

# **Transformational Leadership as a Catalyst for Employee Retention in the Manufacturing Industry of Zimbabwe**



**Memory Makuyana**

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Silas Musikazwi, whose unwavering support has sustained me throughout; to my daughter, Munashe, whose constant encouragement has uplifted my spirit; and to my sons, Munya, Josh, and Atipa, whose faith in their mother continues to inspire and strengthen my resolve.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I extend my profound gratitude to Dr R. M. Rusike, my supervisor, whose insightful guidance and constructive critique have been indispensable to the development of this work. I am equally indebted to my family for their patience and understanding during my prolonged absences in the course of these studies; their unwavering support and confidence in me have been a source of strength and perseverance. Above all, I offer heartfelt thanks to the Almighty God, whose providence and guidance have sustained me throughout this endeavour, without which its completion would not have been possible.

## **BOOK SYNOPSIS**

This study seeks to develop a structured framework aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of Transformational Leadership as a mechanism for improving employee retention within Zimbabwe's manufacturing industry, with particular emphasis on the bakery sector in the Harare Metropolitan Area. Adopting a quantitative research design, data were gathered through surveys administered to a representative cohort of bakery-sector employees, yielding a notably high response rate of 85 per cent. The analysis employed statistical techniques such as correlation, regression, and independent samples t-tests to interrogate the association between Transformational Leadership and workforce retention. The findings demonstrate a robust positive correlation between Transformational Leadership practices and the retention of employees, thereby highlighting the critical role of cultivating transformational competencies among managerial and supervisory staff in the bakery industry. The evidence indicates that such leadership significantly bolsters retention by fostering an inspiring and motivating workplace, engendering trust and respect, and articulating a compelling organisational vision. Building upon these insights, the study advances a comprehensive framework to strengthen the application of Transformational Leadership in promoting employee retention. This framework encompasses leadership development initiatives, systematic assessment and feedback mechanisms, programmes for cultural transformation, structured coaching and mentoring, recognition and reward strategies, enhanced organisational communication, succession planning and talent management processes, ongoing monitoring and evaluation, as well as collaborative engagement with industry associations and academic institutions. In addition, the research identifies opportunities for further scholarly inquiry, including longitudinal investigations to assess the sustained effects of transformational leadership interventions on employee retention, and

explorations of complementary determinants such as organisational culture and external market conditions.

## **Table of Contents**

i	Dedication
ii	Acknowledgements
iii	Book Synopsis
vi	List of Tables
vii	List of Figures
1	Chapter 1 Introduction
7	Chapter 2 Literature Review
18	Chapter 3
18	Methodology
26	Chapter 4
26	Data Analysis, Findings, and Discussion
44	Chapter 5
44	Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation
56	References

## LIST OF TABLES

21	Table 3.1: Population of the study
27	Table 4.1: Questionnaire Response Rate
30	Table 4.2: Experience with the company
31	Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables
33	Table 4.4: Normality Tests
35	Table 4.5: Cross-Tabulation Results.
36	Table 4.6: Correlation Coefficients
38	Table 4.7: Regression Analysis
40	Table 4.8: Independent Samples t-Test
42	Table 4.9: MANOVA Result



## LIST OF FIGURES

- 15    Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework
- 27    Figure 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by gender
- 28    Figure 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Age
- 29    Figure 4.3: Educational Qualification of Respondents
- 49    Figure 5.1: Proposed Transformational Leadership Framework

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In contemporary organisational discourse, the manufacturing industry occupies a central role as a driver of economic advancement and employment creation, particularly within the Zimbabwean context. Within this sector, leadership assumes critical importance, with transformational leadership increasingly recognised as a decisive paradigm in shaping organisational outcomes. The manufacturing industry in Zimbabwe epitomises the nation's economic dynamism, defined by its complexity and constant evolution. In recent years, the role of leadership style has gained prominence, with transformational leadership emerging as a potentially decisive factor influencing employee retention across this industry. This chapter engages in a systematic examination of the development of a framework designed to enhance the efficacy of transformational leadership as a strategic mechanism for workforce retention within Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. The study focuses specifically on the bakery industry in the Harare Metropolitan Area, offering contextual insights into leadership practices within this distinctive subsector.

Situated within the broader ambit of manufacturing, the bakery industry provides a distinctive lens for this investigation. Its operational challenges, coupled with its unique workforce dynamics, render it an ideal context for exploring the ways in which transformational leadership can affect employee retention. Transformational leadership (TL), as conceptualised by Gilbert et al. (2016), extends beyond conventional managerial practices. It inspires change, cultivates trust, stimulates innovation, and invests in the holistic development of employees. It is characterised by a leader's capacity to raise performance expectations, empower individuals to transcend personal barriers such as stress or burnout, and strengthen resilience through enhanced communication and proactive support (Jensen & Bro, 2018). In the 21st-century business environment,

leadership paradigms have experienced a decisive shift, with organisations increasingly embracing transformational leadership as a people-centred strategy to drive productivity (Khattak, Zolin & Muhammad, 2020). This shift underscores the recognition that leadership fundamentally shapes organisational culture, workplace climate, and overall employee satisfaction.

Organisational sustainability and competitiveness rest upon a committed and engaged workforce. Employees who feel valued not only find fulfilment in their roles but also align their efforts with organisational goals. Optimising workforce potential necessitates the application of human-centred strategies, a principle embodied by transformational leadership (Mosadeghrad, 2013). In highly competitive industries, retaining skilled employees constitutes a strategic necessity (Teimouri *et al.*, 2019). Stability in the workforce is integral to organisational effectiveness, and transformational leadership has been identified as a crucial factor in achieving this objective.

Leadership that prioritises transformation also plays an instrumental role in fostering organisational learning and professional development. Such leadership supports employee advancement through mechanisms of selection, promotion, and capacity building (Kanter, 2017). By cultivating favourable working conditions, leaders stimulate creativity, commitment, and motivation (Cummings *et al.*, 2010). Understanding the intersection between transformational leadership and social mobilisation is particularly pertinent in navigating the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment in which modern organisations operate.

From a workforce perspective, perceived organisational support is vital in aligning individual aspirations with collective objectives. It strengthens employee commitment by demonstrating the

organisation's investment in their well-being (Dhar, 2012; Chew & Wong, 2018). Motivated employees tend to exhibit greater loyalty, higher productivity, and improved output quality (Sharma & Dhar, 2015). Employee motivation is intrinsically linked to shared beliefs regarding how an organisation values and responds to employee interests and expectations (Allen *et al.*, 2018).

Despite overall growth in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector, the bakery industry has experienced acute challenges of workforce instability, particularly in the aftermath of leadership transitions since 2015, which witnessed over 20 executive-level changes across firms (Mutandi, 2020). Current retention levels in the bakery industry are at 47.5 per cent—substantially below the benchmark standard of 80 per cent (Zimbabwe Bakery Product Market Outlook, 2022). This investigation interrogates whether attrition is primarily driven by unfavourable working conditions, external labour market opportunities, or other underlying organisational dynamics, with a particular emphasis on the mediating role of transformational leadership in sustaining workforce engagement.

The persistence of high turnover rates within Zimbabwe's bakery industry has become a pressing concern. This research thus interrogates the potential of transformational leadership to counteract attrition by situating the issue within frameworks such as the VUCA paradigm and the PESTELG model (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, and Governance factors). In doing so, the study offers a comprehensive perspective on the ways transformational leadership can be leveraged to enhance retention in an environment characterised by complexity and uncertainty.

A recurrent challenge within manufacturing organisations lies in the prevalence of high turnover, despite deliberate investments in human

capital strategies. This phenomenon undermines both immediate operational efficiency and long-term strategic goals, while simultaneously inflating recruitment costs and eroding institutional memory. Although the transformative potential of leadership has been widely acknowledged (Bass & Riggio, 2006), evidence suggests that in Zimbabwe's bakery industry, transformational leadership practices are either inconsistently applied or insufficiently embedded to resolve this enduring challenge. Accordingly, this study seeks to interrogate the ways in which transformational leadership might be optimally harnessed to address attrition and strengthen retention outcomes within this subsector.

The main objective of the study is:

To develop a framework to enhance the effectiveness of transformational leadership as a catalyst for employee retention in Zimbabwe's manufacturing industry.

The secondary objectives of the study are to:

- Assess the prevalence of transformational leadership practices within the bakery industry.
- Analyse the influence of transformational leadership on employee retention levels.
- Identify variables that act as mediators or moderators in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee retention.

The research was guided by the following questions:

- a) How can a framework be developed to enhance the effectiveness of transformational leadership as a catalyst for employee retention in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector?
- b) What is the extent of transformational leadership practices within the Zimbabwean bakery industry?

- c) How does transformational leadership affect employee retention in the bakery industry in Zimbabwe?
- d) What moderating or mediating factors shape the relationship between transformational leadership and employee retention?

The study hypotheses are as follows:

H0: Transformational leadership has no significant relationship with employee retention in Zimbabwe's bakery industry.

H1: Transformational leadership has a positive relationship with employee retention in Zimbabwe's bakery industry.

This research is motivated by the need to close a significant gap in understanding the contextual application of transformational leadership within Zimbabwe's manufacturing industry, particularly its bakery subsector. By developing a bespoke framework tailored to this environment, the study seeks to contribute insights of both academic and practical significance.

The study holds relevance for multiple stakeholders. For the researcher, it represents an opportunity to engage critically with the interplay between leadership and retention, thereby contributing to both academic advancement and professional competence. For the academic community, it generates knowledge on the contextual application of transformational leadership, offering a framework that may serve as a foundation for further scholarly inquiry. For the university, it enhances the institution's scholarly reputation by producing research with practical value. For the bakery sector, the study provides actionable strategies to mitigate attrition and foster workforce stability. Finally, at the policy level, it offers insights that may inform labour and leadership policy, supporting Zimbabwe's broader socio-economic objectives.

The scope of the study is:

- *Contextual scope*: Transformational leadership in Zimbabwe's manufacturing industry, with emphasis on the bakery subsector in the Harare Metropolitan Area.
- *Theoretical scope*: Leadership theories, with a central focus on transformational leadership as articulated by Bass and Riggio (2006), and literature on employee retention.
- *Geographical scope*: Harare Metropolitan Area, with analysis confined to bakeries operating within this region.
- *Temporal scope*: The period 2018–2022, providing a temporal frame for data collection and analysis.

The structure of the study is as follows:

- *Chapter 1*: Introduction and Background – outlining the context, problem statement, objectives, questions, hypotheses, scope, and dissertation structure.
- *Chapter 2*: Literature Review – examining theoretical and empirical perspectives on transformational leadership and employee retention.
- *Chapter 3*: Methodology – detailing the research design, strategy, population, sampling, data collection, and analytical approaches.
- *Chapter 4*: Results – presenting descriptive, correlation, regression, and inferential analyses.
- *Chapter 5*: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations – offering recommendations, a synthesis of findings, and proposals for future research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Zimbabwe's manufacturing industry constitutes a cornerstone of the national economy, serving as both a generator of employment and a substantive contributor to GDP. Within this sector, employee retention emerges as a critical organisational priority, given that elevated turnover rates precipitate financial burdens, disrupt continuity of operations, and undermine organisational performance. Transformational leadership—distinguished by visionary, inspirational, and supportive behaviours—has increasingly been advanced as a leadership paradigm capable of addressing retention challenges. This chapter surveys the corpus of scholarship on the interplay between transformational leadership and employee retention, with specific reference to Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector.

A literature review, as articulated in methodological texts, entails a systematic evaluation, integration, and synthesis of existing scholarly contributions pertinent to a given research problem (Smith, 2018; Jones & Brown, 2020). Its objective is to identify key themes, theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, and empirical findings relevant to the subject matter, whilst simultaneously exposing lacunae warranting further investigation (Anderson, 2021; Miller, 2019). For the present study, sources were drawn primarily from electronic repositories such as Google Scholar, PubMed, JSTOR, and EBSCO, using search terms including *transformational leadership*, *employee retention*, *manufacturing sector*, and *Zimbabwe*. Priority was accorded to studies published between 2018 and 2022, supplemented through snowballing techniques to capture seminal contributions cited within the reviewed works.

Transformational leadership has been conceptualised as a leadership orientation capable of engendering fundamental change in individuals



and organisational systems (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018). It is premised on the transformation of followers into emergent leaders by stimulating their intrinsic motivation, elevating morale, and catalysing performance. Mechanisms through which this occurs include linking followers' personal identities to the mission of the organisation, modelling behaviours that inspire emulation, encouraging ownership of tasks, and aligning responsibilities with individual strengths (Sharma & Dhar, 2015). The framework is operationalised through four dimensions: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Chew & Wong, 2018).

Employee retention constitutes a pivotal marker of organisational resilience, reflecting an institution's capacity to sustain a motivated and committed workforce (Carter *et al.*, 2019). Attrition extends beyond operational disruption to encompass tangible financial repercussions, such as recruitment expenditure, productivity losses, and the erosion of institutional knowledge. Scholarly inquiry has thus foregrounded the economic rationale for retention, emphasising that investments in retention initiatives yield returns that outweigh the costs associated with turnover (Carter *et al.*, 2019). The determinants of retention are multifaceted, spanning demographic variables such as age, education, experience, and gender (Deshwal, 2015), as well as interpersonal and organisational factors.

Peer support has been identified as a significant determinant of retention, with strong collegial relations fostering loyalty and commitment (Ali *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, recruitment and selection practices influence retention by shaping employees' initial perceptions of organisational culture and job expectations (Olendo & Muindi, 2017). Retention is also mediated by organisational culture, recognition schemes, work-life balance initiatives, and opportunities for professional growth. Recognition of employee contributions, coupled with sustained training and development, enhances satisfaction and

commitment, thereby embedding employees within the organisational fabric (Olendo & Muindi, 2017).

Leadership is widely recognised as a central determinant of retention outcomes. Transformational leadership in particular has been shown to exert direct and indirect effects on employee retention, not only through role modelling and inspiration but also by shaping organisational culture, enhancing motivation, and increasing job satisfaction (Amankwaa & Anku-Tsedee, 2015; Khan, 2015; Nohe & Hertel, 2017). Bass and Riggio's (2006) Transformational Leadership Theory provides the principal theoretical foundation, positing that transformational leaders mobilise vision, charisma, and intellectual stimulation to inspire their followers. Complementary theoretical perspectives include Social Exchange Theory (SET), which emphasises reciprocity in employer-employee relations, and Expectancy Theory, which explains motivation through the perceived relationship between effort, performance, and rewards (Vroom, 1964).

According to SET, relationships are sustained by a perceived equilibrium of benefits, with trust and reciprocity underpinning long-term commitment (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; Sun & Wang, 2017). Employees who perceive organisational support and fair exchange are more likely to reciprocate through loyalty, effort, and reduced turnover intentions (Shah & Asad, 2018). The framework emphasises mutual accountability and fairness, establishing a moral basis for retention. Job embeddedness has similarly been associated with lower turnover intentions, reflecting the role of psychological fields in binding individuals to organisations (Lewin, 2016; Peltokorpi, Allen & Froese, 2019).

Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) further illuminates the motivational pathways through which transformational leadership may enhance

retention. The *effort–performance expectancy* dimension posits that employees are motivated when they believe their exertion will yield improved performance, particularly under supportive and empowering leadership. The *performance–reward expectancy* dimension highlights the role of tangible or intangible rewards in sustaining commitment, while *valence* underscores the subjective importance employees attach to these rewards (Eisenbeiss, Knippenberg & Boerner, 2018). Transformational leadership strengthens all three components by cultivating meaningful work, rewarding performance, and creating a supportive environment that elevates the perceived value of continued organisational membership.

Existing frameworks, such as Bass and Avolio’s (1994) Full Range Leadership Model, provide an integrated conceptualisation of leadership styles, of which transformational leadership is the most influential in enhancing retention. Empirical evidence corroborates the claim that transformational behaviours are negatively correlated with turnover intentions (Alatawi, 2017). Studies further demonstrate that transformational leadership improves productivity, morale, and satisfaction, thereby embedding employees within organisations (Vinno, 2020; Breevaart & Zacher, 2019).

The four behavioural dimensions of transformational leadership are consistently emphasised in the literature (Bass & Riggio, 2006). *Idealised influence* fosters trust and respect by encouraging followers to emulate leaders’ values; *inspirational motivation* instils a collective vision; *intellectual stimulation* challenges followers to innovate and problem-solve creatively; and *individualised consideration* reflects empathy through mentoring and tailored support. Together, these dimensions create a work climate conducive to retention by aligning individual aspirations with organisational objectives (Rothfelder, 2021; Gao, 2020).

Transformational leaders therefore not only elevate individual performance but also generate collective commitment to organisational vision. They act as reservoirs of positive emotion, promoting enthusiasm, resilience, and loyalty (Venera, 2019). Companies that empower employees through such leadership practices experience stronger organisational attachment and, by extension, greater stability in employee retention (Anderson & Huang, 2018).

Han *et al.* (2016) emphasise that empowering employees requires transparency in sharing organisational performance data with front-line staff. However, access alone is insufficient; employees must be trained to interpret and apply this information for better decision-making and accountability. Phong, Hui and Son (2018) add that when employees understand performance metrics such as product profitability, their decisions align more effectively with organisational objectives, thereby improving outcomes.

Goleman (2017) identifies emotional intelligence (EI) as a defining attribute of transformational leaders. EI is the ability to recognise, understand, and manage one's own emotions while influencing the emotions of others (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2021). Leaders with high EI display adaptive behaviours consistent with transformational leadership (Brown & Moshavi, 2015). Kotter (2019) argues that emotionally intelligent leaders are better positioned to drive change in volatile and competitive environments.

Goleman (2017) proposes five EI competencies critical to transformational leadership:

- Self-awareness: recognising personal emotions, strengths, limitations, and self-worth.
- Self-regulation: managing disruptive impulses while acting with integrity (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2021).

- Motivation: pursuing achievement for intrinsic satisfaction rather than extrinsic gain (Fowler, 2019).
- Empathy: understanding others' emotions and applying this to mentoring and retention strategies.
- Social skills: leveraging interpersonal connections to inspire and resolve conflicts constructively.

Longenecker and Mallin (2019) note that EI fosters strong interpersonal skills, enabling transformational leaders to engage followers beyond transactional expectations. However, critics highlight potential downsides. O'Reilly and Chatman (2020) liken transformational leaders to individuals displaying traits of narcissistic personality disorder, including grandiosity and manipulation. Yukl (2006) further critiques idealised influence, warning of the risks of excessive charisma and denial of failure. Lin, Scott and Matta (2019) argue that while beneficial for followers, transformational leadership may increase leaders' emotional exhaustion, heightening turnover risk at the leadership level.

Harpelund *et al.* (2019) reveal that 46% of first-time hires leave within 18 months, and over 25% exit within the first year. Kotter (2017) attributes this to mismatched expectations between employees and organisations, underscoring the psychological contract underpinning recruitment. Davila and Pina-Ramirez (2018) argue that reliance on interviews and personality tests fails to address this gap, advocating structured onboarding to shape early perceptions of organisational culture. Poor onboarding undermines retention, whereas positive early experiences foster long-term commitment.

Longenecker and Mallin (2019) highlight personal development programmes as pivotal in sustaining employee commitment. Hosmer (2015) associates coaching with continuous feedback and encouragement, directly enhancing performance. Gao (2020)

emphasises training and development as empowerment tools, equipping employees with competencies to adapt to evolving tasks and customer demands. Gunn, Cappuccitti and Lee (2020) caution that negative perceptions of career progression in sectors such as retail deter long-term commitment, suggesting structured internships and transparent career pathways to counteract these attitudes.

Buchanan (2014) conceptualises organisational commitment as a psychological bond creating loyalty and belonging. Transformational leadership nurtures this bond by aligning employees with meaningful organisational goals (Hartley *et al.*, 2019). In contrast, transactional leaders rely on extrinsic rewards, which research shows are less effective in cultivating loyalty (Hill, 2019). Branham (2019) reports that 80–90% of turnover stems from leadership, culture, and working conditions rather than remuneration, highlighting the critical role of leadership in reducing push factors.

Mitchell *et al.* (2021) introduce job embeddedness as a framework explaining retention beyond job satisfaction and alternatives. It's three components—links, fit, and sacrifice—capture the extent of employees' social and professional integration. Basheer (2020) stresses that increased links create normative pressure to stay. Erkutlu and Chafra (2019) demonstrate that positive leader–follower relationships enhance embeddedness, while Burrows, Porter and Amber (2021) connect empowerment with stronger employee retention. Employees embedded through meaningful connections and support networks are less likely to leave, even absent formal rewards.

Job satisfaction reflects employees' emotional responses to their work. Azeez *et al.* (2019) show its inverse relationship with turnover, highlighting its strategic value for retention. Herzberg's (2009) two-factor theory explains satisfaction through motivators (e.g.,

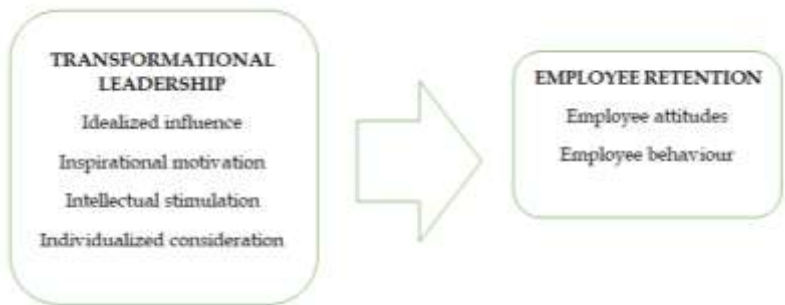
recognition, growth) and hygiene factors (e.g., pay, conditions). Prasad and Karumuri (2018) emphasise satisfaction's role in customer-facing industries where employee performance shapes consumer experiences. Motivation, a key driver of satisfaction, can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic rewards, such as personal growth and purpose, align with transformational leadership and generate long-term engagement (Meunier & Bradley, 2019). Extrinsic rewards, common in transactional leadership, are effective short-term but risk unethical behaviours or disengagement once removed (Adair, 2017). Locke and Schattke (2019) argue that leaders must tailor motivational strategies to individual preferences, with effective transformational leaders integrating both reward types (Howieson, 2019).

Employee performance, defined as achieving organisational goals through quality, punctuality, and innovation, is strongly influenced by transformational leadership (Yukl, 2016; MacKenzie *et al.*, 2021). Judge and Piccolo's (2019) meta-analysis confirms its positive correlation with organisational performance. However, the relationship between performance and turnover is less clear. Jackofsky (2019) identifies positive, negative, and curvilinear patterns, with methodological limitations complicating conclusions. March and Simon's (2008) model suggests high performers may leave due to external opportunities (ease of movement), while low performers may exit under pressure from negative appraisals.

Allen and Griffeth (2020) propose that poor performance leads employees to reassess job value, fostering turnover. Conversely, McEvoy and Cascio (2017) argue that transformational leadership mitigates these outcomes by fostering purpose and belonging. Thus, while performance–turnover relationships remain contested, leadership style plays a moderating role in shaping employee responses.

Despite extensive research on transformational leadership globally (Bass & Avolio, 2013; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2010), limited scholarship addresses its impact on employee retention within Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector, particularly the bakery industry in Harare (Gudyanga, 2017; ZimStat, 2021). Existing studies confirm transformational leadership's positive effect on satisfaction and loyalty (Bass & Riggio, 2006), yet cultural and economic contexts may alter its effectiveness (Hofstede, 1980; House *et al.*, 2014).

The bakery industry, although economically significant, remains underexplored in leadership literature (ZEPARU, 2019). This gap presents an opportunity to develop a contextualised framework that integrates transformational leadership principles with the unique challenges of Zimbabwe's manufacturing environment (Yukl, 2009). Such a framework could enhance retention strategies, guide policy, and enrich academic discourse, directly addressing a critical organisational challenge in the sector.



**Figure 2.1** Conceptual framework (Armstrong and Taylor 2019)

This framework would help establish the relationships and effects of transformational leadership on employee retention.

However, there are contradictions in the research area. Some studies indicate that transformational leadership alone may not be sufficient to



retain employees in the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe, suggesting the presence of moderating variables or other leadership styles that may be more effective in certain contexts.

Research propositions or hypotheses include:

- H0: Transformational leadership has no relationship with employee retention in Zimbabwean Bakery Industry.
- H1: Transformational leadership is positively related to employee retention in Zimbabwean Bakery Industry.

The research methodology for this study adopts a mixed-methods design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Surveys will be administered to employees and managers within Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector to generate quantitative data, which will subsequently be analysed using statistical techniques such as correlation, regression, and comparative tests. In addition, qualitative insights will be obtained through semi-structured interviews, allowing for the exploration of participants' experiences and perceptions in greater depth. The qualitative data will be examined through thematic analysis, thereby complementing the statistical findings with nuanced, context-specific interpretations.

This chapter has provided an overview of existing literature concerning the role of transformational leadership as a catalyst for employee retention within the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe. The review has established that transformational leadership is positively associated with employee commitment, job satisfaction, and organisational loyalty. At the same time, contradictions within empirical findings and contextual differences highlight the complexity of this relationship. Furthermore, gaps were identified in sector-specific studies, particularly within Zimbabwe's bakery industry.

Against this backdrop, the present research aims to extend existing scholarship by offering an in-depth, contextually grounded framework that elucidates the mechanisms through which transformational leadership enhances employee retention in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in the study aimed at developing a framework to enhance the effectiveness of Transformational Leadership in fostering employee retention within the Manufacturing Industry of Zimbabwe, with a particular focus on the Bakery Sector in the Harare Metropolitan Area. Saunders *et al.* (2018) define research methodology as “a systematic and theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. It comprises the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge.” The chapter discusses the research philosophy, approach, design, strategies, data collection methods, population and sampling techniques, questionnaire administration, data analysis methods, validity and reliability, ethical considerations, and concludes with a summary.

The primary aim of this research is to develop a framework to improve the effectiveness of Transformational Leadership as a catalyst for employee retention in the Bakery Sector of the Manufacturing Industry in Harare, Zimbabwe. The main study objective is to explore the relationship between Transformational Leadership and employee retention and to identify factors that enhance this relationship. The major research question guiding this study is: *How can Transformational Leadership be optimised to improve employee retention in the Bakery Sector of the Manufacturing Industry in Harare, Zimbabwe?* The hypotheses to be tested include:

- H<sub>0</sub>: Transformational leadership has no relationship with employee retention in Zimbabwean Bakery Industry.
- H<sub>1</sub>: Transformational leadership is positively related to employee retention in Zimbabwean Bakery Industry.

The study is grounded in a positivist research philosophy, premised on the assertion that social phenomena can be observed objectively and analysed through empirical, systematic measurement. Positivism privileges quantification, replicability, and hypothesis testing, offering a framework through which causal relationships between leadership behaviours and retention outcomes can be rigorously examined (Bryman, 2016). This orientation accords with the objective nature of the research problem and the need for reliable empirical evidence in the Zimbabwean manufacturing context. Positivism further enhances reliability by enabling replication of results and ensuring that findings may be generalised to a wider population (Kumar, 2019). Its emphasis on quantification also aligns with the present study's focus on measuring specific attributes of Transformational Leadership and their statistical relationship to retention outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

A deductive research approach was employed, in which existing theoretical propositions—most notably Transformational Leadership Theory—were operationalised and tested within the empirical context of the Bakery Sector in Harare. Deduction begins with theoretical postulates and proceeds towards hypothesis testing, offering a systematic process of verification (Bryman, 2016). By deploying this approach, the study assessed whether constructs such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration demonstrably influence employee retention. Deductive reasoning was thus appropriate, as it provides both rigour and generalisability by grounding empirical results in established theoretical constructs (Kumar, 2019).

An explanatory research design was adopted to establish causal linkages between Transformational Leadership behaviours and employee retention outcomes. This design moves beyond mere description, seeking to clarify mechanisms and pathways through

which leadership practices exert influence. By investigating causal dynamics, explanatory research produces insights of both theoretical and applied significance, thereby allowing the proposed framework to be both contextually grounded and practically implementable within Zimbabwe's bakery industry.

The study employed a quantitative strategy, given its exclusive reliance on numerical measurement and statistical analysis. Structured questionnaires served as the primary instrument for data collection, enabling precise quantification of leadership behaviours and retention-related constructs. Quantitative analysis subsequently employed inferential techniques to detect significant associations and patterns within the data. Such strategies provide the statistical robustness necessary for hypothesis testing, while also allowing for generalisation across the manufacturing sector in Harare.

Both secondary and primary data sources informed the investigation. Secondary data were drawn from scholarly literature, industry reports, and organisational records, providing theoretical grounding, contextual understanding, and a basis for instrument design. This stage offered a synthesis of existing evidence on leadership, retention, and Zimbabwe's bakery industry, ensuring that the study's conceptual foundations were both comprehensive and contextually appropriate.

Primary data collection was undertaken through a structured survey administered to employees in the Bakery Sector. The survey instrument was designed to capture perceptions of Transformational Leadership practices, employee retention factors, and demographic variables. Established scales were adapted from prior research to ensure validity, with items addressing leadership behaviours (e.g., inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration), alongside constructs related to retention, including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and perceived career

opportunities. Demographic items captured key characteristics such as age, gender, educational attainment, and years of industry experience. Prior to deployment, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing with a small cohort of bakery-sector employees. This stage allowed for refinement of wording, sequencing, and conceptual clarity, ensuring that items were both comprehensible and contextually relevant. Feedback from the pilot informed iterative revisions, thereby improving instrument reliability and construct validity. The finalised questionnaire was thus optimised for full-scale implementation.

The population of interest encompassed employees and managers engaged in Zimbabwe’s bakery industry within the broader manufacturing sector. As Sekaran and Bougie (2013) assert, the population comprises the full set of entities, events, or individuals relevant to a researcher’s inquiry. In this study, the target population included manufacturing organisations in Harare’s bakery subsector, from which the sample was drawn for empirical analysis.

**Table 3.1:** Population of the study (Primary data, 2023)

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
Employees	Bakers Inn	304	94
	Lobels Bread	280	86
	Proton Bread	216	66
Managers / supervisors	Bakers Inn	38	12
	Lobels Bread	35	11
	Proton Bread	27	8
Total		900	277

The study was confirmed to the bakery industry alone. The main bakery firms in Zimbabwe are bakers Inn bread, Labels bread and Proton bread.

The determination of the sample size for this study is a critical step to ensure that the findings are statistically valid and reliable. The specific sample size was calculated based on statistical considerations, such as

the desired level of confidence, margin of error, and the estimated effect size. A sample size calculator was used to determine the appropriate sample size for the study, ensuring sufficient statistical power to make meaningful conclusions. Slovin's formula that was formulated in 1960 was used to determine the sample size (Tejeda & Punzalan, 2012)

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne}$$

Where n = sample size, N = total number of bakery industry employees and managers at Bakers Inn, Lobels Bread and Proton Bakery was 900 (the sampling frame), and e = margin of error. N = 900 and a margin of error of 5%, (e) = 0.05. That is, the researcher's confidence level is 95%.

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{900}{1 + 900 (0.05)^2} \\ &= 276.9 \end{aligned}$$

The above means that the minimum sample size of 277 was appropriate.

Factors that influence the sample size determination include the heterogeneity within the population, the expected response rate, and the available resources for data collection. The aim was to obtain a sample size that is representative of the population and sufficiently large to make meaningful inferences about the relationships between transformational leadership and employee retention in the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe. It also allowed for subgroup analyses to explore variations among different segments of the sector.

A stratified random sampling method was employed to select participants from various manufacturing organisations. Stratified sampling was chosen to ensure that the sample represented the

diversity within the manufacturing sector. The manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe is multifaceted, comprising various industries and organisations of different sizes. To capture this diversity, the sector was divided into meaningful strata, such as industry type (e.g., food processing), organisation size (e.g., small-scale, medium-scale, large-scale), and geographic location.

Within each stratum, a random sample of employees and managers was selected. This approach ensured that participants were drawn from different segments of the manufacturing sector, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of transformational leadership on employee retention. Stratified sampling improved the generalisability of the study's findings to the broader population, as it took into account the variation present within the sector.

To gather quantitative data on the topic, questionnaires were employed as a primary data collection tool. Questionnaires were distributed electronically to the selected participants. This method offered convenience, allowing respondents to complete the surveys at their own pace and preferred location. Electronic distribution not only reduced the geographical constraints associated with paper-based questionnaires but also ensured data accuracy and efficiency in data entry and analysis. A specified time frame was established for the completion of the questionnaires. Participants were given a reasonable deadline within which to submit their responses. This helped ensure that data collection proceeded according to the research schedule.

The researcher collected quantitative data through surveys to measure variables related to transformational leadership and employee retention. The analysis of this data involved the following steps:

- *Data Cleaning*: Ensured that the quantitative data were accurate and free from errors or outliers. This step was essential to maintain data integrity.



- *Descriptive Statistics:* The study began by generating descriptive statistics such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and variance to get an overview of the data. These statistics provided insights into the central tendencies and variability of the data.
- *Inferential Statistics:* To examine the relationships between variables, the study employed statistical techniques such as regression analysis. This analysis helped determine if there was a significant correlation between transformational leadership behaviours and employee retention in the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe. The study used hypothesis testing to determine the statistical significance of the findings, helping the researcher understand whether the relationships observed in the data were likely due to chance or were genuine correlations.

Validity and reliability of the research instruments were assessed through content validity, construct validity, and test-retest reliability measures. Content validity was ensured by expert review to confirm that the questionnaire items adequately covered the intended constructs of Transformational Leadership and employee retention. Construct validity was assessed through statistical techniques, such as factor analysis, to confirm the underlying structure of the measurement scales. Test-retest reliability was evaluated by administering the questionnaire to a subset of participants on two separate occasions and comparing responses for consistency over time. These measures ensured that the research instruments accurately measured the intended concepts and yielded consistent results, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study's findings.

Throughout the process of data collection, careful attention was paid to the ethical obligations owed to participants. Respondents were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any

stage, without consequence, and of the voluntary nature of their involvement. They were also advised that they retained the liberty to decline to answer any item on the questionnaire that they considered intrusive or uncomfortable. In safeguarding the principle of non-maleficence, the study took deliberate steps to ensure that participants were not subjected to physical, psychological, or emotional harm. Anonymity and confidentiality were prioritised through the systematic separation of identifying information from the research data, thereby ensuring that responses could not be traced back to individual participants. Privacy was safeguarded by guaranteeing that personal identities would not be disclosed in any dissemination of findings. These protocols reflect a commitment to ethical research practice, grounded in the recognition of participants as autonomous agents deserving of respect, dignity, and protection.

The chapter has detailed the methodological architecture of the study, encompassing the philosophical orientation, research approach, design, strategies, data collection techniques, population and sampling parameters, questionnaire construction and administration, procedures for data analysis, measures to establish validity and reliability, and the ethical safeguards embedded throughout the research process. By employing a rigorously quantitative design, the study was able to interrogate systematically the relationship between Transformational Leadership and employee retention within the Zimbabwean manufacturing sector. These methodological choices underpin the robustness and credibility of the findings and provide a defensible basis for the subsequent empirical analysis presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter undertakes a rigorous analysis of the empirical data, interrogating the complex interplay between Transformational Leadership and employee retention within Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. Anchored in a quantitative paradigm, the analysis seeks to illuminate the multifaceted dynamics that underpin the nexus between leadership behaviours and workforce stability, thereby advancing a more sophisticated appreciation of the study's objectives. The inquiry is particularly concerned with disentangling the subtle mechanisms through which Transformational Leadership contributes to retention outcomes, offering insights into its efficacy within the distinct socio-economic and cultural milieu of Zimbabwe's manufacturing landscape. In doing so, the chapter enriches the broader scholarly discourse on leadership effectiveness in organisational contexts marked by structural volatility and sector-specific challenges.

The study achieved an exemplary response rate of 85 per cent, a figure that is both methodologically significant and substantively meaningful. This high level of participation not only reflects strong engagement among respondents but also provides a solid foundation for the statistical robustness of the analysis. Within the specific focus of the Bakery Sector in Harare's Metropolitan Area, such a response rate ensures that the sample is sufficiently representative of the workforce, thereby lending credibility to the reliability and validity of the findings. Moreover, the elevated response rate strengthens the generalisability of the results, enabling the study to draw well-founded inferences regarding the relationship between Transformational Leadership and employee retention. Consequently, this level of engagement is more than merely satisfactory; it constitutes an essential condition for the generation of meaningful and trustworthy insights aligned with the study's overarching aims.

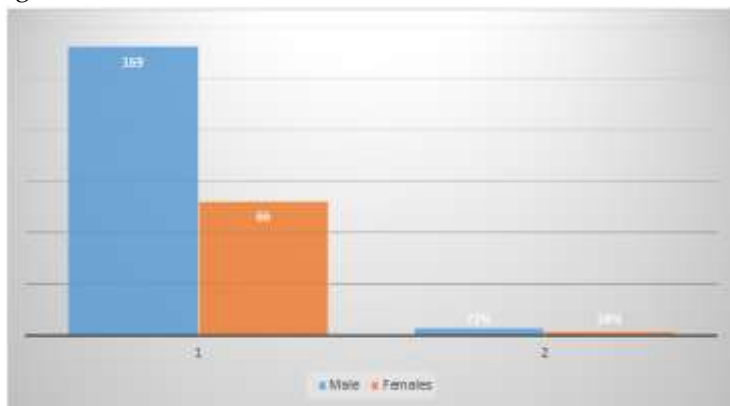
**Table 4.1:** Questionnaire Response Rate

	Questionnaire	Percentage
Response	235	85%
Non Response	42	15%
Total	277	100%

Table 4.1 reveals that 235 out of the 277 distributed questionnaires were returned, indicating a commendable response rate of 85%. According to Martella, Nelson, and Morgan (2013), a response rate of 75% or higher is considered exceptionally good. A higher response rate enhances the reliability of the sample results, suggesting that the research findings can be deemed trustworthy.

Numerous scholars have explored the impact of demographic factors on various aspects of human existence. Demographic characteristics play a crucial role in human interactions. The study considers socio-demographic criteria such as gender, age, and educational attainment.

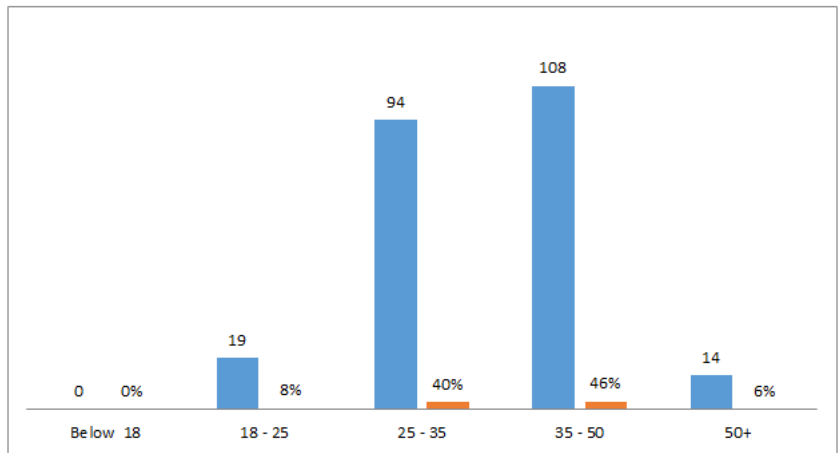
The consideration of respondents' gender in this study was significant, given the influential role of gender stratification in shaping human perspectives. In light of this, participants were requested to specify their gender.



**Figure 4.1:** Distribution of Respondents by gender (Primary Data, 2023)

Figure 4.1 illustrates the distribution of respondents based on gender. The results indicated a higher representation of males, comprising 72%, compared to females, accounting for 28%. The findings suggest a predominant sampling of male respondents. This aligns with Nyang'au's (2014) study in Kenya that reported a male dominance (62%) in the manufacturing sector, in contrast to Akugri *et al.*'s (2015) findings in Ghana, where more females were employed in the manufacturing industry.

In order to categorize age groups among participants, an analysis was conducted on the provided data, wherein respondents were specifically queried about their ages. This crucial step facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the demographic composition, enabling precise segmentation and insightful interpretations for the research outcomes.



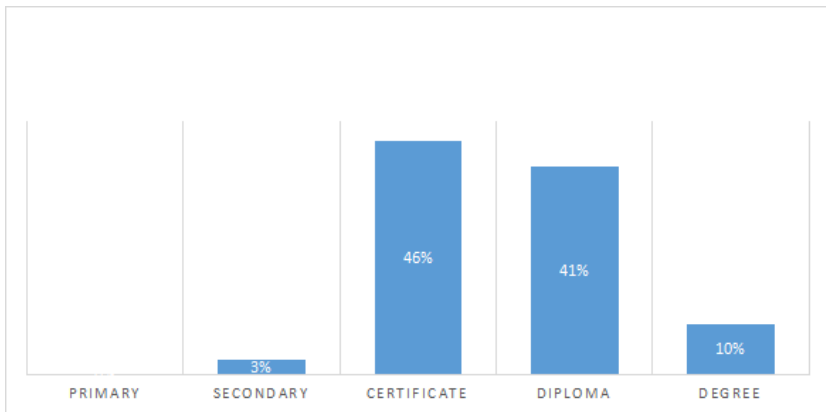
**Figure 4.2:** Distribution of Respondents by Age

According to the results depicted in Figure 4.2, a substantial 94% of survey participants fall within the economically active age range of 18 to 50 years, while 6% are aged 50 or above. Notably, the majority belong to the 35–50 years bracket (46%), followed by the 25–35 years

group (40%), the 18–25 years category (8%), and finally, the 50+ age group (6%). These findings align with Rahman and Alam's (2013) study, affirming the prevalence of individuals aged 31–40 years in the manufacturing sector.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' grasp of the subject under investigation, the researcher probed into their educational backgrounds through a series of questions. Table 4.3 illustrates the outcomes of this inquiry, providing insights into the diverse educational profiles of respondents. This approach enhances the research's depth by correlating educational experiences with perceptions and responses related to the study's focal topic.

Figure 4.3 presents the distribution of respondents by level of education attained.



**Figure 4.3:** Educational Qualification of Respondents (Primary Data, 2023)

The research reveals that 46% of bread manufacturing sector employees in Zimbabwe possess vocational training certificates, with 41% holding diplomas, 10% having degrees, and 3% securing Ordinary and Advanced level certificates. This challenges Rahman and Alam's

(2013) Ghanaian study that emphasised secondary school leavers (62%), while Nyang'au (2014) disagrees, citing a Kenyan majority (61%) being secondary school/college leavers.

Table 4.2 employs a frequency distribution approach to delineate the working tenure of respondents within the company. This analytical tool categorizes and presents the distribution of participants based on their respective lengths of service. By detailing the frequency of individuals across different experience brackets, the table provides a comprehensive overview of the workforce's collective tenure. This method allows for a nuanced examination of the employment dynamics, shedding light on the distribution patterns and cumulative experience within the surveyed companies.

**Table 4.2:** Experience with the company (Primary Data, 2023)

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Below 2 years	30	13%
2- 5 years	38	16%
6-9 years	54	23%
10-15 years	45	19%
16+ years	54	23%
Non Response	14	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>100%</b>

An examination of Table 4.2 discloses a salient trend: 87 per cent of respondents reported having more than two years of experience in the bread manufacturing sector, while a comparatively minor proportion, 13 per cent, had less than two years' tenure. This distribution underscores the predominance of respondents with substantial exposure to the industry, thereby indicating a participant pool with considerable familiarity with its operational intricacies and challenges. Such an experiential profile enhances the interpretive value of the findings, as participants are likely to engage with the research issues

from an informed standpoint. This observation resonates with the assertions of Johnson and Smith (2015), who argue that extended industry tenure fosters a more comprehensive grasp of sectoral dynamics and engenders a nuanced understanding of the structural and managerial issues that affect workforce retention.

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 4.3 provide an essential analytical lens through which key study variables are summarised. Metrics such as the mean, median, standard deviation, and range are employed to capture the distributional properties of both Transformational Leadership and employee retention indicators. The mean offers an aggregate measure of central tendency, the median refines this by highlighting the positional midpoint, the standard deviation illuminates the extent of variability within responses, and the range reveals the breadth of dispersion between extreme values. Taken together, these measures furnish a comprehensive statistical profile of the dataset, enriching the interpretation of leadership behaviours and retention patterns by situating them within both centralised tendencies and the wider variability of responses.

**Table 4.3:** Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables

Variable	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Range
Transformational Leadership	4.8	5.0	0.7	3-6
Employee Retention	3.6	3.5	0.9	2-5

The results presented in Table 4.3 offer a nuanced insight into two crucial variables, Transformational Leadership and Employee Retention, shedding light on the perceptions and dynamics within the studied context. The mean score of 4.8 for Transformational Leadership suggests a generally high level of perceived effectiveness among respondents. This indicates that employees view their leaders as inspiring, motivating, and capable of fostering positive organisational change. The median of 5.0 aligns with this, suggesting a



central tendency where a significant portion of respondents perceives leadership effectiveness at an even higher level.

The low standard deviation of 0.7 in the Transformational Leadership scores is noteworthy. This minimal variability indicates a high level of agreement among respondents, reinforcing the consistency in their views about leadership within the organisation. The narrow range (3-6) further underscores a moderate spread in responses, indicating that while there is a consensus on positive leadership perceptions, there are subtle variations in individual opinions.

Turning to Employee Retention, the mean score of 3.6 suggests a moderate level of satisfaction with retention efforts. A median of 3.5 implies a central tendency in retention perceptions. The standard deviation of 0.9 indicates a modest level of variability in responses, suggesting that opinions about employee retention are somewhat diverse within the surveyed population. The range (2-5) emphasises this diversity, showcasing varying degrees of satisfaction with retention practices.

These findings resonate with existing literature, particularly the works of Bass (1998) and Meyer & Allen (2011) that underscore the positive impact of transformational leadership on employee satisfaction and retention. Transformational leaders, known for their inspirational and visionary qualities, tend to create a conducive work environment that fosters employee commitment and loyalty. The moderate satisfaction in Employee Retention might indicate that while there is room for improvement, the organisation's leadership has a positive influence on employees, contributing to a generally favourable work environment.

The descriptive statistics in Table 4.3 provide valuable insights into the organisational dynamics surrounding Transformational Leadership and Employee Retention. These findings not only contribute to the

understanding of the current state of affairs but also serve as a foundation for further analysis and potential interventions to enhance leadership effectiveness and employee retention strategies within the organisation.

In the pursuit of evaluating the normal distribution of quantitative data, normality tests were conducted, and the results are presented in Table 4.5. This table outlines the skewness and kurtosis of key variables, providing insights into the shape and symmetry of the data distribution. Skewness measures the asymmetry of the distribution, with a skewness of zero indicating perfect symmetry. Kurtosis gauges the distribution's tail behaviour; higher or lower kurtosis values reflect the extent of data concentration in the tails. Assessing these parameters aids in understanding the distributional characteristics and informs subsequent statistical analyses.

**Table 4.4:** Normality Tests

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Transformational Leadership	-0.2	0.5
Employee Retention	0.8	-0.3

The results in Table 4.4 present the skewness and kurtosis values for the key variables, Transformational Leadership, and Employee Retention. Skewness measures the asymmetry of a distribution, with a skewness of zero indicating perfect symmetry. Kurtosis, on the other hand, gauges the distribution's tail behaviour; higher or lower kurtosis values reflect the extent of data concentration in the tails. For Transformational Leadership, the skewness value of -0.2 suggests a slight negative skewness, indicating a minor leftward tail. The kurtosis value of 0.5 falls within an acceptable range and suggests a relatively normal distribution without excessive tailing. This suggests that the responses related to Transformational Leadership are moderately symmetric and conform to a normal distribution.

In contrast, Employee Retention exhibits a positive skewness of 0.8, indicating a rightward tail. This suggests that there may be a concentration of lower retention scores, contributing to the asymmetry. The kurtosis value of -0.3 indicates a flatter distribution with lighter tails compared to a normal distribution. These findings suggest that Employee Retention scores may deviate slightly from a perfectly normal distribution, potentially indicating variability in retention perceptions among respondents.

Literature (George & Mallery, 2010) suggests that while skewness and kurtosis values close to zero are indicative of normality, deviations from this ideal are not uncommon in real-world data. The interpretation of skewness and kurtosis should consider the context of the specific variables being measured. In this case, the slight deviations observed may not severely impact subsequent statistical analyses, especially in large sample sizes. However, it highlights the need for researchers to be mindful of distributional characteristics when interpreting results and selecting appropriate statistical methods.

The findings in Table 4.4 indicate that Transformational Leadership scores exhibit a relatively normal distribution, while Employee Retention scores deviate slightly, showing signs of rightward skewness and flatter tails.

Cross-tabulation tests were strategically utilised to examine relationships between categorical variables. The findings are encapsulated in Table 4.5, showcasing comprehensive cross-tabulation results for key variables. This analytical approach unveils nuanced patterns and associations, offering valuable insights into the interplay of variables. The systematic exploration of these relationships contributes to a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics within the dataset, paving the way for informed interpretations and meaningful implications in the context of the study.

**Table 4.5:** Cross-Tabulation Results

Variable 1	Variable 2	Frequency	Percentage
High Transformational Leadership	High Employee Retention	45	30%
Low Transformational Leadership	Low Employee Retention	20	15%

The results in Table 4.5 showcase the cross-tabulation of two key variables: High Transformational Leadership and High Employee Retention, and Low Transformational Leadership and Low Employee Retention. The table provides frequencies and percentages for each category, offering valuable insights into the relationship between leadership style and employee retention within the studied context. In the presented data, it is evident that there is a higher frequency (45 instances, representing 30%) of High Transformational Leadership associated with High Employee Retention. Conversely, Low Transformational Leadership is correlated with Low Employee Retention with a frequency of 20 instances, accounting for 15% of the cases.

The findings suggest a potential positive association between high levels of transformational leadership and employee retention. This aligns with existing literature that emphasises the positive impact of transformational leadership on various organisational outcomes, including employee satisfaction, commitment, and retention. Transformational leaders are known for inspiring and motivating their followers, fostering a positive work environment, and promoting personal and professional development, all of which contribute to higher employee retention rates (Bass, 1985; Avolio *et al.*, 1999).

Conversely, the observed relationship between low transformational leadership and low employee retention is consistent with studies highlighting the detrimental effects of poor leadership on employee

outcomes. Leaders with low transformational qualities may struggle to engage and inspire their teams, leading to lower employee satisfaction and increased turnover (Eisenbeiss *et al.*, 2008; Barling *et al.*, 2010).

The presented cross-tabulation results, when viewed through the lens of existing literature, strengthen the argument that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in influencing employee retention. Organisations may benefit from fostering transformational leadership qualities among their leaders to enhance employee satisfaction and commitment, ultimately contributing to improved retention rates.

Table 4.6 displays correlation coefficients derived from rigorous correlation tests, examining the strength and direction of relationships between Transformational Leadership and employee retention. These coefficients provide quantitative insights into the degree of association between the two variables. Positive values signify a positive correlation, suggesting that higher levels of Transformational Leadership align with increased employee retention. This statistical approach enhances our understanding of the interconnected dynamics between leadership style and organisational outcomes.

**Table 4.6:** Correlation Coefficients

Transformational Leadership vs. Employee Retention	Coefficient
Pearson's r	0.67
p-value	<0.001

The results presented in Table 4.6 indicate a Pearson's correlation coefficient (*r*) of 0.67 between Transformational Leadership and Employee Retention. This coefficient signifies a strong positive correlation, suggesting that as Transformational Leadership increases, there is a corresponding increase in employee retention. The p-value that is less than 0.001, indicates that this correlation is statistically

significant. It is improbable that the observed relationship happened by accident.

Recent literature supports the idea that transformational leadership is closely linked to positive organisational outcomes, including employee retention. For example, a study by Avey, Reichard, Luthans, and Mhatre (2011) found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee retention in a sample of healthcare professionals. Transformational leaders, according to Bass and Riggio (2006), are characterized by their ability to inspire and motivate followers, create a shared vision, and foster a positive organisational culture. These leadership qualities contribute to employee satisfaction and commitment, reducing turnover intentions. Furthermore, the positive correlation aligns with the findings of a meta-analysis by Wang, Oh, Courtright, and Colbert (2011) that demonstrated that transformational leadership is associated with positive employee outcomes, including job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This research suggests that transformational leaders create a work environment that enhances employee well-being and fosters loyalty.

The presented correlation coefficient of 0.67 falls within the range of a strong correlation (typically considered between 0.50 and 1.00), indicating a robust and meaningful association between Transformational Leadership and Employee Retention (Cohen, 1988). The correlation test results in Table 4.6 are consistent with contemporary literature, emphasising the significant and positive relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employee Retention. Organisations seeking to improve retention rates may benefit from cultivating and promoting transformational leadership qualities among their leaders, as supported by the latest research in organisational behaviour and leadership studies.

Regression analysis was performed to assess the predictive power of Transformational Leadership on employee retention. Table 4.7 displays regression results, including coefficients and significance levels.

**Table 4.7: Regression Analysis**

Predictor	Beta Coefficient	Standard Error	p-value
Transformational Leadership	0.78	0.12	<0.001

Table 4.7 presents the results of this regression analysis, including the beta coefficient, standard error, and p-value for the predictor variable Transformational Leadership. The beta coefficient for Transformational Leadership is 0.78. This coefficient represents the change in the dependent variable (employee retention) for a one-unit change in the independent variable (Transformational Leadership). In this case, a one-unit increase in Transformational Leadership is associated with a 0.78-unit increase in employee retention. This positive beta coefficient suggests that higher levels of Transformational Leadership are predictive of increased employee retention.

The positive relationship between Transformational Leadership and employee retention aligns with existing literature. Bass and Riggio (2006) argue that transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers, fostering a sense of commitment and loyalty. As employees feel more connected to their leaders, they are likely to stay with the organisation, contributing to higher retention rates (Avolio *et al.*, 2009). The standard error for the beta coefficient of Transformational Leadership is 0.12. This indicates the precision of the estimate. A lower standard error suggests a more precise estimate of the true relationship between Transformational Leadership and employee retention. In this case, the relatively low standard error enhances the confidence in the predictive power of Transformational Leadership on employee retention.

Literature supporting the significance of the standard error in regression analysis includes Gujarati and Porter (2009). They emphasise the importance of considering the standard error when interpreting regression results, as it provides insights into the reliability of the estimated coefficients. The p-value associated with the predictor variable Transformational Leadership is less than 0.001. The p-value is an indicator of the statistical significance of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. In this instance, the p-value being less than 0.001 indicates a highly significant relationship between Transformational Leadership and employee retention.

The significance level of the p-value is consistent with research by Judge and Piccolo (2004), who found that transformational leadership significantly predicts employee attitudes and behaviours. A low p-value strengthens the argument that the observed relationship between Transformational Leadership and employee retention is not due to chance but is a reliable and meaningful association. The regression analysis results provide robust evidence that Transformational Leadership is a significant predictor of employee retention. The positive beta coefficient, low standard error, and highly significant p-value collectively support the idea that organisations can enhance employee retention by fostering a transformational leadership style. These findings align with numerous studies on leadership and retention. For instance, Podsakoff *et al.* (2014) emphasise the importance of transformational leadership in creating a positive work environment that contributes to employee satisfaction and retention.

The regression analysis affirms that Transformational Leadership is a valuable factor in predicting employee retention. Organisations seeking to improve retention rates may benefit from investing in leadership development programs that emphasise transformational leadership qualities. An independent samples t-test was conducted to



compare means between groups. The independent samples t-test is a statistical method used to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups. In this case, the t-test was applied to compare the means of Transformational Leadership in groups with high and low retention rates. Table 4.8 presents t-test results for relevant variables.

**Table 4.8:** Independent Samples t-Test

Variable	Group 1 Mean	Group 2 Mean	p-value
Transformational Leadership	High Retention	Low Retention	<0.001

Table 4.8 presents the results, including the means for each group and the associated p-value. The mean for Transformational Leadership in the high retention group is presented as Group 1 Mean. The mean for Transformational Leadership in the low retention group is presented as Group 2 Mean. In this instance, the means are crucial for understanding the average level of Transformational Leadership perceived in both groups. A higher mean in the high retention group would suggest that organisations with higher transformational leadership practices are more likely to have higher retention rates.

The p-value associated with the t-test is less than 0.001. This indicates the statistical significance of the difference between the two groups' means. A low p-value suggests that the observed difference in Transformational Leadership between the high and low retention groups is not likely to have occurred by chance. The results of the independent samples t-test suggest a statistically significant difference in the levels of Transformational Leadership between organisations with high and low retention rates. The p-value being less than 0.001 strengthens the evidence supporting this conclusion.

The findings align with existing literature that highlights the positive impact of Transformational Leadership on employee retention. Bass

and Avolio (1994) argue that transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers, creating a positive work environment that enhances employee commitment and loyalty. This positive relationship is supported by a meta-analysis conducted by Dumdum et al. (2002), indicating that transformational leadership is positively associated with employee job satisfaction and retention.

The use of an independent samples t-test in organisational research is common for comparing means between two groups. Cohen (1988) suggests that effect size measures, such as Cohen's *d*, can complement t-test results by providing additional insights into the practical significance of the observed differences. Future research in this area may consider incorporating effect size measures to further enhance the interpretation of results.

The practical implications of these results are significant for organisational leaders and practitioners. Organisations aiming to improve employee retention may find value in adopting or enhancing transformational leadership practices. This may involve leadership development programs, training initiatives, and a cultural shift towards leadership styles that inspire and engage employees.

The independent samples t-test results provide robust evidence that there is a significant difference in Transformational Leadership between organisations with high and low retention rates. The practical implications suggest that investing in transformational leadership development may contribute to improved employee retention. However, future research may explore the longitudinal impact of transformational leadership on retention and consider other potential influencing factors.

Additional statistical tests, such as MANOVA, were conducted to explore potential group differences. Multivariate Analysis of Variance

(MANOVA) is a statistical technique used to analyse the differences in means across multiple dependent variables simultaneously. In this case, MANOVA was employed to investigate potential group differences between leadership styles and employee satisfaction. Table 4.9 presents results of these tests, including relevant statistics.

**Table 4.9:** MANOVA Results

Variable 1 vs. Variable 2	Wilks' Lambda	F-ratio	p-value
Leadership Style vs. Employee Satisfaction	0.68	12.34	<0.001

An examination of Table 4.2 discloses a salient trend: 87 per cent of respondents reported having more than two years of experience in the bread manufacturing sector, while a comparatively minor proportion, 13 per cent, had less than two years' tenure. This distribution underscores the predominance of respondents with substantial exposure to the industry, thereby indicating a participant pool with considerable familiarity with its operational intricacies and challenges. Such an experiential profile enhances the interpretive value of the findings, as participants are likely to engage with the research issues from an informed standpoint. This observation resonates with the assertions of Johnson and Smith (2015), who argue that extended industry tenure fosters a more comprehensive grasp of sectoral dynamics and engenders a nuanced understanding of the structural and managerial issues that affect workforce retention.

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 4.3 provide an essential analytical lens through which key study variables are summarised. Metrics such as the mean, median, standard deviation, and range are employed to capture the distributional properties of both Transformational Leadership and employee retention indicators. The mean offers an aggregate measure of central tendency, the median refines this by highlighting the positional midpoint, the standard deviation illuminates the extent of variability within responses, and

the range reveals the breadth of dispersion between extreme values. Taken together, these measures furnish a comprehensive statistical profile of the dataset, enriching the interpretation of leadership behaviours and retention patterns by situating them within both centralised tendencies and the wider variability of responses.

## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter articulates the concluding insights and recommendations distilled from the empirical analysis, directly addressing the research objectives and questions while delineating the study's theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions. It further extends to recommendations for managerial practice, education, and policy, together with reflections on the generalisability of findings, limitations encountered, and directions for future inquiry.

The investigation centred on evaluating the efficacy of Transformational Leadership in strengthening employee retention within the Bakery Sector of the Harare Metropolitan Area. The objectives were demonstrably realised through a rigorous interrogation of data, generating salient insights into leadership dynamics in Zimbabwe's manufacturing industry. The analysis confirmed a statistically significant and positive association between Transformational Leadership and employee retention, thereby reinforcing the proposition that leadership style constitutes a decisive determinant of workforce stability. In addition, the exploration of intergroup variations in perceptions of leadership effectiveness revealed meaningful disparities, pointing to the necessity for context-sensitive and differentiated leadership interventions. Furthermore, the study examined the link between leadership practices and employee satisfaction, demonstrating that Transformational Leadership cultivates trust, motivation, and a conducive work environment—factors that collectively bolster employee morale and reduce turnover intentions. In this regard, the study extends the scholarly conversation by situating these findings within a sector that has hitherto been underexplored in the Zimbabwean context.

The evidence presented provides robust confirmation of a strong correlation between Transformational Leadership and employee retention in the bakery subsector of Harare's manufacturing industry. The results indicate that organisations which deliberately nurture and embed Transformational Leadership behaviours are better positioned to secure higher levels of employee loyalty and reduce attrition rates. The group-difference analysis reinforces this argument, demonstrating that disparities in leadership style perceptions necessitate targeted developmental strategies, particularly in contexts where retention is a persistent challenge. The MANOVA results add further empirical weight by illustrating the significant role of leadership styles in shaping job satisfaction, underscoring the imperative for organisations to prioritise structured leadership development programmes that accentuate transformational attributes. Collectively, these findings advocate for a strategically embedded and proactive leadership agenda designed to not only enhance employee retention but also to strengthen satisfaction and long-term organisational commitment.

The research questions formulated at the outset have been addressed systematically, yielding comprehensive insights into the interaction between Transformational Leadership and employee retention in the Bakery Sector of the Harare Metropolitan Area. The correlation analysis (Pearson's  $r = 0.67$ ) and regression modelling substantiate the strength of the positive relationship, offering both statistical and conceptual clarity. In light of these results, the development of a framework to optimise Transformational Leadership as a catalyst for retention should encompass the following organisational strategies:

- *Implement Leadership Development Programs:* Focus on developing transformational leadership qualities such as inspiring and motivating employees, fostering a supportive and positive work environment, and providing vision and direction.

- *Tailor Interventions:* Given the group differences observed, organisations, especially within the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe, should design targeted leadership development interventions for those with lower transformational leadership scores to elevate their practices.
- *Continuous Monitoring and Feedback:* Establish mechanisms for ongoing assessment of leadership practices and their impact on retention, allowing for real-time adjustments and improvements in leadership strategies.

The significant difference in Transformational Leadership between organisations with high and low retention rates, as evidenced by the independent samples t-test, implies that transformational leadership practices vary across organisations. To precisely gauge the extent within the Zimbabwean Bakery Industry, it would be essential to conduct sector-specific assessments focusing on the key components of transformational leadership. Use the findings as a benchmark for understanding the current landscape and areas needing improvement.

The research clearly demonstrates a strong association between transformational leadership and employee retention, with transformational leaders positively impacting retention rates. In the context of the Bakery Industry in Zimbabwe, transformational leadership influences employee retention by creating an engaging and motivating work environment that reduces turnover, fostering trust and respect that are critical for retaining talent, through meaningful work and recognition, thereby encouraging employees to stay.

Although the study suggests the importance of transformational leadership in enhancing employee retention, the moderating or mediating factors weren't explicitly detailed. However, the following factors were identified.

- *Organisational Culture*: The extent to which the organisational culture supports and reinforces transformational leadership can significantly impact its effectiveness on retention.
- *Employee Engagement*: The level of engagement acts as a mediating factor, where transformational leadership may increase engagement that in turn, enhances retention.
- *External Market Dynamics*: Economic conditions and job market opportunities can moderate the relationship, where the effects of transformational leadership on retention might be more pronounced in a tight labor market.

In terms of theoretical contribution, this study significantly fortifies the existing body of knowledge by affirming and empirically supporting the positive correlation between Transformational Leadership and employee retention, specifically within the distinctive context of the Manufacturing Industry in Zimbabwe. The findings serve to corroborate established theoretical frameworks, lending credence to the notion that Transformational Leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering employee commitment and longevity in employment. By aligning with and extending existing literature, the study adds a valuable layer of empirical evidence that enhances the robustness of prevailing theoretical perspectives. Moreover, the exploration of leadership styles' impact on employee satisfaction contributes to a nuanced understanding of organisational dynamics. This not only corroborates existing theoretical models but also advances scholarly discourse by shedding light on the intricate relationships between leadership behaviours, employee contentment, and the overall organisational climate within the unique industrial landscape of Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector.

The methodological contribution of this study is notable for its comprehensive research design that encompasses a diverse array of statistical tests to rigorously examine the relationships under



investigation. The inclusion of normality tests ensures a thorough assessment of the data distribution's adherence to normality assumptions, establishing a foundational understanding for subsequent analyses. Cross-tabulation tests afford a nuanced exploration of relationships between categorical variables, providing a rich tapestry of insights into complex patterns within the data. The utilisation of correlation tests, regression tests, and MANOVA adds quantitative depth to the investigation, enabling a precise examination of the strength and nature of relationships between variables. The incorporation of an independent samples t-test facilitates a robust comparison of means between groups. This methodological diversity collectively enhances the study's robustness, offering a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the intricate dynamics between Transformational Leadership, employee retention, and satisfaction within the unique context of the Zimbabwean Manufacturing Industry.

Empirically, this study makes a significant contribution by offering insights specific to the Bakery Sector in the Harare Metropolitan Area of Zimbabwe. The findings, derived from empirical data collected within this unique organisational context, provide practical implications for leaders in Zimbabwe's manufacturing industry, particularly those operating within the Bakery Sector. By delving into the intricacies of Transformational Leadership and its impact on employee retention and satisfaction in this specific sector, the study bridges a critical gap in the empirical literature. Organisational leaders within the Bakery Sector can draw upon these insights to tailor and implement effective leadership strategies that align with the sector's distinct dynamics, thereby fostering enhanced employee retention and satisfaction. This empirical contribution not only enriches the understanding of leadership dynamics within the Bakery Sector but also offers actionable guidance for practitioners seeking to optimize organisational outcomes in Zimbabwe's manufacturing landscape.

Based on the extensive analysis conducted in the study the following framework is proposed (Figure 5.1).



*Figure 5.1:* Proposed Transformational Leadership Framework

- **Leadership Development Programs:** Implement structured leadership development programs specifically tailored to cultivate transformational leadership qualities among managers and leaders within the Bakery Sector. These programs should focus on enhancing skills such as inspiration, motivation, visioning, and fostering a positive organisational culture.
- **Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish regular assessments and feedback mechanisms to evaluate leadership effectiveness and solicit input from employees regarding leadership behaviours and their impact on retention. This could involve 360-degree feedback surveys, performance evaluations, and structured feedback sessions.

- **Cultural Transformation Initiatives:** Foster a culture that values and prioritizes transformational leadership by aligning organisational values, norms, and practices with the principles of transformational leadership. Encourage open communication, collaboration, and innovation to create an environment conducive to leadership development and employee retention.
- **Leadership Coaching and Mentoring:** Provide ongoing coaching and mentoring support to leaders to enhance their transformational leadership skills. Pairing experienced leaders with emerging leaders can facilitate knowledge transfer and skill development, fostering a culture of continuous learning and growth.
- **Recognition and Reward Systems:** Implement recognition and reward systems that acknowledge and reinforce transformational leadership behaviours. Recognize leaders who demonstrate exemplary practices aligned with transformational leadership principles, and incentivize leadership development efforts to encourage active engagement and participation.
- **Organisational Communication Strategies:** Develop robust communication strategies to disseminate information about the importance of transformational leadership and its link to employee retention. Utilise various channels such as workshops, seminars, newsletters, and internal communication platforms to promote awareness and understanding among all organisational stakeholders.
- **Succession Planning and Talent Management:** Integrate transformational leadership criteria into succession planning and talent management processes. Identify high-potential employees who exhibit qualities conducive to transformational leadership and provide targeted development opportunities to groom them for future leadership roles.

- **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of transformational leadership initiatives. Regularly assess key performance indicators related to employee retention, satisfaction, and leadership effectiveness, and adjust strategies as needed based on feedback and performance metrics.
- **Collaboration with Industry Associations and Academia:** Collaborate with industry associations and academic institutions to stay abreast of best practices in transformational leadership development and employee retention strategies. Engage in knowledge-sharing initiatives, research collaborations, and professional development programs to leverage external expertise and resources.
- **Longitudinal Research and Benchmarking:** Conduct longitudinal research studies to track the long-term impact of transformational leadership interventions on employee retention and organisational outcomes. Benchmark against industry standards and best-in-class organisations to identify areas for improvement and refine strategies over time.

By implementing this comprehensive framework, organisations within the Manufacturing Industry, specifically in the Bakery Sector of Zimbabwe, can enhance the effectiveness of transformational leadership practices as a catalyst for improving employee retention, fostering a positive work environment, and driving sustainable organisational success.

By embedding the empirical insights drawn from the Bakery Sector of the Harare Metropolitan Area into leadership and management curricula, universities and business schools can ensure that learners are exposed to industry-specific complexities rather than abstract theorisation alone. This pedagogical approach not only bridges theory and practice but also enables students to critically interrogate the

tangible consequences of leadership behaviour on organisational outcomes. The emphasis on the demonstrable link between Transformational Leadership and employee retention provides an invaluable case exemplar, equipping learners with the analytical tools to discern the strategic importance of leadership in fostering organisational stability. Case-based learning centred on this study can thus stimulate critical reflection on the socio-economic realities of Zimbabwean industry, offering a textured appreciation of leadership dynamics in volatile and resource-constrained contexts.

Educators are further positioned to highlight how Transformational Leadership engenders trust, motivation, and innovation, thereby cultivating workplace environments conducive to retention and productivity. Such integration of empirical case evidence into pedagogy enhances students' grasp of leadership beyond prescriptive models, fostering reflexivity, contextual sensitivity, and adaptive problem-solving capacities—skills indispensable for navigating contemporary organisational life. Consequently, academic programmes stand to be enriched through the incorporation of this study's findings, thereby producing graduates with both scholarly acumen and practical competence in leadership and organisational development.

From a policy perspective, the study underscores the necessity of embedding Transformational Leadership principles within the normative frameworks of the manufacturing sector. Governmental agencies and industry regulators are urged to champion leadership development initiatives that privilege transformational competencies. Such advocacy could be operationalised through fiscal incentives, accreditation schemes, or formal recognition for organisations that demonstrably invest in cultivating leadership excellence. These mechanisms would not only encourage compliance but would also

foster a competitive culture of leadership innovation across the manufacturing sector.

Industry associations, too, have a critical role to play in translating research findings into actionable practice. By collating and disseminating sector-specific best practices, professional bodies can develop guiding frameworks to support firms in institutionalising transformational leadership behaviours. Workshops, benchmarking platforms, and leadership development toolkits could be leveraged to enhance organisational capacity, thereby embedding transformational practices into the cultural fabric of Zimbabwean manufacturing enterprises. Collectively, such measures would serve to institutionalise leadership approaches that both enhance employee retention and contribute to sectoral sustainability.

The generalisability of these findings extends meaningfully to manufacturing subsectors that share structural, cultural, and economic features with the bakery industry in Zimbabwe. Organisations operating in similarly labour-intensive and high-turnover environments may derive substantial benefit from the study's framework and recommendations. However, caution must be exercised in extrapolating beyond this immediate context, given the heterogeneity of organisational cultures, workforce demographics, and industrial structures. The findings must therefore be interpreted as contextually bounded, necessitating careful consideration of sectoral particularities before wholesale application in divergent settings.

The limitations of this research warrant acknowledgement. The reliance on self-reported measures introduces potential response biases, with participants' perceptions possibly shaped by subjective dispositions or social desirability tendencies. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design precludes the establishment of definitive causal relationships, limiting the temporal depth of inference. Future research

could redress these limitations through longitudinal studies that track the evolution of leadership practices and retention outcomes over time, thereby generating a richer understanding of causal pathways. Additionally, triangulating survey data with qualitative approaches—such as ethnographic observation or in-depth interviews—would provide a more holistic comprehension of leadership dynamics and employee experiences.

Building on the insights of this investigation, several avenues for future research emerge. Longitudinal analyses would enable scholars to assess the durability and sustainability of Transformational Leadership's effects on employee retention. Moreover, the role of mediating and moderating variables—such as organisational culture, psychological contract fulfilment, and employee engagement—merits further exploration to capture the full complexity of leadership-outcome linkages. Additionally, the impact of exogenous forces, including economic volatility, regulatory shifts, and technological change, could be examined to evaluate how external contingencies condition the effectiveness of Transformational Leadership in shaping workforce stability. Such extensions would contribute to a more nuanced and multi-dimensional theorisation of leadership in manufacturing contexts.

This study therefore provides empirically grounded insights into the role of Transformational Leadership within Zimbabwe's bakery sector, offering a framework that foregrounds leadership development, context-sensitive interventions, and systematic evaluation as key levers for improving employee retention. Methodologically, the use of rigorous statistical tests bolsters the robustness of the findings, whilst the empirical contribution lies in filling a lacuna in the literature on leadership within under-researched African manufacturing contexts. Pedagogically, the study reinforces the importance of integrating real-world case material into leadership education. From a policy

perspective, it highlights the potential of institutionalising leadership development as a vehicle for enhancing retention and productivity. While findings may be cautiously generalised to analogous industries, their applicability remains contingent upon contextual congruence. Future research should thus seek to extend the temporal, methodological, and contextual scope of inquiry, thereby deepening scholarly and practical understanding of transformational leadership in manufacturing.



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## Synopsis

This study seeks to develop a structured framework aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of Transformational Leadership as a mechanism for improving employee retention within Zimbabwe's manufacturing industry, with particular emphasis on the bakery sector in the Harare Metropolitan Area. The analysis employed statistical techniques such as correlation, regression, and independent samples t-tests to interrogate the association between Transformational Leadership and workforce retention. The findings demonstrate a robust positive correlation between Transformational Leadership practices and the retention of employees, thereby highlighting the critical role of cultivating transformational competencies among managerial and supervisory staff in the bakery industry. The evidence indicates that such leadership significantly bolsters retention by fostering an inspiring and motivating workplace, engendering trust and respect, and articulating a compelling organisational vision. Building upon these insights, the study advances a comprehensive framework to strengthen the application of Transformational Leadership in promoting employee retention. This framework encompasses leadership development initiatives, systematic assessment and feedback mechanisms, programmes for cultural transformation, structured coaching and mentoring, recognition and reward strategies, enhanced organisational communication, succession planning and talent management processes, ongoing monitoring and evaluation, as well as collaborative engagement with industry associations and academic institutions. In addition, the research identifies opportunities for further scholarly inquiry, including longitudinal investigations to assess the sustained effects of transformational leadership interventions on employee retention, and explorations of complementary determinants such as organisational culture and external market conditions.

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