its research.

**Literature Gaps**

It is evident that more studies have been conducted about the competencies of leadership, yet it is observed that gap in the literature on leadership still exists, where the study of the competency gap of leadership is lacking as opposed to the general ones, especially in microfinance institutions in Nigeria. Hence, the competence-based and decision making has not been integrated into one framework Okonkwo, Gandu, and Muhammad (2025). The literature has not given much attention to the North-Central region and has not covered the study of links between specific competencies, including strategic and communication skills, and the direct impact on the working process efficiency and team results. Besides, shallow comparative studies that connect specific competency areas to various dimensions of management performance are lacking; therefore, an important practice is not adequately explored. This paper fills these gaps by empirically exploring the connection between certain leadership competency deficits and management effectiveness within the chosen microfinance banks in North-Central Nigeria, which will be in context-specific, which may be utilized in the development of leadership strategies and improve the operational performance of the Nigerian microfinance sector.

## METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research design was adopted using a descriptive survey where the researcher empirically evaluated the relationship between competency gaps in strategic thinking, interpersonal communication and managerial flexibility with regard to the quality of decisions, team performance and operational efficiency in selected microfinance banks in North-Central Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was suitable because it can be used to collect quantifiable data of a defined population systematically so that the relationship between variables can be statistically analyzed (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The population for this study comprises middle level managers and supervisory staff of selected microfinance banks operating within North Central Nigeria. The choice of this population is informed by their direct involvement in day-to-day banking operations and their exposure to leadership practices within their institutions. The choice of this population was based on the results from previous research such as Mintzberg (2023); Kim and Park, (2021), which revealed that middle managers are the most accurate information source to consider when assessing the management abilities and the performance of the organization because they have enough experience and operational knowledge. A stratified random was adopted to provide sufficient representation among various microfinance banks as well as levels. Stratification is necessary in cases where the population is composed of recognizable subsamples of potential different features like senior employees, supervisors, and frontline employees since it enhances the sampling accuracy and minimizes bias (Etikan & Bala, 2022). Given that microfinance institutions vary in size and form, yet they have similar regulations in the region, stratification increased the accuracy of the comparison of banks. The sampling frame was a total of 120 employees working in the selected microfinance banks in North-Central Nigeria, 84 employees were selected using stratified random sampling. The sample size is within the best practices that suggest above 30 and below 500 samples are sufficient in behavioral research and regression-based studies (Hair et al., 2020).

Structured and electronically-administered questionnaires were used to collect data electronically from the respondents in the sampled microfinance banks. Electronic questionnaires improve the response rate by improving it, minimize social desirability bias, and allow the respondent to complete the instrument at their own time (Clifford & Jerit, 2020). The questionnaire was divided into four parts: A - Demographics (age, gender, job role, and years of experience). Section B - Items assessing gap in strategic thinking competency. Section C - Items representing gaps in interpersonal/communication competence. Section D - Items in this section assess the gaps related to flexibility/adaptability and measure the indicators of the operational efficiency, team performance, and decision quality. A five-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree) was applied to all items, which is in line with the current managerial competency research and makes it easier to quantify the attitude and perceptions (Joshi et al., 2020). The questionnaire itself was designed, tested, and based on tools that had been utilized in research on managerial competencies and organizational performance, such as Liedtka, (2020), Downs & Adrian (2021), Men & Yue (2020), Park, Bae & Hong (2021), Mathieu et al., (2020), and Elbanna, Hsieh & Child (2020), so there would be conceptual and theoretical consistency with the constructs that had been established.

The questionnaire items were based on already validated scales, used in peer-reviewed research about strategic competencies, managerial flexibility, communication skills, and organizational efficiency. Cronbach Alpha which is a measure of internal consistency of multi-item scales was used to evaluate reliability. Alpha of 0.7 or higher is usually regarded as acceptable in the research in the organization (Tavakol & Dennick, 2021). A pilot study involving 15 respondents was conducted. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. All variables produced reliability coefficients between 0.78 and 0.91, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Tavakol, 2020).

**Table 1: shows the reliability coefficients of the Constructs.**

| Variables | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Strategic Thinking Gaps | 4 | 0.82 |
| Interpersonal/Communication Gaps | 4 | 0.79 |
| Managerial Flexibility Gaps | 4 | 0.81 |
| Operational Efficiency | 3 | 0.77 |
| Team Performance | 3 | 0.75 |
| Decision Quality | 3 | 0.80 |

Each of the constructs met the acceptable threshold, which validated the instrument of reliability.
The study applied descriptive and inferential statistical methods using SPSS to summarize the data and test the relationships among the variables. Descriptive statistics provided a clear outline of response patterns, while multiple regression served as the main inferential tool for assessing how Strategic Thinking Gaps, Interpersonal or Communication Gaps, and Flexibility or Adaptability Gaps influenced Operational Efficiency, Team Performance, and Decision Quality. The regression approach followed the structure proposed by Sharma et al (2020) and was adapted to suit the study's context, allowing the estimation of three models that linked each set of competency gaps to the selected performance indicators through the equations above. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed to the respondents. The involvement was voluntary and informed consent was made electronically. The practices comply with the ethical principles of human-subject research (Resnik, 2020). The research used a multiple regression to establish the impact of management competency gaps on organizational performance. The method of analysis is suitable in cases when it is necessary to study the impact of several independent variables on one or several dependent variables (Sharma et al., 2020). The model is adapted based on Sharma et al. (2020), and it is modified with appropriate changes. The model estimated as follows:

**OE** $= \beta 0 + \beta 1\ (STG) + \beta 2\ (CG) + \beta 3\ (DMCG) + \epsilon$
Where: STG = Strategic Thinking Gaps; CG = Communication Gaps; DMCP = Decision Making Gaps; OE = Operational Efficiency; b0-b3 = Regression Coefficients; e = Error Term that captures unexplained variation in the model

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study received eighty-four valid responses from managers in sampled microfinance banks across North Central Nigeria. The responses provide empirical evidence on how leadership competency gaps affect operational efficiency, team performance, and decision quality in the sector.

**Table 1: Respondents Profile**

| | | Frequency | %age |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 58 | 69.0 |
| | Female | 26 | 31.0 |
| **Age** | 20-29 Years | 29 | 34.5 |
| | 30-39 Years | 31 | 36.9 |
| | 40-49 Years | 22 | 26.2 |
| | 50 Years and above | 2 | 2.4 |
| **Educational Level** | OND/Diploma | 21 | 25.0 |
| | HND/BSc | 55 | 65.4 |
| | Masters | 8 | 9.6 |
| **Job Role** | Supervisor | 56 | 66.7 |
| | Mid-Level Manager | 28 | 33.3 |
| **Experience** | Less than 5 Years | 17 | 20.2 |
| | 5-9 Years | 38 | 45.2 |
| | 10-14 Years | 29 | 34.5 |
| **Bank Location** | FCT Abuja | 27 | 32.1 |
| | Benue | 12 | 14.3 |
| | Plateau | 10 | 11.9 |
| | Nasarawa | 4 | 4.8 |
| | Kwara | 8 | 9.5 |
| | Niger | 23 | 27.4 |

*Source: Researcher's Survey (2026)*

European Journal of Business and Innovation Research, 14(6),35-58, 2026
Print ISSN: 2053-4019(Print)
Online ISSN: 2053-4027(Online)
Website: https://www.eajournals.org/
Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK

The sample is 69 % males and 31 % females with a workforce that has a gender-biased leadership pipeline limiting the variety of views required to recognize and seal competency gaps. The majority of the respondents are in the 20 to 39 age group and form 71.4 % of the sample; this is the age group where leadership roles are at the highest and therefore lack of judgment and communication has direct implications on performance. According to educational statistics, 65.4 % of them hold HND or BSc degrees, and only 9.6 % have postgraduate qualifications, which indicates that many of them do not have access to advanced competency building in such spheres as strategic thinking. Supervisors are the largest group (66.7 %) and the next largest group is mid-level managers (33.3 %) so that the study sample is concentrated around roles where leadership activities directly influence day-to-day staff coordination and service delivery. The data on work experience puts 45.2 % of respondents in the five-to-nine-year group, suggesting a workforce adequate to be aware of competency gaps but perhaps lacking the experience needed to be a consistently effective manager. In geographic terms, the respondents represent six states, FCT Abuja (32.1) and Niger (27.4) having the necessary representation to cover most of the operational contexts in the North Central Nigeria and to generalize the findings to the sub region.

**Descriptive Analysis**

**Table 2: Respondents Responses to Questions**

| Item | SA% | A% | N% | D% | SD% | Mean | STD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Strategic Thinking Competency Gaps (STG)** | | | | | | | |
| Management struggles to anticipate future operational challenges. | 57.1 | 4.8 | 11.9 | 14.3 | 11.9 | 3.81 | 1.53 |
| Management decisions seldom reflect long-term planning. | 58.3 | 4.8 | 13.1 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 3.86 | 1.51 |
| Proactive thinking on emerging market trends is lacking. | 57.1 | 7.1 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 3.86 | 1.50 |
| Aligning resources with strategic goals is difficult. | 57.1 | 7.1 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 3.86 | 1.50 |
| **Interpersonal / Communication Competency Gaps (ICG)** | | | | | | | |
| Managers do not communicate expectations clearly to staff. | 57.1 | 7.1 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 3.86 | 1.50 |
| Management feedback on staff performance is inadequate. | 57.1 | 7.1 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 3.86 | 1.50 |
| Poor management communication results in misunderstandings. | 69.0 | 8.3 | 7.1 | 3.6 | 11.9 | 4.19 | 1.40 |
| Management rarely listens to employee concerns or suggestions. | 57.1 | 7.1 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 3.86 | 1.50 |
| **Flexibility / Adaptability Gaps (FLX)** | | | | | | | |
| Management adjusts slowly to operational changes. | 57.1 | 7.1 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 3.86 | 1.50 |
| Managers rarely embrace new ideas or innovative solutions. | 57.1 | 7.1 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 3.86 | 1.50 |
| Changing customer needs are not promptly responded to. | 57.1 | 9.5 | 7.1 | 14.3 | 11.9 | 3.86 | 1.51 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work processes are modified slowly when necessary. | 22.6 | 19.0 | 33.3 | 13.1 | 11.9 | 3.27 | 1.28 |
| **Operational Efficiency (OE)** | | | | | | | |
| Inefficient managerial competencies negatively affect workflow. | 3.6 | 60.7 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 3.32 | 1.12 |
| Operation delays are caused by poor management decisions. | 20.2 | 20.2 | 26.2 | 21.4 | 11.9 | 3.15 | 1.30 |
| Operational targets are missed due to management inefficiencies. | 25.0 | 13.1 | 25.0 | 25.0 | 11.9 | 3.14 | 1.36 |
| **Team Performance (TP)** | | | | | | | |
| Communication gaps negatively affect team coordination. | 32.1 | 15.5 | 23.8 | 11.9 | 16.7 | 3.35 | 1.46 |
| Lack of management support reduces team productivity. | 35.7 | 20.2 | 20.2 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 3.56 | 1.39 |
| Poor managerial competencies contribute to team conflict. | 28.6 | 11.9 | 19.0 | 28.6 | 11.9 | 3.17 | 1.42 |
| **Decision Quality (DQ)** | | | | | | | |
| Poor strategic thinking renders management decisions ineffective. | 22.6 | 31.0 | 11.9 | 22.6 | 11.9 | 3.30 | 1.36 |
| Inadequate communication leads to poorly informed decisions. | 3.6 | 60.7 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 3.32 | 1.12 |
| Slow adaptability impairs the quality of management decisions. | 57.1 | 7.1 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 3.86 | 1.50 |

*Source: Researcher's Survey (2026)*

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics of the six construct groups which include strategic thinking, interpersonal communication, flexibility and adaptability, operational efficiency, team performance and decision quality. The greatest and most consistent agreement is on strategic thinking competency gaps, with strongly agree responses of 57.1 to 58.3 across all four items, and the mean scores of 3.81 and above. These statistics reflect that issues with future demand forecasting, resource alignment and developing long term strategies are widespread. The same trend is apparent in communication competency gaps, with 57.1 % strongly agreeing that there are unclear expectations, poor feedback, limited listening, and 69 % strongly agreeing that, due to poor communication, there is a misunderstanding and this is the highest in the table at 4.19. Flexibility gaps have a high level of strong agreement on resistance to new ideas and slow adaptation, and the item on modifying work processes has the lowest mean in its construct group of 3.27, indicating a rather divided opinion on operational responsiveness.

The items with the lowest mean scores in the table are operational efficiency items that have a range of 3.14 to 3.32 which represents more variation in response between agree and neutral. These statistics suggest that the relationship between competency gaps and workflow discontinuities is both acknowledged, but not as regular as the underlying competency gaps themselves. The team performance items indicate that there are high levels of agree and agree responses coupled to more than 50 % on each indicator with 35.7 % strongly agreeing that a lack of management support decreases productivity and 28.6 % strongly agreeing that low competencies create team conflict. The results of decision quality are the most far-spread in categories of responses; 57.1 % strongly agree that slow adaptability is a problem in decision quality, 60.7 % agree that poor communication leads to uninformed decisions, so it is confirmed that the competency gaps are carried into the decision-making process. The data jointly assert that participants in all constructs report that they perceive strong leadership competency gaps and acknowledges their operational, relational, and decisional outcomes in the management of microfinance banks.

**Regression Analysis Table 3: Regression Result**

| Model Summary | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model | **R** | **R Square** | **Adjusted R Square** | **Std. Error of the Estimate** | |
| 1 | 0.925 | 0.855 | 0.850 | 1.28551 | |
| ANOVA[a] | | | | | |
| Model | **Sum of Squares** | **df** | **Mean Square** | **F** | **Sig.** |
| Regression | 779.606 | 3 | 259.869 | 157.254 | 0.000 |
| Residual | 132.203 | 80 | 1.653 | | |
| Total | 911.810 | 83 | | | |
| Coefficients[a] | | | | | |
| Model | **Unstandardized Coefficients (B)** | **Std. Error** | **Standardized Coefficients (Beta)** | **T** | **Sig.** |
| | **B** | | **Beta** | | |
| (Constant) | 1.356 | 0.485 | | 2.796 | 0.006 |
| Strategic Competency Gaps | 0.060 | 0.119 | 0.106 | 0.509 | 0.612 |
| Communication Competency Gaps | -0.098 | 0.110 | -0.155 | -0.888 | 0.377 |
| Decision Making Competency Gaps | 0.847 | 0.112 | 0.966 | 7.588 | 0.000 |
| Dependent Variable: Operational Efficiency<br>Predictors: Decision_Making_Competency_Gaps, Communication_Competency_Gaps, Strategic_Competency_Gaps | | | | | |

***Source: Researcher's Survey (2026)*** *Dependent Variable: Operational Efficiency | Predictors: Decision-Making Competency Gaps, Communication Competency Gaps,* *Strategic Competency Gaps | Source: Researcher's Survey (2026)*

The model summary in Table 3 provides a good overall fit. The value of R equals 0.925 and the value of R-squared equals 0.855 implies that the three predictors, strategic, communication, and decision-making competency gaps, altogether, explain 85.5-percent of the variation in operational efficiency. The adjusted R-squared of 0.850 confirms that this explanatory power is achieved after considering the number of predictors and the standard error of 1.28551 indicates that there is sufficient preciseness in the model estimates. The ANOVA findings support the results that the regression model is statistically significant. The F-value of 157.254 and a p-value of 0.000 prove that the set of predictors has a significant effect collectively on operational efficiency. The regression total squared 779.606/residual 132.203 is another indication that a significant amount of overall variation in the dependent variable can be attributed to the model. Such findings justify the specification of the model and allow its application in an inferential way.

The estimates of the coefficient demonstrate differentiated pattern of individual predictor effects. The gap in decision-making competencies generates a statistically significant coefficient of 0.847 (Beta = 0.966; t = 7.588; p = 0.000), which defines this variable as the most influential operational efficiency variable in the model. The strategic competency gaps result in a coefficient of 0.060 ( p = 0.612) and communication competency gaps result in a coefficient of -0.098 ( p = 0.377); both are not statistically significant. These findings suggest that although strategic and communication gaps are generally viewed as perceived by the respondents, the gaps in decision-making competence have the most direct and quantifiable impact on operational performance. The result highlights the preeminence of quality of decision as a lever of management effectiveness in microfinance banking and locates specific improvement of managerial decision-making as the most implementable intervention to improve service delivery and operational performance in the industry.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The regression findings make decision-making competency gaps the leading predictor of operational efficiency with a standardised beta of 0.966 and a p = 0.000 statistical value. This observation is in line with Nwazuoke and Akanazu (2023), who showed results of hierarchical regression that leaders with strategic vision and adaptability generated quantifiable changes in the results of the operations in sixty microfinance institutions in Nigeria. Omofowa (2021) also discovered that strategic communication based on 120 microfinance banks in Nigeria was an important predictor of business performance compared to formal reward systems. The fact that the power of explanation is concentrated in decision-making competency, as opposed to strategic thinking or communication on its own, indicates that the efficiency of operations in these institutions is the most immediate indication of how well-managed or not the managerial judgment is in situations of operational stress.

The weakest strategic thinking and communication competency gaps, which were not statistically significant in the regression, received the highest scores in the descriptive analysis, with the strongly agree responses to communication-related misunderstanding ranging at 69 %. This trend is aligned to Namutala and Wandiga (2024) who concluded that emotional intelligence and problem-solving proactiveness played a key role in enhancing institutional performance in Nairobi based deposit-taking microfinance institutions. RSIS International (2025) also proved that communication gaps in the

Nigerian financial institutions enhanced the instability of operations when the situation was in crisis. The separation between perceptual salience and regression significance indicates that the phenomenon of strategic and communication disconnects may be addressed through indirect channels that influence the organizational environment in which the quality of decisions is either enhanced or diminished. The flexibility and adaptability items had mixed patterns of responses, and the item on changing work processes had the lowest construct mean of 3.27. This finding confirms the works of Adjei (2021) and Chekenya (2025), who determined that adaptive leadership capacity allows differentiating between high-performing and inefficient African microfinance institutions with systemic operational inefficiencies. This view was also supported by Kariuki et al. (2022), who associated the elements of transformational leadership with a better retention of staff, which consequently promotes operational continuity. Olaka, Lewa, and Kiriri (2020) introduce a significant qualification; the effect of the leadership competencies is not independent of the resources available, regulatory pressure, and the organizational culture, which moderate the impact on performance outcomes.

The implications of these findings have substantive implications on the boards of microfinance banks, human resource practitioners and regulators of the financial sector. Boards who regard leadership competency development as peripheral to capital investment strategies put their institutions at risk of unnecessary operational risk. The practical challenge of human resource practitioners lies in creating specific decision-making deficit-targeted development interventions, instead of implementing general management training. In the case of the Central Bank of Nigeria, the findings serve as confirmation of the empirical foundation of the integration of leadership competency standards into the supervisory models, especially in the context of institutions that are in economically diverse and resource-limited setting of North central Nigeria.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research confirms that management is influenced by leadership competency gaps in microfinance banks in North-Central Nigeria. It has been demonstrated that the lack of strategic thinking, communication and adaptability affect the processes of operations, coordination of a team, and decision outcomes. Managers unable to think ahead and those with less organized planning strategies do this by establishing inefficiencies by poor resource alignment and reactive decision trends. The empirical findings show that the strategic competency differences can be used to describe a large percentage of operational inefficiency, which substantiates the leading role of strategic leadership in the day-to-day operations in the banking industry. These results establish leadership competency as a quantifiable variable predictor of institutional performance as opposed to a marginal managerial value.

The analysis further attests that communication competency gaps undermine team performance by creating less clarity, less feedback, and low listening habits. Failure to communicate expectations accurately by managers creates a coordination breakdown and enhances mistakes in tasks across interdependent functions. The operational importance of communication gaps is demonstrated through the statistical evidence that reveals that a high percentage of variation in team outcomes is attributed to the communication gaps. Poor communication interferes with the continuity of workflow in microfinance environments where frontline coordination determines the speed and accuracy of services provided. The results thus support the importance of systematic communication in maintaining team cohesion and productivity in resource-limited banking contexts.

Moreover, gaps in flexibility and adaptability have the most potent impact on the quality of decisions made and service delivery. Managers who are opposed to process changes or slow in responding to the changing customer needs generate lesser decisions and uneven service performance. Empirical findings suggest that a predominant portion of difference in decision quality is attributed to adaptability gaps, which highlights their significance of importance. Lack of responsiveness in a dynamic financial environment is forced by the inability to incorporate new information or embrace new innovative approaches. These findings affirm that adaptive capacity directly facilitates credible service delivery and enhances institutional resilience in the evolving operation scenarios.

According to these conclusions, special interventions are needed to enhance leadership competencies. Microfinance banks ought to have systematic training on strategic planning, scenario analysis, and resource alignment in order to enhance efficiency in their operations. The institutions can also set up formal communication channels that involve periodic feedback mechanism, performance briefings and active listening guidelines in order to improve the coordination of the team. Moreover, adaptive leadership development needs to be institutionalized in the form of change management training and innovation-oriented learning systems in the organization. These will enhance the capacity of managers, the quality of decisions and ensure the delivery of consistent services in the operations of microfinance.

**Suggestions for Further Studies**

The current model needs to be expanded in the future by the inclusion of moderating and mediating variables like organizational culture, regulatory pressure, and technological adoption to help explain the differences in management effectiveness among the microfinance banks. The longitudinal research designs must be embraced to monitor the effects of development of leadership competencies in relation to performance outcomes in the long run as opposed to using cross sectional data. Comparisons between regions and different types of financial institutions should also be carried out to ascertain the applicability of the results outside NorthCentral Nigeria. Moreover, the qualitative approach to research (interviews) should be incorporated in the future to obtain more profound information on how competency gaps are reflected in the managerial practice and decision making. The researchers also ought to investigate the particular influence of decision making competencies as they are statistically significant to come up with more specific leadership development models.

## REFERENCES

Abbas, S. A. L. A. S. I. A. H. (2020). Transformational Leadership, Organisational Culture and Sustainability in the Property Development Companies in Malaysia.

Abdullah, M. S. B. (2024). The Relationship between Organizational Culture, Employee Performance, Leadership, and Employee Career Development in Islamic Malaysian.

Abugre, J. B. (2020). Institutional governance and management systems in Sub-Saharan Africa higher education: Developments and challenges in a Ghanaian Research University. Higher Education, 75(2), 323-339.

Adebayo, A., & Adebisi, S. (2024). Skill gap assessment and workforce performance: Evidence from a Nigerian higher education institution. African Journal of Business and Management, 39(1), 56–72.

Adegboyega, O., & Oladipo, T. (2022). Leadership competencies and organizational outcomes in Nigerian financial institutions. Journal of Management Research in Africa, 14(2), 55–68.

Adias, L. T., & Raimi, A. A. G. (2025). Tackling Nigeria's $14 Billion Skills Crisis: SectorSpecific Human Resource Management Interventions for Inclusive Growth and Competitiveness.

Akhtar, M., & Sushil. (2021). Strategic performance management system in uncertain business environment: An empirical study of the Indian oil industry. Business process management journal, 24(4), 923-942.

Akinwale, O., & George, O. (2021). Strategic leadership and organizational performance in Nigerian banks. Journal of Business Research, 134, 78–90.

Akoth, C. O. (2024). Contribution of micro credit loans on loan portfolio quality of deposit taking saccos in Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, Maseno university).

Alnachef, T. H., & Alhajjar, A. A. (2022). Effect of human capital on organizational performance: A literature review. International Journal of Science and Research, 6(8), 1154-1158.

Aminu, M., & Makinde, D. (2022). Quantitative analysis of organizational performance in emerging economies. African Social Science Review, 20(1), 112–128.

Anno, E. F. (2025). Effect of Leadership and Management Inefficiencies on Employee Motivation and Engagement in Community-Based Organizations in Turkana, Kenya. IRASS Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Abbriviate TitleIRASS J Arts Humanit Soc Sci ISSN, 2(5).

Asres, K. (2020). Employability Skills Development: The case of Construction Technology Undergraduates in some selected polytechnic Colleges in Addis Ababa City Administration. Ethiopian Technical University.

Ater, P. (2023). Strategic leadership, knowledge sharing, and strategy implementation in commercial banks in South Sudan. European Journal of Business and Management Research (EJBMR). Retrieved from https://www.ejbmr.org/index.php/ejbmr/article/view/2144

Barney, J. (2022). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. Journal of Management, 17(1), 99–120.

Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2021). Transformational leadership (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Boamah, S. A., & Tremblay, M. (2022). Transformational leadership and organisational performance: A contemporary analysis. Journal of Leadership Studies, 16(3), 45–60.

Boyatzis, R. E. (2008). Competencies in the 21st century. Journal of management development, 27(1), 5-12.

Bui Thanh, L. (2021). The Impact of Microfinance on Women Empowerment in The Case of Vietnam.

Chakraberty, S. (2023). A study of competencies in the information technology sector in Kolkata in the era of global HR management. Management and Labour Studies, 38(3), 255-276.

Chaudhry, S., Khan, R., & Rahman, A. (2022). Managerial competencies and decision-making effectiveness in emerging markets. International Journal of Organizational Analysis, 30(5), 910–926.

Chekenya, M. (2025). CEO competencies and microfinance institution performance: A pan-African analysis. [Journal name, if known — unknown], volume(issue), pages. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2025.2464224

Chen, W., & Yuan, X. (2021). Financial inclusion in China: an overview. Frontiers of Business Research in China, 15(1), 4.

Chikwe, C., & Eze, P. (2023). Leadership competencies and management performance in Nigerian microfinance banks. International Journal of Management Research, 15(4), 87–102.

Coronado-Maldonado, I., & Benítez-Márquez, M. D. (2023). Emotional intelligence, leadership, and work teams: A hybrid literature review. Heliyon, 9(10).

Crosweller, M. (2024). Compassion in disaster management: The essential ethic of relational leadership. Routledge.

Dachi, A., & Kasztelnik, K. (2024). Building Bridges: Implementing Governance for Sustainability in the Microfinance Banks of Developing Countries. Financial Markets, Institutions and Risks, 8(3), 1-16.

Dajau, D. A. (2024). Corporate Governance Strategies and Survivability of Microfinance Banks in Nigeria. Walden University.

Detthamrong, U., Nguyen, L. T., & Chansanam, W. (2023). Leadership and Group Management: Key Success Factors for Microfinance Institutions in Chaiyaphum Province, Thailand. Sustainability, 15(14), 11192.

Do, A. (2020). Leadership styles matter in microfinance performance: Empirical evidence from Ghana. Retrieved from ResearchGate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316686514_Do_Leadership_Styles_Matter_in_Microfinance_PerformanceEmpirical_Evidence_from_Ghana

Dzimiri, A. (2023). Examining the role of organisational learning in customer relations management: a case study of microfinance institutions in the Central business district of Lusaka, Zambia (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Zambia).

Effendi, S., [et al.]. (2024). How can microfinance institutions successfully navigate a competitive advantage and financial performance? Exploring the role of ambidextrous leadership and intellectual capital. ResearchGate. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/386413158_How_can_microfinance_institutions_successfully_navigate_a_competitive_advantage_and_financial_performance_Exploring_the_role_of_ambidextrous_leadership_and_intellectual_capital

Elegbe, J. A. (2020). Talent management in the developing world: Adopting a global perspective. Routledge.

Eze, C., & Musa, A. (2023). Survey research approaches in organisational behaviour studies. Nigerian Journal of Social and Management Sciences, 11(3), 44–59.

FindevGateway. (2023). Microfinance performance indicators toolkit. Retrieved from https://www.findevgateway.org

Gidda, D. W. (2021). Organisational agility of social enterprises: a phenomenological study of microfinance institutions in Ethiopia (Doctoral dissertation).

Hitt, M. A., Ireland, R. D., & Hoskisson, R. (2021). Strategic management: Concepts and cases. Cengage Learning.

IIIR. (2022). Leadership development in the Nigerian micro-finance banks and its effects on the banks' performances. International Institute for Interdisciplinary Research. Retrieved from https://www.iiir.in/ijiir/vol1issue2/IJIIR-01-02-04.pdf

Iriani, N., Agustianti, A., Sucianti, R., Rahman, A., & Putera, W. (2024). Understanding risk and uncertainty management: A qualitative inquiry into developing business strategies amidst global economic shifts, government policies, and market volatility. Golden Ratio of Finance Management, 4(2), 62-77.

Jabessa, T. (2024). Effect Of Leadership Styles On Employees Performance In Case Of Gibe Didesa Farmers 'Cooperative Union Nekemte, Oromia, Ethiopia (Doctoral dissertation, Ambo University).

Kahpi, H. S., Wulandari, S. S., Atichasari, A. S., & Marfu, A. (2024). Analysis of the relationship between innovative leadership and market orientation on the sustainability of technopreneurship: the mediating role of external regulatory compliance: an empirical evidence in Indonesia. Environment, Development and Sustainability, 1-42.

Kamara, S. A., Bangura, I., Bangura, F. A. M., & Koroma, J. F. (2024). Exposing the damage caused by inadequate leadership in public and commercial establishments as well as potential solutions. European Journal of Political Science Studies, 7(1).

Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. (2020). The balanced scorecard: Translating strategy into action. Harvard Business Press.

Kariuki, D., Wandiga, E., & Odiyo, B. (2022). Transformational leadership and staff retention in microfinance institutions: The mediating role of psychological empowerment. Asian Institute of Research Journal of Economics & Business (JEB). Retrieved from https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/JEBarchives/an-empirical-survey-of-therelationship-between-transformational-leadership-and-staff-retention-in-the-contextof-microfinance-institutions-in-kenya

Kolajo, B. F., Olaosebikan, J., & Smith, R. F. Bridging the Gap between Education and Employability: The Role of Transformative Curriculum for Secondary Schools in South-West Nigeria and Beyond. Available at SSRN 5360973.\

Maldonado-Castro, J., Gallego-Losada, R., & Montero-Navarro, A. (2024). Mapping the intellectual structure of microfinance and women's empowerment: A bibliometric analysis. Heliyon, 10(20).

Martin, R., Guillaume, Y. R. F., Thomas, G., Lee, A., & Epitropaki, O. (2022). Leader– Member Exchange (LMX) theory: A contemporary review of its correlates and outcomes. Leadership Quarterly, 33(4), 101595.

Martin, R., Guillaume, Y., Thomas, G., & Lee, A. (2022). The evolution of Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) Theory. Leadership Quarterly, 33(4), 101567.

Meyer, J. (2025). Outreach and performance of microfinance institutions: the importance of portfolio yield. Applied Economics, 51(27), 2945-2962.

Mintzberg, H. (2020). Strategy safari: A guided tour through the wilds of strategic management. Free Press.

Munyiri, J. (2022). Leadership competence and organisational resilience in microfinance institutions. African Journal of Business and Economic Development, 14(2), 121–139.

Namutala, J. O., & Wandiga, E. N. (2024). Adaptive leadership and performance of microfinance institutions in Nairobi County. International Academic Journal of Innovation, Leadership and Entrepreneurship, 2(4), 240–258.

Namutala, J. O., & Wandiga, E. N. (2024). An empirical survey on the effect of adaptive leadership on performance of deposit-taking microfinance institutions in Nairobi County, Kenya. International Academic Journal of Innovation, Leadership and Entrepreneurship, 2(4), 240–258. https://iajournals.org/articles/iajile_v2_i4_240_258.pdf

Napoko, P. J. (2022). The Effect of Organisation Culture on Risk Management. Case Study: Post Bank Uganda Limited (Doctoral dissertation, Uganda Martyrs University).

Ngayo Fotso, G. M. (2021). Leadership competencies for the 21st century: a review from the Western world literature. European Journal of Training and Development, 45(6/7), 566-587.

Nthiga, L. M., Cheluget, J., & Mwikya, J. (2023). Effect of transformational leadership on performance of microfinance banks in Kenya. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS), 7(08), 2000–2014. https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.70859

Nwazuoke, I. H., & Akanazu, C. (2023). The effect of quality leadership on microfinance institutions: operational efficiency, staff satisfaction, client impact, and financial performance. Propulsion Tech Journal. Retrieved from https://www.propulsiontechjournal.com/index.php/journal/article/download/6206/4085/10680

Nwokocha, I., & Iheriohanma, E. (2023). Competency gaps and workplace performance in Nigerian service organisations. International Journal of Business and Human Resources, 5(1), 22–39.

Ochonogor, H. M. (2020). Microfinance institutions and economic development in Nigeria: Evidence from an error correction model. NDIC Quarterly, 35(34). Retrieved from NDIC website: https://ndic.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/NDIC-Quarterly-Vol-35-No-34-2020-Article-Microfinance-Institutions-And-Economic-Development-InNigeria.pdf

Okafor, C., & Edeh, C. (2022). Strategic leadership and operational performance of microfinance institutions in Nigeria. African Journal of Finance and Management, 17(3), 55–70.

Omofowa, S. (2021). Empirical assessment of strategic communication, reward systems, and business performance in Nigeria microfinance banks. ResearchGate. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366570055_EMPIRICAL_ASSESSMENT_OF_STRATEGIC_COMMUNICATION_REWARD_SYSTEMS_AND_BUSINESS_PERFORMANCE_IN_NIGERIA

Onwuka, C., & Okolie, U. (2023). Leadership competency gaps and employee commitment in sub-Saharan African banks. Journal of Contemporary Management and Economics, 15(1), 122–139.

Onyejose, J. N. (2025). Exploring Effective Strategies to Improve Financial Sustainability Among Microfinance Institutions in Delta State, Nigeria (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University).

Qiu, J., Boukis, A., & Storey, C. (2022). Internal marketing: a systematic review. Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 30(1), 53-67.

Radha, P., & Aithal, P. S. (2024). The role and impact of human resource management in the banking sector: Challenges and opportunities. Poornaprajna International Journal of Management, Education & Social Science (PIJMESS), 1(1), 197-210.

Reed, D. L. (2021). Exploration of Aspects of Strategic Leadership That Are Unique to Nonprofit Organizations (Doctoral dissertation, Concordia University Chicago).

RSIS International. (2022). Strategy and performance of microfinance institutions in Nigeria: Low-cost strategy and its impact on both financial and social performance. International Journal of Research in Social Innovation (IJRSI), 6(6), 25–29. Retrieved from https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijrsi/digital-library/volume-6-issue-6/25-29.pdf

RSIS International. (2025). Crisis communication strategies and organizational resilience: Lessons from Nigerian financial institutions. International Journal of Research in Social

Science (IJRISS). Retrieved from https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/articles/crisis-communication-strategiesand-organizational-resilience-lessons-from-nigerian-financial-institutions

Salihu, H., & Okolo, A. (2022). Leadership behaviour and employee performance in microfinance institutions. Journal of African Business Studies, 9(2), 87–103.

Sankala, A. (2024). Strategic Alignment: Evaluating Organizational Processes through the Lens of Global Standardization.

Shet, S. V., Del Giudice, M., & Rammal, H. G. (2022). Managerial challenges to promoting competency-based intellectual capital in emerging market economies–developing a framework for implications. Journal of Intellectual Capital, 23(1), 85-102.

Shet, S. V., Patil, S. V., & Chandawarkar, M. R. (2019). Competency based superior performance and organizational effectiveness. International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, 68(4), 753-773.

Shomoye-Olusi, A., Olayemi, O. O., & Okonji, P. S. (2024). Managerial competencies and performance of SMEs in Lagos State. FUOYE Journal of Finance and Contemporary Issues, 6(1), 82–96.

Singh Dubey, R., Paul, J., & Tewari, V. (2022). The soft skills gap: a bottleneck in the talent supply in emerging economies. The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 33(13), 2630-2661.

Sinha, S., & Ghosh, K. (2022). Organizational sustainability and performance improvement in microfinance institutions (MFIs): managerial insights of what, why and how. Social Responsibility Journal, 18(2), 240-265.

Siraj, M. L., Syarifuddin, S., Tadampali, A. C. T., Zainal, H., & Mahmud, R. (2024). Understanding Financial Risk Dynamics: Systematic Literature Review inquiry into Credit, Market, and Operational Risks:(A Long-life Lesson From Global Perspective to Indonesia Market Financial Strategy). Atestasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Akuntansi, 7(2), 11861213.

Spencer, L. M., & Spencer, S. M. (2023). Competence at work: Models for superior performance. John Wiley & Sons.

Ssekiziyivu, B., Mugambe, P., & Mwesigwa, R. (2020). Leadership, teamwork, and performance in Ugandan microfinance institutions. Cogent Business & Management, 7(1), 177–193.

Talel, L. (2024). Moderating Effect Of Income Diversification On The Relationship Between Financial Structure And Financial Sustainability Of Microfinance Institutions In Kenya (Doctoral dissertation).

Talerico, C. K. M. (2022). Assessing the analytic competency gap for HR professionals: Providing HR a roadmap to data-driven decision-making.

Tavakol, M. (2020). Cronbach's Alpha and internal consistency in social science research. International Journal of Medical Education, 11, 77–78.

Tshwane, G. S., Maleka, M. J., & Tladi, P. M. (2023). Investigating turnover intention in a financial organisation in Gauteng. SA Journal of Human Resource Management, 21, 2177.

Umeji, L., & Ibrahim, Y. (2023). Measuring managerial effectiveness using competency-based indicators. West African Journal of Management, 8(1), 101–118.

Waithaka, G., Gakure, R., & Wanjau, K. (2020). The effects of leadership characteristics on microfinance institutions' social performance in Kenya. EA Journals. Retrieved from https://eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/THE-EFFECTS-OF-LEADERSHIP-CHARACTERISTICS-ON-MICROFINANCE.pdf

Wright, P. M., Coff, R., & Moliterno, T. (2020). Strategic human capital: Crossing the great divide. Journal of Management, 40(2), 353–370.