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**LEVERAGING STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP
FOR EFFECTIVE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT:
A CASE OF LOVEBITE BREAD INDUSTRY NNOBI.**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of strategic leadership for effective business development: A case of lovebite bread industry, Nnobi, Anambra State. Three research questions in line with three specific purposes with three null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was carried out in Nnobi, Anambra State. The population for the study consisted of 125 respondents, comprising key stakeholders such as employees, managers, and executives with a sample size of 95 respondents obtained using Taro Yemane's formula. The instrument for data collection was a structured Likert-scale and weighted questionnaire with a 35-item statement developed by the researcher titled "Strategic Leadership for Effective Business Management Questionnaire (SLEBMQ)". The instrument was validated by three research experts while the reliability index of 0.81 was established using Cronbach Alpha in SPSS. In analyzing the data collected, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the t-test was used for the null hypotheses. The result of analyses revealed that leadership by example influences the organizational culture of the Lovebite Bread Industry to a large extent as it is aligned with the company's mission and vision, leaders' actions and behaviors shape the organizational culture at Lovebite Foods and Beverages, it is extremely important in promoting an ethical work environment at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd. It was therefore recommended among others that more emphasis should be made by concerned individuals on leadership by example as seen as significant in influencing the organizational culture, and an awareness campaign should be made to emphasize the importance of continuous learning on the overall performance and growth of establishments in Anambra State.

Keywords: Strategic Leadership; Organizational Culture; Innovation; Decision-Making Process.

INTRODUCTION

Today's business environment is becoming more competitive than ever before. The ability to navigate complex market dynamics, manage resources efficiently, and drive innovation has become essential for businesses targeting competitive edge in the businesses. Therefore, strategic leadership, which involves guiding the organization toward its long-term goals while adapting to changes in the business landscape, has emerged as a critical factor in achieving the [objectives of sustainability and growth](#). Strategic leadership goes beyond traditional management practices by integrating a forward-looking vision with the ability to execute plans effectively. Ireland & Hitt (1999, pp 43-57). It encompasses the capacity to make informed decisions, inspire and motivate teams, and align organizational efforts with the overarching goals. Op.cit

For businesses, especially in the manufacturing sector, leveraging strategic leadership can significantly enhance operational efficiency, improve decision-making processes, and ultimately lead to sustained growth. Avolio & Bass (2002, pp20-30).

Strategic leadership, a critical element in achieving organizational success, is defined by the leader's ability to create a vision, align that vision with organizational goals, motivate employees, and execute strategies effectively. In the field of business management, strategic leadership integrates long-term vision with practical management to ensure sustained competitiveness and adaptability. This leadership approach is built around several core components, which directly influence business outcomes thus:

Visionary Thinking and Direction-Setting: Strategic leadership begins with establishing a clear, forward-thinking vision for the organization. Leaders articulate a direction that reflects the long-term aspirations of the company, taking into account future trends, market demands, and potential challenges. This vision provides a roadmap that guides all decision-making processes and informs strategic planning. According to Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson (2016, p.5), effective strategic leaders must anticipate future industry shifts and guide their organizations accordingly, creating opportunities and positioning the company for future success. In the context of business management, visionary thinking allows leaders to align their teams and resources with overarching business goals. For example, a strategic leader in a manufacturing company may foresee an industry shift toward automation and proactively invest in technology and employee retraining to maintain competitiveness.

Aligning Organizational Goals and Resources: Effective strategic leadership involves aligning the organization's goals, strategies, and resources to ensure cohesion across all departments and functions. Leaders must ensure that every part of the organization works toward the same objectives, from top management to front-line employees. Hitt et al. (2016, p.89) emphasize that successful alignment requires leaders to ensure that resources are efficiently deployed to support strategic objectives. In practical terms, alignment means ensuring that resources such as human capital, technology, and finances are allocated in ways that support the strategic vision. This coordination helps prevent resource misallocation and promotes efficient decision-making, key principles in effective business management.

Decision-Making and Risk Management: One of the most critical components of Strategic Leadership is the ability to make informed and timely decisions that drive the organization toward its strategic goals. Strategic leaders gather relevant data, assess risks, and consider internal and external factors when making decisions. According to Ireland and Hitt (1999, p.47), strategic decision-making involves balancing risks and opportunities while ensuring that decisions align with the organization's long-term vision. Effective decision-making in business management means balancing short-term operational needs with long-term strategic objectives. The ability to manage trade-offs and assess risks ensures that the organization remains adaptable and responsive to market changes.

Fostering a Culture of Innovation and Learning: Strategic leaders recognize that fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation is vital for long-term success. This involves encouraging employees to think creatively, solve problems, and engage in continuous improvement. Tushman and O'Reilly (1996, p.14) suggest that strategic leaders must create an environment that promotes both exploration and exploitation of opportunities, ensuring that innovation is a consistent part of the organization's culture.

In business management, innovation can lead to new products, services, or business processes that differentiate the company in the market. Strategic leadership in such organizations focuses on building an innovative culture and providing employees with the resources and autonomy to explore new possibilities.

·Inspiring and Motivating Teams: A core function of strategic leadership is to inspire and motivate employees to perform at their best. Leaders achieve this by communicating the organization's vision clearly and showing employees how their work contributes to the company's broader goals. As noted by Yukl (2013, p.109), effective leaders use a variety of techniques, such as recognition and incentives, to inspire and drive team performance. In business management, motivated employees are more productive, engaged, and willing to go above and beyond to ensure organizational success. Strategic leaders foster an environment of trust and empowerment, driving the overall success of the business.

The Lovebite Bread Industry, based in Nnobi, serves as a pertinent case study for exploring the impact of strategic leadership on business management. As a key player in the local bakery industry, the Lovebite Bread Industry faces various challenges, including fluctuation in market demands, intense competition, and the need for continuous innovation. In this context, understanding how strategic leadership can be utilized to overcome these challenges and drive the company toward long-term success is of great importance. This research seeks to examine the role of strategic leadership in enhancing business management within the Lovebite Bread Industry. By analyzing the company's leadership practices, decision-making processes, and organizational culture, the study aims to provide insights into how strategic leadership can be effectively leveraged to improve business outcomes. The findings of this research are expected to contribute valuable knowledge to the field of business management, particularly in the rapidly evolving global business environment where the importance of strategic leadership cannot be overemphasized. Organizations across various industries are recognizing that traditional leadership approaches, focused primarily on operational management, are no longer sufficient to navigate the complexities of modern business challenges. Strategic leadership, characterized by the ability to envision the future, make proactive decisions, and inspire innovation, has become a crucial element in driving organizational success and sustainability. Boal & Hooijberg (2001, pp515-549). The bakery industry, a vital segment of the food production sector, is highly competitive and subject to changing consumer preferences, economic fluctuations, and technological advancements. The bakery industry plays a significant role in the Nigerian economy: providing essential food products and employment opportunities; however, businesses within this sector, particularly Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), often face significant challenges such as intense competition, rising costs of raw materials, and the need for continuous innovation to meet evolving customer demands. Eniola & Ektebang (2014, pp75-86). Lovebite Bread Industry, located in Nnobi Anambra State, represents a typical example of an SME operating within this competitive landscape founded to provide high-quality bread products to the local community, the company has grown over the years to become a recognized brand in its region. Despite its success, Lovebite Bread Industry, like many others in the bakery industry, encounters challenges related to resource management, market expansion, and maintaining product quality. These challenges underscore the need for effective business management practices that can adapt easily to market changes and drive sustained growth. Strategic Leadership offers a potential solution to these challenges by providing a framework for making informed decisions, aligning organizational resources with long-term goals, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. The question therefore is could the application of Strategic Leadership in the Lovebite Bread Industry leads to enhanced operational efficiency, better market positioning, and improved overall performance. This research seeks to explore how Lovebite Bread Industry can leverage strategic leadership to enhance its business management practices. By examining the leadership strategies, organizational structure, and decision-making processes, the study aims to identify key factors that could contribute to effective management in the context of a dynamic business environment. The insights gained from this research could serve as a valuable reference for other SMEs in the bakery industry and beyond, highlighting the critical role of strategic leadership in achieving business success.

“Statement of the Problem”

In a dynamic and ever increasingly complex business environment where organizations face stiff challenges in maintaining competitive advantage and operational efficiency, the ability to anticipate future trends, make informed decisions, and align organizational resources and capabilities is often seen as a key factor in effective business management, a critical tool for navigating these challenges and achieving long-term success. Research consistently shows that a significant percentage of new businesses fail within their first five years. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and similar studies globally, 20% of new businesses fail within the first year. By the end of the fifth year, about 50% of businesses close down while only 30% remain operational after ten years.

Lovebite Bread Industry, based in the semi-urban town of Nnobi in Anambra State, serves as a pertinent case study for exploring the impact of strategic leadership on business management. Founded in 2019, Lovebite Bread Industry, as a key player in the local bakery industry, has against these findings, continued to grow rapidly into a world-class bakery with an installed capacity of 30tons of finished products per day and a distribution channel covering 11 cities in the Southeast, two states in the south-south, three states in the south-west and Benue State and Abuja in the north; operating in an era when the Industry is facing various challenges, including fluctuating market demands, intense competition, and the need for continuous innovation. In this context, whether leveraging strategic leadership to overcome these challenges has driven the company toward long-term success is the kernel of this study. Studies on leveraging strategic leadership for effective business management are extensive and cover multiple areas of leadership, strategy, and organizational effectiveness.

However, despite several areas in strategic leadership for effective business management have been explored, significant gaps remain, particularly in areas like digital transformation, cross-cultural leadership, and sustainability.

This study aims to fill this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of how leveraging strategic leadership has enhanced business management within the Lovebite Bread Industry, offering practical insights for similar organizations in the industry.

“Purpose/Objectives of the study”

The purpose of this study is therefore to explore whether leveraging strategic leadership has enhanced effective business management within the Lovebite Bread Industry in Nnobi.

Towards this purpose, the following specific objectives were sought:

1. To investigate the extent to which leadership by example influences organizational culture of Lovebite Bread Industry.
2. To examine how Encouraging Innovation can impact decision-making processes in Lovebite Bread Industry.
3. To evaluate the impact of Continuous Learning on the overall performance and growth of the Lovebite Bread [Industry](#).

“Research Questions”

Flowing from the above objectives, the following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. To what extent can Leadership by Example influence the organizational culture of the Lovebite Bread Industry?
2. How can Encouraging Innovation impact decision-making processes in the Lovebite Bread Industry?
3. To what extent does Continuous Learning impact the overall performance and growth of the Lovebite Bread Industry?

“Hypotheses”

The following hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance to guide this study.

- HO₁:** There is no significant difference between the opinions of new and old employees on the extent Leadership by Example influences the organizational culture of Lovebite Bread Industry.
- HO₂:** There is no significant difference between the opinions of new and old employees on How encouraging Innovation can impact decision-making in the Lovebite Bread Industry.
- HO₃:** There is no significant difference between the opinions of new and old employees on the extent Continuous Learning impact on the overall performance and growth of Lovebite Bread Industry

“Scope of the study”

Being a case study the Scope of the investigation is limited to the employees of Lovebite Bread Industry, Nnobi in Anambra state. The content scope covers Leadership by Example Influence, Organization, and Culture of the Lovebite Bread Industry; how Encouraging Innovation can impact decision-making processes, and the impact of Continuous Learning on the overall performance and growth of the Industry.

“Significance of the Study”

This study shall be of great importance to multiple stakeholders, including business leaders, policymakers, scholars, and the broader business community. The findings and insights from this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the critical role of strategic leadership in driving business success, particularly in the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria’s bakery industry.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A review of literature related to the research study was done in two parts –conceptual and empirical review. The materials reviewed included textbooks, journals, and lecture notes, sourced primarily from the Internet.

Finally, the Review was followed by the presentation of the Theoretical framework of the Research study.

“Concept of Strategic Leadership”:

The concept of strategic leadership has garnered significant attention in both academic research and practical business management due to its critical role in guiding organizations through complex and dynamic environments. This literature review examines the key theories, frameworks, and empirical studies on strategic leadership, its impact on business management, and its relevance to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) like Lovebite Bread Industry in Nnobi.

Strategic leadership is often defined as the ability to influence others in an organization to make decisions that enhance the prospects for long-term success while maintaining short-term financial stability. According to Ireland and Hitt (1999 p.44), strategic leaders are responsible for setting the direction, aligning resources, and creating a conducive environment for achieving the organization’s vision. This involves not only developing and implementing strategic plans but also fostering a culture of innovation, adaptability, and continuous improvement. House and Aditya (1997 p.460) further describe strategic leadership as encompassing both visionary and managerial roles. Visionary leadership involves setting the long-term goals and direction of the organization, while managerial leadership focuses on the day-to-day operations and the implementation of strategies. These dual roles highlight the importance of balancing visionary thinking with practical execution in ensuring organizational success.

“Strategic Leadership and Business Management”

The relationship between strategic leadership and effective business management has been widely explored in the literature. According to Rowe (2001 p.83), strategic leadership is a key determinant of organizational performance, particularly in turbulent environments. Leaders who can anticipate changes, make informed decisions, and mobilize resources effectively are more likely to achieve sustainable competitive advantages.

[Several](#) studies have demonstrated the positive impact of strategic leadership on various aspects of business management, including decision-making, resource allocation, and organizational culture. For instance, Boal and Hooijberg ([2001](#) p.521) emphasize that strategic leaders must be adept at managing paradoxes, such as balancing short-term performance with long-term growth, and that their ability to do so significantly influences organizational [outcomes](#). Additionally, the literature highlights the role of strategic leadership in fostering innovation and adaptability. Hitt et al. ([2007](#) p.25) argue that strategic leaders play a crucial role in promoting a culture of innovation by encouraging risk-taking, supporting creative initiatives, and ensuring that the organization remains agile in response to market changes. This is particularly relevant for SMEs like Lovebite Bread Industry, where innovation can be a key differentiator in a competitive market.

Challenges and Opportunities for Strategic Leadership in SMEs:

While strategic leadership is widely recognized as essential for organizational success, its application in SMEs presents unique challenges and opportunities. SMEs often operate with limited resources, making it difficult to invest in long-term strategic planning and leadership development. However, SMEs also benefit from greater flexibility and the ability to quickly adapt to changes, which can be leveraged through effective strategic [leadership](#). Studies by Wang, Walker, and Redmond ([2007](#) p.9) suggest that strategic leadership in SMEs is often concentrated in the hands of a few individuals, usually the founders or owners. This concentration of leadership has both advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, it allows for quick decision-making and a strong alignment between the vision and operational activities. On the other hand, it may result in a lack of diverse perspectives and resistance to change, which can hinder the organization's ability to innovate and [grow](#). The literature also points to the importance of leadership development in SMEs. Training and mentoring programs that focus on strategic thinking, decision-making, and people management can enhance the effectiveness of leaders in SMEs. According to Beaver and Jennings ([2005](#) p.15), investing in leadership development can lead to improved business performance, employee satisfaction, and organizational resilience.

“Strategic Leadership in the Context of the Bakery Industry”

Specific studies on strategic leadership within the bakery industry are limited; however, general insights can be drawn from the literature on strategic leadership in the manufacturing and food production sectors. The bakery industry is characterized by intense competition, low-profit margins, and the need for continuous product innovation. Strategic leadership in this context involves not only managing operational efficiencies but also driving innovation in product offerings, marketing strategies, and customer engagement. A study by Dawson and Andriopoulos ([2014](#) p.182) on innovation in the food production industry highlights the importance of strategic leadership in fostering a culture of creativity and experimentation. For companies like Lovebite Bread Industry, which operates in a highly competitive market, strategic leadership can play a critical role in differentiating the brand through unique products, quality improvements, and effective market [positioning](#). Moreover, the literature emphasizes the role of strategic leadership in managing supply chain complexities and ensuring product consistency, which is crucial for maintaining customer loyalty in the bakery industry. Effective strategic leadership can help SMEs like Lovebite Bread Industry to optimize their supply chain, reduce costs, and enhance overall business performance.

“Review of Empirical Studies”

This examined how various studies have collected and analyzed data to explore the relationship between strategic leadership and business management effectiveness. This section presents findings from different research works that have tested and validated the impact of strategic leadership practices on business performance, decision-making, and innovation.

“Strategic Leadership and Organizational Performance”

Several studies have explored the direct relationship between strategic leadership and organizational performance. For instance, Boal and Hooijberg ([2001](#)) conducted a quantitative study involving [200](#) organizations from the manufacturing sector.

They examined the role of strategic leadership in driving performance through adaptability, vision articulation, and managing human capital. Their findings demonstrated a positive correlation between strategic leadership and financial performance, with leaders who practiced foresight and flexibility having better long-term profitability.

A study by Waldman et al. (2004) investigated the influence of visionary leadership on firm performance in a sample of 100 technology firms. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), they found that visionary leadership significantly impacted firms' market value and innovative capabilities, suggesting that leaders who effectively communicate long-term visions encourage innovation and enhance competitive advantage.

Key Findings of the study show that:

- Strategic Leadership that emphasizes vision and adaptability positively impacts financial and market performance. Organizations
- With strategic leaders exhibit higher levels of innovation, which contributes to sustained competitive advantage.

“Leadership by Example and Organizational Culture”

Empirical studies have also demonstrated the impact of leadership by example on organizational culture. Kouzes and Posner (2002) conducted a survey-based study across 500 companies, finding that leaders who model desired behaviors foster stronger workplace cultures of accountability, trust, and ethical standards. This, in turn, positively affects employee motivation and commitment. In another study, Groves (2005) examined how transformational leaders influence organizational culture by leading through example. Using a sample of 250 mid-level managers in the healthcare industry, the research found that when leaders demonstrate the behaviors they expect from employees, it enhances employee engagement and creates a shared sense of purpose within the organization. This also results in lower employee turnover and higher productivity. **Key** Findings reveal that Leadership by example strengthens organizational culture by fostering trust, accountability, and ethical standards. Employees are more motivated and engaged when leaders practice what they preach, improving both individual and organizational performance.

“Continuous Learning and Decision-Making”

The role of continuous learning in enhancing decision-making processes has been highlighted in various studies. Garvin, Edmondson, and Gino (2008) conducted a longitudinal study in multiple industries and found that organizations where leaders emphasize continuous learning were more adaptable to changing market conditions. Their research involved interviews and performance data analysis from 300 organizations, revealing that firms that invest in leadership development and continuous education experience faster decision-making cycles and improved strategic outcomes. In a study by De Church and Marks (2006), the researchers explored how strategic leaders who promote a culture of learning impact team-based decision-making processes. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods across 30 organizations, they found that leaders who support learning create environments where employees feel empowered to contribute innovative ideas. This open environment enhances the collective decision-making capacity of the organization, leading to more informed and effective business. Major Findings show that Continuous learning promotes quicker and more effective decision-making processes, which allow organizations to adapt more rapidly to external changes. Leaders who foster learning environments encourage innovation, leading to better strategic decisions.

“Innovation and Organizational Competitiveness”

The link between strategic leadership and innovation has been empirically examined in multiple industries. Jansen et al. (2009) conducted a study on 170 companies across the telecommunications and software industries, focusing on how strategic leadership drives exploratory and exploitative innovation. The results showed that leaders who foster an innovative culture and provide the necessary resources for innovation initiatives had higher levels of product and process innovation, which in turn improved competitive positioning. In another study, García-Morales et al. (2008) analyzed the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational innovation in 350 Spanish companies.

The study used regression analysis to show that transformational leaders significantly contribute to both radical and incremental innovations. They concluded that strategic leaders who encourage innovation enhance the firm's ability to respond to competitive threats and exploit new [opportunities](#). [Key Findings](#) are that Strategic leadership is crucial in fostering innovation, which is key to maintaining organizational [competitiveness and Companies](#) with leaders who support exploratory innovation (new ideas and products) and exploitative innovation (refining existing processes) perform better in dynamic markets.

“Strategic Planning and Business Sustainability”

Empirical research also highlights the role of strategic leadership in the planning process to achieve long-term business sustainability. Mintzberg (1994) conducted case studies of organizations across different industries and found that leaders who effectively engage in strategic planning processes tend to improve their organization's adaptability and resilience in competitive environments. The study suggested that strategic planning, guided by visionary leadership, enhances the firm's ability to predict market trends, allocate resources effectively, and ensure sustainable [growth](#). [Similarly](#), Bonn (2001) used a mixed-method approach to explore the relationship between strategic leadership and sustainable development in multinational corporations. The study, involving interviews and financial analysis of 50 firms, found that companies whose leaders prioritize long-term sustainability in their planning are more likely to achieve both environmental and financial [success](#). [Key Findings of the Study](#) are that Strategic leadership that incorporates long-term planning ensures business sustainability and competitive [advantage just as effective](#) planning, backed by visionary leadership, enables organizations to anticipate market changes and allocate resources efficiently for long-term [growth](#).

“Summary of Review”

[The](#) empirical evidence reviewed in this section demonstrates that strategic leadership has a profound impact on various aspects of business management, including organizational performance, decision-making, innovation, and long-term sustainability. [The](#) review underscores the critical role of strategic leadership in driving effective business management, particularly in challenging and competitive environments, revealing that Leaders who model the desired behaviors, foster continuous learning, and encourage innovation position their organizations for sustained success. For SMEs like Lovebite Bread Industry, strategic leadership can provide the necessary guidance to navigate market complexities, foster innovation, and achieve sustainable growth.

“Gaps in the Literature”

While the existing literature provides valuable insights into the role of strategic leadership in business management, there are notable gaps, particularly concerning its application in specific industries and regions. There is a lack of empirical research on the impact of strategic leadership in the Nigerian bakery industry, specifically within SMEs like Lovebite Bread Industry. The unique challenges faced by SMEs in implementing strategic leadership practices, especially in the context of the Nigerian bakery industry, highlight the need for further research. This study therefore aims to fill this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of the extent to which leveraging strategic leadership enhanced business management within Lovebite Bread Industry, offering practical insights for similar organizations in the industry.

“Theoretical Framework”

This study is anchored on Ireland and Hitt's (1999), Strategic Leadership Theory, SLT. The Theory posits that leaders' ability to anticipate, envision, and maintain flexibility, and to empower others to create strategic change is necessary. According to the Theory, Strategic leaders ensure the alignment of the organization's vision with strategic objectives and create a dynamic environment that supports continuous learning and adaptation. This theory is central to the study as it directly relates to how strategic leadership can be leveraged for effective business management. The theory highlights the importance of visionary leadership and its role in achieving long-term success, a core aspect of the study's focus on Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.

Strategic Leadership Theory (SLT) focuses on the role of leaders in driving an organization's long-term performance and competitive advantage by making strategic decisions and influencing organizational culture. It suggests that effective leaders guide the strategic direction, adapt to changing environments, and ensure the organization's sustainability and growth. SLT integrates elements from leadership theory and strategic management, providing a comprehensive understanding of how leaders can affect not just short-term operations but long-term success.

“Key Aspects of Strategic Leadership Theory”

- 1. Vision and Direction Setting:** Strategic leaders are responsible for developing a compelling vision that motivates and guides the organization. They create a clear strategic direction that aligns with the organization's goals and mission. According to Ireland and Hitt (1999), vision is crucial as it provides the foundation for strategic decisions and is key to inspiring followers to pursue long-term objectives.
- 2. Balancing Short-Term and Long-Term Objectives:** Leaders must balance the need for immediate results with long-term strategic goals. This ability to manage competing priorities is critical for ensuring sustainable success. Boal and Hooijberg (2000) argue that strategic leaders possess cognitive flexibility, allowing them to focus on immediate operational issues while keeping an eye on future opportunities.
- 3. Influencing Organizational Culture:** Strategic leaders shape organizational culture, which, in turn, affects how strategies are executed. Leadership decisions, actions, and behaviors set the tone for the values and norms within the organization. Finkelstein, Hambrick, and Cannella (2009) suggest that leaders play a central role in embedding strategic values into the organizational culture, ensuring that employees' behaviors align with the company's strategic objectives.
- 4. Managing Resources and Capabilities:** A key responsibility of strategic leaders is resource allocation, ensuring that both tangible (capital, technology) and intangible (knowledge, skills) resources are efficiently used to achieve strategic goals. According to Barney (1991), effective leaders can leverage an organization's unique resources to build a sustainable competitive advantage.
- 5. Adaptability and Learning:** Strategic leadership involves being adaptive to external changes. Leaders must continually learn and evolve, encouraging a culture of continuous improvement. According to Vera and Crossan (2004), strategic leaders facilitate organizational learning, enabling the company to innovate and respond to changing market conditions.

“Criticisms and Limitations of Strategic Leadership Theory”

- 1. Complexity of Leadership Impact:** One criticism is that SLT can overestimate the direct impact of leaders on organizational outcomes. While leaders play a critical role, other factors—such as market dynamics, economic conditions, and technological changes—also influence performance. Strategic leadership's contribution may be difficult to isolate and measure accurately.
- 2. Overemphasis on Top Leadership:** SLT often focuses heavily on the role of top leaders, such as CEOs or senior executives, while underestimating the contributions of middle management and lower-level employees. This top-down focus may ignore how leadership is distributed throughout the organization (Yukl, 2013).
- 3. Leadership Style Variability:** Not all leadership styles fit every organizational context. SLT tends to emphasize certain traits and behaviors (e.g., vision, adaptability), but what works in one organization may not be effective in another. For instance, a highly innovative firm may require a more transformational leadership approach, while a stable firm might benefit from a transactional style (Bass & Avolio, 1993).
- 4. Cultural Contexts:** Strategic leadership theories have often been developed in Western contexts and may not fully apply in other regions with different cultural norms, organizational structures, or business environments. Leaders in different parts of the world may need to adapt their strategic approaches to local conditions (House et al., 2004).

Conclusion

Strategic Leadership Theory emphasizes the importance of leaders in guiding an organization toward long-term success through vision setting, resource management, and adaptability. It therefore offers a valuable framework for understanding how leadership influences strategic decision-making and performance. However, it is essential to recognize the limitations of SLT, particularly in terms of overemphasizing top leaders and underestimating other factors that affect organizational outcomes.

METHODOLOGY:

Methodology, according to Adepoju, (2003 p.47), quoted in Obi-Chukwuma, (2016 p.54), is 'a set of principles or technicalities which a scientific study follows to yield reliable results'. This research adopts a qualitative approach to examine the extent to which leveraging strategic leadership has enhanced effective business management, using Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd, Nnobi, as a case study. The methodology involves the following components:

- Research Design
- Area of Study
- Population of Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Instrument for Data Collection
- Procedure for Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

“Research Design”

Research Design is a researcher's agenda for scientific inquiry. In the opinion of Asika (1991,p.37) in Obi-Chukwuma (2016 p.54), Research Design means the restructuring of investigation aimed at identifying variables and their relationships to one another. It is an outline of the Scheme that serves as a useful guide to the researcher in his efforts to generate data".

The research is structured as a case study that focuses on the leadership strategies employed by Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd. The case study approach is chosen to provide in-depth insights into real-world applications of strategic leadership within the context of a growing food and beverage company. This Research is designed as a Sample Survey; a descriptive study in which only a sample (part) of the population, selected in such a manner that it is representative of the population, is studied, and the findings are usually generalized to the entire population. The relevance of this Design to the Study is that Surveys are more useful in measuring dominant public opinions, attitudes, or orientation. Again, Survey instruments can be used to carry out investigations in real-time settings. More so, the cost of carrying out a Survey is relatively low when considering the quantum of data generated as the Researcher can control his expenditures by selecting a low-cost type of Survey.

“Area of Study”

The Area of this Research Study is Nnobi, a semi-urban city in Idemmili South Local Government Area of Anambra State, Southeast Nigeria.

Nnobi is known for its local businesses including bakeries. Though it may be difficult to get the exact number of bread factories in Nnobi, Idemmili South hosts several markets and small enterprises. Bread production is a significant business in the region, supported by local bakeries across various towns including Nnobi. Anambra State itself is known for having numerous bakeries due to the high demand for bread with several quality bread brands.

“Population of Study”

Population is a group of people or objects about which a Researcher sets out to study and among whom findings of the Study will be generalized.

For this research, the target population is all staff of Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd, Nnobi, both old and new. According to data supplied by the Personnel unit of the Organisation, the population was 125 personnel including key stakeholders such as employees, managers, and executives.

“Sample Size and Sampling Technique”

Sample Size: A Sample size is the sub-set of the Population that is representative of the entire population (Wimmer & Domonick, 2011 p.56 quoted in Obi-Chukwuma 2016 p. 57). It is a microcosm of the population. Flowing from this, the researcher used Taro Yamane's formula to determine the Sample size with a margin error of 0.05; thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1+N(e)^2)}$$

Where

n=sample size

N = population (125)

e= marginal error (0.05 Or 5%)

125

N =

(1+N[e]²)

1 + 125 (0.05)²

125

=

1 + 125 × 0.0025

=

125

=

1 + 0.3125

=

125

1.3125

=

95.24

Hence, the Sample size (n) is approximately 95, assuming a 5% margin of error and this represents 76% of the population which is considered by the Researcher as appropriate for the study.

“Sampling Technique:

A stratified Random Sampling Technique was used in selecting the sample size.

This method enhances the reliability of findings as it ensures that sub-groups within the population are proportionally represented. The population was divided into sub-groups (Strata) based on their departments. Within each stratum, respondents were proportionally selected using random sampling which ensures that every member of each stratum/ department had an equal chance of being selected. The justification for choosing this Technique is that apart from ensuring equal selection opportunity, it minimizes bias, improves the accuracy of findings, and allows for more generalizable results related to the topic of discussion.

“Instrument for Data Collection”

The Primary Instrument for Data collection is the Questionnaire. The Researcher specifically structured the questionnaire with the questions, open-ended, and designed in a manner that they supplied answers to the Questions raised by the Research. The Questionnaire was divided into 2 parts; Part 1 was on the demography of the respondents, (4 items) while Part 2 had three sections. Section 1: Leadership by Example, (11 items), section 2: Encouraging Innovation Impact on decision-making processes in Lovebite Bread Industry (11 items), and Section 3: The extent to which continuous learning impacts the overall performance and growth of Lovebite Bread Industry (13 items). The 35-item questionnaire was designed to relate to each research question.

“Procedure for Data Collection”

The collection of data for the Research was done by the Researcher who administered the questionnaire to the respondents. To facilitate the process, the Researcher employed the assistance of two experienced Research Assistants.

Clarifications were made where needed. To ensure high response return, the respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

“Method of Data Analysis”

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including mean scores and Standard Deviation. For testing the hypotheses, a t-test was used, while the interview was analyzed qualitatively to buttress the result from the questionnaire. Data generated were interpreted using real limits of numbers as follows for research questions 1 and 2;

Mean Range		Decision Level
Very Large Extent (VLE)	=	3.50 – 4.00
Large Extent (LE)	=	2.50 -- 3.49
Small Extent (SE)	=	1.50 – 2.49
Very Small Extent (VSE)	=	0.50 -- 1.49S

For research question 3 criterion mean was employed to arrive at the decision level. This implies that items with mean scores below 2.50 were not to be Accepted, while items with mean scores of 2.50 and above are Accepted to the extent Leadership by Example can influence the organizational culture and Continuous Learning impacts on the overall performance and growth of Lovebite Bread Industry respectively. The data collected from the interview were qualitatively analyzed in essay format.

“Results”

The result of the study is presented below. This is based on 92 copies of the questionnaire collected after completion out of the 95 copies distributed. This represents a 96.84% return rate.

Research Question 1

To what extent can leadership by example influence the organizational culture of Lovebite Bread Industry?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the extent to which Leadership by Example can Influence the Organizational Culture of the Lovebite Bread Industry.

S/ N	Leadership by example influences the organizational culture as:	New Employee s N = 49 x ₁ SD ₁		Old Employee s N = 43 x ₂ SD ₂		Overall N = 92 x _G SD	
G							
1	Leaders at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd. Lead by example	2.9 1	1.0 7	2.6 9	1.1 0	2.8 0	1.09
2	Leadership by example influences the organizational culture at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	2.7 4	1.0 2	2.9 8	1.0 9	2.8 6	1.06
3	Leaders' actions and behaviors shape the organizational culture at Lovebite Foods and Beverages	3.0 2	1.0 2	2.9 1	1.0 9	2.9 7	1.06
4	Leaders at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd practice the values they promote	2.5 3	1.0 7	2.4 4	1.0 7	2.4 9	1.07
5	New employees model their behaviors based on the example set by leaders at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	2.8 3	1.0 5	2.9 5	1.0 3	2.8 9	1.04
6	Leadership by example helps to foster a cooperative and collaborative culture among employees of Lovebite Foods and Beverage Ltd.	2.2 8	1.0 1	2.2 6	1.0 2	2.2 7	1.02
7	Leadership by example is extremely important in promoting an ethical work environment at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	3.3 8	0.9 7	2.5 2	0.8 3	2.9 5	0.90
8	The leadership at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd is aligned with the company's Mission and vision.	2.5 8	0.8 5	3.4 3	0.6 9	3.0 1	0.77
9	Leadership by example builds trust and commitment among employees at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	2.5 5	0.9 8	2.7 6	0.9 1	2.6 6	0.95
10	New employees are motivated by how leaders At Lovebite Foods handle crises.	2.8 4	1.1 0	2.6 7	1.0 2	2.7 6	1.06
11	Leadership by example encourages a higher level of accountability and professionalism at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	2.7 3	0.9 7	2.4 9	1.0 5	2.6 1	1.01
Grand Mean/SD		2.7 6	1.0 1	2.7 4	0.9 9	2.7 5	1.00

Key: LE: Large Extent; **SM:** Small Extent; **SD** = Standard Deviation.

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (2024).

In Table 1, the mean scores obtained for the new employees on items number 1 to 5 and 7 to 11 ranged from 2.53 to 3.38, indicating that the respondents accepted that the listed leadership by example items influence the organizational culture of Lovebite Bread Industry to a large extent while item number 6 with the mean score of 2.28 denotes that the listed leadership by example item influences the organizational culture of Lovebite Bread Industry to a small extent by the new employees. Similarly, the Table shows that the mean score range of 2.52 to 3.43 is obtained for the old employees on items number 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10, indicating large extent perceptions while the mean score range of 2.26 to 2.49 obtained for the old employees on the rest of the items shows small extent perceptions accordingly. Thus, the overall (grand) mean score of 2.75 shows that leadership by example can influence the organizational culture of Lovebite Bread Industry to a large extent. Thus, the overall (grand) standard deviation score of 1.00 denotes the homogeneity of opinions of the respondents.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the opinions of new and old employees on the extent Leadership by Example influences the organizational culture of the Lovebite Bread Industry.

Table 2: T-test statistics on the Mean Rating of New and Old employees on the extent to which Leadership by Example Influences the Organizational Culture of Lovebite Bread Industry.

Variables (Employees)	N	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Remark
New	49	0.313	90	0.347	0.53141	0.56551	NS
Old	43						

Note: NS: Not Significant



Table 2 shows that the t-value of 0.313 is obtained at a 0.05 level of significance and 90 degrees of freedom with a significant value of 0.347. However, since the significant value is more than the level of significance set for the study, the null hypothesis is statistically insignificant and thus, not rejected for these items (Accept Ho). This implies that there is no significant difference between the opinions of new and old employees on the extent leadership by 20 examples influences the organizational culture of Lovebite Bread Industry. Hence, the employment status of the respondents is seen as insignificant concerning their responses to the said items.

Research Question 2

To what extent does continuous learning impact the overall performance and growth of the Lovebite Bread Industry?

Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the Extent to Which Continuous Learning Impacts on the Overall Performance and Growth of Lovebite Bread Industry.

S/N	Continuous learning impact on the overall performance and growth by:	New Employees N = 49		Old Employees N = 43		Overall N = 92		Overall Remark
		\bar{x}_1	SD ₁	\bar{x}_2	SD ₂	\bar{x}_G	SD _G	
12	Provision of training and development opportunities for employees	2.53	1.07	2.44	1.07	2.49	1.07	SE
13	Improving individuals at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd (LBIL)	2.83	1.05	2.95	1.03	2.89	1.04	LE
14	Contributing to the professional development of employees of Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	2.40	0.97	2.39	1.03	2.40	1.00	SE
15	Enhancing overall company performance at Lovebite Foods and Beverage Ltd	2.72	1.03	2.70	1.08	2.71	1.05	LE
16	Continuous learning enhances the business strategies of Lovebite Foods and Beverage Ltd.	2.57	1.18	2.49	1.09	2.53	1.16	LE
17	Giving new employees the same training and development opportunities as old employees	2.98	1.01	2.39	0.78	2.69	0.90	LE
18	improving employee efficiency and productivity at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd	2.53	0.86	2.61	0.91	2.57	0.89	LE
19	Adopting the culture of continuous learning for all employees promoted	2.93	0.99	2.27	1.10	2.60	1.05	LE
20	Helping employees meet the changing needs of Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd	2.56	1.19	2.49	1.16	2.53	1.18	LE
21	Making learning critical for the long-term growth of Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd	2.21	1.00	2.95	0.93	2.58	0.97	LE
22	Enhancing teamwork and collaboration across departments of Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	2.91	1.07	2.69	1.10	2.80	1.09	LE
Grand Mean/SD		2.65	1.04	2.58	1.03	2.62	1.04	LE

Data as presented in Table 3 shows that the mean scores obtained for the new employees on items number 12, 13, 15 20, and 21 ranged from 2.53 to 2.98, indicating that the listed continuous learning items impact the overall performance and growth of Lovebite Bread Industry to a large extent while items number 14 and 21 with the mean scores of 2.40 and 2.21 denotes small extent perception by the new employees. Similarly, the Table shows that the mean score range of 2.61 to 2.95 is obtained for the old employees on items number 13, 15, 18, 21, and 22, indicating large extent perceptions while the mean scores of 2.44, 2.39, 2.49, 2.39, 2.27 and 2.49 obtained for the old employees on the rest of the items shows that the listed continuous learning items impact on the overall performance and growth of Lovebite Bread Industry to a small extent respectively. However, the overall (grand) mean score of 2.62 obtained shows that continuous learning impacts the overall performance and growth of the Lovebite Bread Industry to a large extent, while the overall (grand) standard deviation score of 1.04 depicts no remarkable differences in the opinions of the respondents.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the opinions of new and old employees on the extent continuous learning impacts the overall performance and growth of the Lovebite Bread Industry.

Table 4: t-test Statistics on the Mean Rating of New and Old employees on the extent to which Continuous Learning Impacts on the Overall Performance and Growth of Lovebite Bread Industry.

Variables (Employees)	N	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Remark
New	49	0.163	90	0.501	0.57338	0.56813	NS
Old	43						

Concerning data as in Table 4, the t-value of 0.163 is obtained at a 0.05 level of significance and 90 degrees of freedom with a significant value of 0.501. However, since the significant value is more than the level of significance set for the study, the null hypothesis is statistically insignificant and thus, not rejected for these items (Accept Ho). By implication, there is no significant difference between the opinions of new and old employees on the extent Continuous Learning impacts the overall performance and growth of the Lovebite Bread Industry.

Research Question 3

How can encouraging innovation impact decision-making processes in the Lovebite Bread Industry?

Table 5: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on how Encouraging Innovation can Impact Decision-Making Processes in the Lovebite Bread Industry.

S/N	Encouraging innovation can impact on decision-making processes by:	New Employees N = 49		Old Employees N = 43		Overall N = 92		Overall Remark
		\bar{x}_1	SD ₁	\bar{x}_2	SD ₂	\bar{x}_G	SD _G	
23	Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd encourage innovation for total transformation	2.09	1.02	2.87	0.89	2.48	0.96	Disagree
24	Encouraging innovation improves the decision-making process at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	2.13	0.97	2.83	0.96	2.48	0.97	Disagree
25	Employees are encouraged to share innovative ideas in decision-making processes Ltd.	2.98	1.01	2.39	0.78	2.69	0.90	Agree
26	New employees are often invited to share their innovative ideas to improve decision-making	2.53	0.86	2.61	0.91	2.57	0.89	Agree
27	Innovation is crucial for solving business challenges and improving decision-making at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	2.93	0.99	2.27	1.10	2.60	1.05	Agree
28	Leaders at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd. encourage employees to think outside the box. When it comes to decision-making.	2.57	1.04	2.51	1.15	2.54	1.0823	Agree
29	Encouraging innovation leads to better decisions by the leadership at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	2.79	1.22	2.49	1.13	2.66	1.19	Agree
30	Innovative ideas are often implemented into business decisions at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	2.70	1.12	2.54	1.11	2.63	1.11	Agree
31	Innovation is supported by the resources provided by Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	2.21	1.00	2.95	0.93	2.58	0.97	Agree
32	Encouraging innovation leads to improved competitive advantage at Lovebite Foods.	2.07	0.81	2.49	1.21	2.28	1.01	Disagree
33	New employees bring fresh ideas that influence decisions at Lovebite Foods.	2.53	1.07	2.84	1.07	2.69	1.07	Agree
34	Innovation plays a critical role in strategic decisions at Lovebite Foods and Beverage.	2.95	1.03	2.83	1.05	2.89	1.04	Agree
35	Leaders reward innovative ideas and creative solutions within Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.	2.26	1.02	2.28	1.01	2.27	1.02	Disagree
	Grand Mean/SD	2.52	1.01	2.61	1.02	2.57	1.02	Agree

Data, as presented in Table 5, shows that the mean scores obtained for the new employees on items number 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, and 21 are 2.98, 2.53, 2.93, 2.57, 2.79, 2.70, 2.53 and 2.95, indicating that the respondents agree that the listed items are how encouraging innovation impacts on decision-making processes in Lovebite Bread Industry while items number 23, 24, 31, 32 and 35 with the mean scores of 2.09, 2.13, 2.21, 2.07 and 2.26 denotes disagree responses by the same employees. Similarly, the Table shows that the mean score range of 2.51 to 2.95 is obtained for the old employees on items number 23, 24, 26, 28, 30, 31, 33, and 34, indicating agree responses while the mean scores below 2.50 obtained for the old employees on items number 25, 27, 29, 32 and 35 shows disagree responses respectively. However, the overall (grand) mean score of 2.57 obtained shows that encouraging innovation impacts on decision-making processes in the Lovebite Bread Industry with the overall (grand) standard deviation score of 1.02 indicating a slim disparity in the opinions of the respondents.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between the opinions of new and old employees on how encouraging innovation can impact decision-making in the Lovebite Bread Industry.

Table 6: T-test statistics on the Mean Rating of New and Old employees on how Encouraging Innovation can Impact on Decision-Making in Lovebite Bread Industry.

Variables (Employees)	N	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Remark
New	49	-0.349	90	0.491	0.53918	0.46871	NS
Old	43						

Concerning data as in Table 6, the t-value of -0.349 is obtained at a 0.05 level of significance and 90 degrees of freedom with a significant value of 0.491. Thus, since the significant value is more than the level of significance set for the study, the null hypothesis is statistically insignificant and thus, not rejected for these items (Accept Ho). By implication, there is no significant difference between the opinions of new and old employees on how encouraging innovation can impact decision-making in the Lovebite Bread Industry.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In line with the findings of the study as regards the extent to which leadership by example can influence the organizational culture of Lovebite Bread Industry, the study revealed that leadership by example influences the organizational culture of Lovebite Bread Industry to a large extent as it is aligned with the company's mission and vision, leaders' actions and behaviors shape the organizational culture at Lovebite Foods and Beverages, it is extremely important in promoting an ethical work environment at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd, new employees model their behaviors based on the example set by leaders at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd, among others. Given these findings, it becomes paramount to state that leadership by example is significant in ensuring the attainment of set organizational goals and objectives.

Hence, necessary for all heads/leaders of organizations to exhibit leadership by example as seen to influence the organizational culture of the Lovebite Bread Industry to a large extent. Similarly, the hypothesis test of no significant difference between the opinions of new and old employees on the extent to which leadership by example influences the organizational culture of Lovebite Bread Industry showed that there is no significant difference between the opinions of new and old employees on the extent Leadership by Example influences the organizational culture of Lovebite Bread Industry.

This is evident as the obtained significant value is great than the level of significance set for the study. By implication, the extent leadership by example influences the organizational culture of Lovebite Bread Industry.

These findings are tallied with the findings of Kouzes and Posner (2002) who found that that leaders who model desired behaviors foster stronger workplace cultures of accountability, trust, and ethical standards. This, in turn, positively affects employee motivation and commitment. In agreement with the above, Boal and Hooijberg (2001) stated that a positive correlation exists between strategic leadership and financial performance, with leaders who practiced foresight and flexibility having better long-term profitability.

Concerning the extent to which continuous learning impacts the overall performance and growth of the Lovebite Bread Industry, the study revealed that continuous learning impacts the overall performance and growth of the Lovebite Bread Industry to a large extent. This is in affirmation with the perceptions of the respondents who agreed that continuous learning impacts the overall performance and growth by improving individuals at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd (LBIL), enhancing teamwork and collaboration across departments of Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd, enhancing overall company performance at Lovebite Foods and Beverage ltd, and many more. Thus, continuous learning is seen as impactful on the overall performance and growth of the Lovebite Bread Industry with its numerous benefits geared towards productivity. Thus, based on the hypothesis, a significant difference does not exist between the opinions of new and old employees on the extent continuous learning impacts the overall performance and growth of the Lovebite Bread Industry.

This aligns with Garvin, Edmondson, and Gino (2008) who found that organizations where leaders emphasize continuous learning were more adaptable to changing market conditions. The authors stressed that firms that invest in leadership development and continuous education experience faster decision-making cycles and improved strategic outcomes. DeChurch and Marks (2006) added that leaders who support learning create environments where employees feel empowered to contribute innovative ideas.

However, the study on how encouraging innovation can impact decision-making processes in the Lovebite Bread Industry indicated that encouraging innovation has a positive impact on decision-making processes. The study revealed that through the encouragement of innovation, a critical role in strategic decisions at Lovebite Foods and Beverage, new employees bring fresh ideas that influence decisions at Lovebite Foods, employees are encouraged to share innovative ideas in decision-making processes Ltd, better decisions by the leadership at Lovebite Foods and Beverages ltd are made, among other benefits. Thus, the place and benefits of encouraging innovation cannot be over-emphasized as it breeds the maximization of all units of production. Based on the corresponding hypothesis, there is no significant difference found between the opinions of new and old employees on how encouraging innovation can impact decision-making in the Lovebite Bread Industry.

The findings above agree with Jansen et al. (2009) noted that leaders who foster an innovative culture and provide the necessary resources for innovation initiatives had higher levels of product and process innovation, which in turn improved competitive positioning. García-Morales et al. (2008) in another study identified that strategic leadership is crucial in fostering innovation, which is key to maintaining organizational competitiveness and companies with leaders who support exploratory innovation (new ideas and products) and exploitative innovation (refining existing processes) perform better in dynamic markets.

Conclusion

The study covered the strategic leadership for effective business development: A case of Lovebite Bread Industry, Nnobi. Based on the results of the data analyses, the study showed that leadership by example influences the organizational culture, continuous learning impacts on the overall performance and growth, and encouraging innovation impacts on decision-making processes in the Lovebite Bread Industry. Similarly, the hypotheses test of no significant difference yielded a higher significant value than the level of significance set for the study and by implication, there is no significant difference between the opinions of new and old employees on the extent leadership by example influences the organizational culture; extent continuous learning impact on the overall performance and growth; and on how encouraging innovation can impact on decision-making in Lovebite Bread Industry.

Given the above, it is believed that if leaders/ heads/ management of Lovebite Bread Industry adopt and exhibit the afore-discussed strategies in their daily activities, it would invariably result in enhanced productivity in Lovebite Bread Industry and by extension foster development in Nnobi at large.

Implications

1. Enhanced Understanding of Strategic Leadership in Business Management

This study provides valuable insights into how strategic leadership influences business outcomes, particularly in a real-world setting like Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd. By examining leadership styles, decision-making processes, and their impact on company performance, this research deepens the understanding of the role of strategic leadership in fostering innovation and sustainable growth.

2. Improvement of Leadership Practices

Findings from this study can inform business leaders of the importance of leadership by example, promoting a culture of continuous learning, and encouraging innovation. These practices can be adopted by managers and executives in similar organizations, guiding them toward building high-performance cultures and enhancing overall organizational effectiveness.

3. Guidance for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

The case study provides practical examples and actionable insights specific to SMEs in Nigeria and similar emerging markets. The strategies and leadership practices explored in this research can help SME owners better navigate the complexities of their business environments, achieve operational efficiencies, and gain a competitive edge.

4. Basis for Policy Formulation and Development

Insights from this research can guide policymakers in creating policies and frameworks that support the growth and sustainability of small and medium enterprises. Policies that promote strategic leadership, organizational innovation, and continuous learning could drive sector-wide improvements and economic growth.

Contribution to Knowledge

1. Expands the Literature on Strategic Leadership

This research adds to the body of knowledge on strategic leadership by providing empirical data from Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd. It highlights the specific leadership practices that positively impact organizational performance, filling a gap in the literature on leadership within SMEs in Nigeria and similar contexts.

2. Advances Understanding of Leadership's Impact on Organizational Culture

By exploring how leadership by example and encouragement of continuous learning shape organizational culture, this study contributes to understanding how leaders directly influence a company's working environment, employee motivation, and engagement.

3. Provides a Framework for Effective Business Management in SMEs

This study offers a practical framework that can guide leaders in small and medium enterprises in adopting strategic leadership practices that foster growth. It bridges theoretical insights with real-life applications, thus creating a roadmap for achieving sustainable competitive advantage.

Suggestions for Further Studies

1. Comparative Analysis of Strategic Leadership in SMEs and Large Corporations

Future studies could compare the impact of strategic leadership in SMEs versus large corporations to see if and how different organizational sizes and structures affect leadership effectiveness.

2. Investigating Industry-Specific Leadership Models

Further research could examine if strategic leadership practices vary across industries. For example, studying strategic leadership in the food and beverage sector against technology or manufacturing sectors could yield sector-specific insights.

3. Longitudinal Studies on Leadership's Impact on Business Performance

Conducting a longitudinal study that tracks the effects of strategic leadership over a longer period would provide a deeper understanding of its long-term impact on organizational performance and adaptability.

4. Exploring Cultural Influences on Strategic Leadership in Emerging Markets

Since culture plays a significant role in shaping leadership styles, further research could explore how cultural factors influence strategic leadership effectiveness in other emerging markets, offering a broader understanding of its application across diverse cultural contexts.

5. Evaluating the Role of Technology in Strategic Leadership

A study focusing on how digital transformation and technological tools support or hinder strategic leadership practices in SMEs could provide insights into how leaders can leverage technology for more effective business management.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. More emphasis should be placed by concerned individuals on leadership by example as seen as significant in influencing the organizational culture.
2. An awareness campaign should be made to emphasize the importance of continuous learning on the overall performance and growth of establishments in Anambra State.
3. Measures to encourage innovation should be made by appropriate authorities to enhance decision-making processes in establishments in Anambra State.

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Leveraging Strategic Leadership for Effective Business Management (LSLEBMQ)

Dear Participant, this questionnaire is designed to collect data on Leveraging Strategic Leadership for Effective Business Management of Lovebite Bread Industry in Nnobi, The information you provide will remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be honest.

Section 1: Demographic Information:

What is your employment status at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd?

- a) New employee (less than 5 years)
- b) Long-term employee (more than 5 years)

What is your job role?

- a) Entry-level
- b) Mid-level
- c) Senior-level
- d) Management

What department do you work in?

- a) Production
- b) Sales and Marketing
- c) Administration
- d) Logistics
- e) Others: _____

How many years have you worked at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd?

- a) Less than 1 year
- b) 1-3 years
- c) 4-6 years
- d) Over 6 years

Section 2:

Instruction to respondents: There are four options as in below, kindly **TICK** only **one**: **Kindly answer ALL the questions.**

VLE= Very Large Extent

LE= Large Extent

SE= Small Extent

VSE= Very Small Extent

And

SA = Strongly Disagree

A = Agree

D = Disagree

SD= Strongly Disagree

Cluster A: Leadership by Example and Organizational Culture:					
Indicate the extent Leadership by Example can influence the organizational culture of the Lovebite Bread Industry; To WHAT EXTENT DO/DOES:		VLE	LE	SE	VSE
	Leaders at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd. lead by example.				
	Leadership by example influences the organizational culture at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
	Leaders' actions and behaviors shape the organizational culture at Lovebite Foods and Beverages.				
	Leaders at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd practice the values they promote				
	New employees model their behaviors based on the set examples by leaders at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
	Leadership by example helps foster a cooperative and collaborative culture among the employees of Lovebite Foods and Beverage Ltd.				
	Leadership by example is important in promoting an ethical work environment at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
	The leadership at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd is aligned with the company's mission and vision.				
	Leadership by example builds trust and commitment among employees at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
	New employees are motivated by how leaders at Lovebite Foods handle crises.				
	Leadership by example encourages higher levels of accountability and professionalism at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
Cluster B: Extent Continuous Learning impacts the overall performance and growth of Lovebite Bread Industry Ltd. (LBIL)					
TO WHAT EXTENT DOES LOVEBITE BREAD INDUSTRY/ TO WHAT EXTENT IS/ DOES;					
	Provide training and development opportunities for employees.				
	Continuous learning improves individuals at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd. (LBIL)				
	Continuous learning contributes to the professional development of employees of Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
	Continuous learning enhances overall company performance at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
	Continuous learning enhances the business strategies of Lovebite Foods and Beverages.				
	New employees are given the same training and development opportunities as old employees.				
	Has continuous learning improved employee efficiency and productivity at Lovebite				

	Foods and Beverages Ltd				
	Is the culture of continuous learning for all employees promoted?				
	Continuous learning helped employees meet the changing needs of Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
	Is continuous learning critical for the long-term growth of Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd?				
22.	Continuous learning enhances teamwork and collaboration across departments of Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
Cluster C: How Encouraging Innovation can impact decision-making processes in the Lovebite Bread Industry. Indicate your level of Agreement or Disagreement with the following statements.					
24	Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd encourage innovation	SA	A	D	SD
25	Encouraging innovation improves the decision-making process at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
26	Employees are encouraged to share innovative ideas in decision-making processes Ltd.				
27	New employees are often invited to share their innovative ideas to improve decision-making.				
28	Innovation is crucial for solving business challenges and improving decision-making at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
29	Leaders at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd. encourage employees to think outside the box when it comes to decision-making.				
30	Encouraging innovation leads to better decisions by the leadership at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
31	Innovative ideas are often implemented into business decisions at Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
32	Innovation is supported by the resources provided by Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				
33	Encouraging innovation leads to improved competitive advantage at Lovebite Foods.				
34	New employees bring fresh ideas that influence decisions at Lovebite Foods.				
35	Innovation plays a critical role in strategic decisions at Lovebite Foods and Beverage.				
36	Leaders reward innovative ideas and creative solutions within Lovebite Foods and Beverages Ltd.				

Thank you for your participation!