This article is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

Open Access

AFRICAN JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT
African Academic Imprint Press

Vol. 2, Issue 1, October 2026, pp. 141–159
Email: ajetdpress@gmail.com
Website: www.aaimp.ng
Submitted August 2026, Published Oct. 2026
Print ISSN: 3156-5123, E-ISSN:3156-5352

LEADERSHIP QUALITY SKILLS FOR NIGERIA'S TRANSITION TOWARDS A PRODUCTIVE ECONOMY: PERSPECTIVES OF LEADERSHIP STAKEHOLDERS AND ECONOMISTS

[1]Solomon Ihuoma Iwejuo, [2]Faithful Cynthia C. Dikeogu-Okoroigwe & [3]Emeh Kenneth Obioma,

[1]Economics, Covenant College of Education in Affiliation with ABSU
[2]Department of Economics, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education
[3]Economics, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri.

Correspondence: ihuomaiwejua@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Nigeria's dependence on imported goods, limited domestic production, unemployment, underutilized industrial capacity, and infrastructure deficits have constrained economic development. This study examined leadership stakeholders' and economists' perceptions of Nigerian leadership quality skills as catalysts for transitioning from a consumption-oriented economy to a productive economy. Two objectives, two research questions, and two null hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The population comprised 78,578 leadership stakeholders and Economics graduates/economists. Through purposive and stratified sampling, 855 respondents were selected from Abuja, Kano, Lagos, and Port Harcourt, comprising 655 leadership stakeholders and 200 economists. Data were collected using a questionnaire with a four-point response scale. Pilot testing with 20 respondents produced a Cronbach's alpha of .76. Mean ratings and standard deviations answered the research questions, while Welch's independent-samples t-tests tested the hypotheses at the .05 significance level. Respondents rated leadership skills positively for productive transformation. Strategic decision-making, innovation, entrepreneurship, accountability, transparency, vision, ethical conduct, problem-solving, communication, and policy implementation emerged as competencies. Neither test revealed a significant difference between the groups' mean ratings. The study concludes that respondents perceive leadership quality skills as potential enablers of productive transformation. It recommends leadership training and coordinated policies supporting domestic production, human capital.

infrastructure, and enterprise development. The findings represent perceived leadership priorities rather than evidence of causal effects on national productivity or sustainable development.

Keywords: *leadership quality skills, productive economy, economic transformation, entrepreneurship, Nigeria.*

JEL Classification: O15, O25, O43, O55.

Citation: Iwejuo, S. I., Dikeogu-Okoroigwe, F. C. C., & Emeh, K. O. (2026). Leadership quality skills for Nigeria's transition towards a productive economy: Perspectives of leadership stakeholders and economists. *African Journal of Economic Transformation and Development, 2*(1), 141–159.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's economic development challenge concerns not only the availability of resources but also the capacity to organise them for productive use. Human and natural resources can support industrial development, employment, and technological progress when they are matched with effective institutions, infrastructure, and investment in skills. Dike (2014) places these issues at the center of Nigeria's development difficulties, linking weaknesses in leadership and governance with inadequate investment in education, technological capabilities, and infrastructure. This perspective suggests that strengthening domestic production requires attention to the leadership capacities that guide economic decisions and sustain their implementation.

The movement towards a more productive economy requires leaders who can translate development priorities into coordinated action. In this study, productive transformation refers to strengthening domestic production, value addition, entrepreneurship, and the effective use of economic resources. Solomon et al. (2023) argue that leadership and strategic governance are closely connected requirements for sustainable socioeconomic development in Nigeria. Their argument provides a basis for examining leadership beyond the personal qualities of officeholders: development also depends on how leaders organise institutions, establish priorities, and coordinate efforts towards shared goals.

At the organisational level, the literature similarly highlights the importance of leadership practices suited to the demands of the operating environment. Akpa et al. (2021), in their theoretical examination of leadership styles and organisational performance in Nigeria, discuss approaches that managers can use to develop and adapt their leadership practices. This emphasis on adaptation is relevant to productive transformation, which requires organisations to respond to changing markets, improve operations, and make effective use of available resources. However, their discussion does not establish that a single leadership style can resolve Nigeria's wider economic challenges.

A more specific account of the skills involved is provided by Harrison et al. (2018). Drawing on 51 semi-structured interviews within Nigeria's retail pharmacy sector, they identified four categories of entrepreneurial leadership skills: technical and business skills, interpersonal skills, conceptual skills, and entrepreneurial skills. These categories suggest that effective leadership combines knowledge of operations with the ability to work with people, understand complex situations, and pursue business

opportunities. Although the findings are sector-specific, they offer a useful foundation for examining the competencies that may support enterprise development and productive activity in Nigeria.

Leadership capacity also deserves attention in institutions that develop the workforce and knowledge needed for production. Habeeb and Eyupoglu (2024) examine strategic planning, transformational leadership, and organisational performance in Nigerian higher education. Their focus connects leadership with the management of institutions responsible for developing skills and supporting learning. Read alongside Dike's (2014) discussion of human-capital and technological development, this work suggests that productive transformation requires coordination between economic priorities and the institutions that prepare people to contribute to them.

Together, these studies provide a basis for examining leadership quality through identifiable competencies rather than broad claims about good or poor leadership. Strategic planning, communication, technical understanding, entrepreneurial judgement, and institutional coordination emerge as relevant areas of inquiry. Their relevance to national productive transformation nevertheless requires careful assessment. Evidence drawn from individual sectors and organisations cannot automatically establish how leadership skills influence productivity across the economy.

Within the sources reviewed, attention is directed mainly towards broad leadership and governance problems, organisational performance, or entrepreneurial leadership in particular settings. Less attention is given to comparing the views of leadership stakeholders and economists on the competencies needed to strengthen Nigeria's productive economy. Such a comparison can help identify shared priorities and differences between those involved in leadership practice and those concerned with economic analysis.

The present study examines the views of leadership stakeholders and economists on the role of Nigerian leadership quality skills in supporting the transition from a consumption-oriented economy to a productive economy. It focuses on competencies associated with strategic planning, innovation, entrepreneurship, accountability, resource management, and policy implementation. Specifically, the study assesses the perceived contribution of these skills, identifies those respondents consider most effective, and examines whether the two groups differ in their views. It therefore provides evidence about perceived leadership priorities rather than establishing a causal relationship between leadership skills and national productivity.

To guide this investigation, the following research questions were formulated:

Research Questions

a) To what extent do leadership stakeholders and economists perceive Nigerian leadership quality skills as contributing to Nigeria's transition from a consumption-oriented economy to a productive economy?
b) Which leadership quality skills do leadership stakeholders and economists consider most effective in promoting productivity, entrepreneurship, investment, innovation, and sustainable economic development in Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine Nigerian leadership quality skills as catalysts for moving from a consumption-oriented economy to a productive economy.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

a) Examine the extent to which Nigerian leadership quality skills contribute to the migration of Nigeria from a consumption-oriented economy to a productive economy.
b) Determine the leadership quality skills that are most effective in promoting productivity, entrepreneurship, investment, innovation, and sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

a) H_{01}: Nigerian leadership quality skills do not significantly contribute to the migration of Nigeria from a consumption-oriented economy to a productive economy.
b) H_{02}: There is no significant difference in the views of leadership stakeholders and Economists on effective leadership quality skills and the promotion of productivity, entrepreneurship, investment, innovation, and sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Literature

Consumption Economy and Productive Economy

A consumption-oriented economy, according to Ede (2019), is an economic system in which a major proportion of economic activity is devoted to purchasing and using goods and services rather than developing domestic productive capacity. Consumption is not inherently undesirable, as household spending contributes to aggregate demand. The concern in this study is dependence on imported consumer goods without a corresponding expansion of domestic production. Dike (2014) situates Nigeria's development challenges within a broader pattern of oil dependence and inadequate investment in the skills, infrastructure, and technological capabilities needed for industrial development.

A productive economy is understood here as one that effectively combines labour, capital, technology, natural resources, and entrepreneurial capabilities to produce goods and services. This understanding emphasizes the development of productive capacity through investment, skills, and technological advancement. Dike (2014) supports this emphasis by identifying human-capital development and technological capabilities as essential foundations for Nigeria's industrial transformation. For Nigeria, moving from consumption to production therefore involves strengthening domestic capacity to meet demand and develop competitive goods and services for export. Within the conceptual framework of this study, investment in agriculture, manufacturing, infrastructure, education, technology, and entrepreneurship represents a connected set of development priorities. The importance of linking workforce capabilities with enterprise development is reflected in Harrison et al. (2018), who identified technical and business, interpersonal, conceptual, and entrepreneurial skills as important dimensions of entrepreneurial leadership in Nigeria.

Leadership is relevant because decisions about institutions, public resources, and policy implementation influence the conditions in which productive activities occur. Solomon et al. (2023) present leadership and strategic governance as closely connected requirements for sustainable socioeconomic development in Nigeria. Dike (2014) similarly links leadership and governance weaknesses with inadequate investment in education, infrastructure, and technological development. Together, these perspectives suggest that productive transformation requires leadership capable of coordinating development priorities and sustaining their implementation.

At the organisational level, leadership also concerns how people and resources are directed towards productive goals. Akpa et al. (2021) discuss the need for managers to develop and adapt leadership practices to support organisational performance. Habeeb and Eyupoglu (2024) examine strategic planning and transformational leadership in relation to organisational performance in Nigerian higher education. These contributions provide a basis for considering planning, adaptability, communication, and the development of institutional capabilities as relevant aspects of leadership quality.

The central conceptual argument of this study is that leadership quality may provide an enabling mechanism through which resources, policies, and institutions support productive activity. Drawing on the emphasis on entrepreneurial competencies in Harrison et al. (2018) and strategic governance in Solomon et al. (2023), the study considers strategic planning, accountability, innovation, economic management, communication, and policy implementation as potentially relevant leadership skills. It examines how leadership stakeholders and economists perceive their contribution to Nigeria's productive transformation, without assuming that these perceptions establish a causal relationship with national productivity.

Economists and Leadership Skills for a Productive Economy

Leadership is relevant to economic development because decisions about resources, institutions, and investment shape the conditions for productive activity. Dike (2014) links Nigeria's development challenges to weaknesses in leadership and governance, alongside inadequate investment in education, infrastructure, and technological capabilities. His analysis emphasizes that economic transformation requires sustained attention to the capabilities and institutions that support production.

Strategic governance provides a connection between development priorities and their implementation. Solomon et al. (2023) argue that leadership and strategic governance are closely related requirements for sustainable socioeconomic development in Nigeria. Their discussion supports examining leadership in terms of its capacity to coordinate development efforts, rather than focusing solely on the personal attributes of leaders.

Entrepreneurial leadership offers a more specific account of relevant competencies. Harrison et al. (2018), drawing on interviews in Nigeria's retail pharmacy sector, identified four categories of entrepreneurial leadership skills: technical and business skills, interpersonal skills, conceptual skills, and entrepreneurial skills. These findings provide a basis for examining how different competencies are perceived to support enterprise development, although their sector-specific evidence does not establish effects across the national economy. Drawing on these perspectives, the present study examines economists' assessments of leadership competencies associated with productive transformation. It considers their views on strategic

planning, economic management, innovation, problem-solving, and implementation capacity. These are dimensions of the study's framework whose perceived importance is assessed through the survey.

Leadership Stakeholders' Skills for a Productive Economy

In this study, leadership stakeholders comprise respondents with leadership responsibilities, including heads of political parties and group leaders. Their views provide a perspective on the competencies needed to establish priorities, coordinate activities, and manage resources.

Accountability and responsible resource management are included in the study's framework because the reviewed literature connects governance weaknesses with development difficulties. Dike (2014) identifies poor leadership, governance, and corruption among the obstacles to Nigeria's economic development. Solomon et al. (2023) similarly emphasize leadership and strategic governance in their discussion of sustainable development. These arguments provide a basis for investigating the importance respondents attach to accountability and ethical leadership.

Planning and interpersonal competencies also feature in the literature. Habeeb and Eyupoglu (2024) examine strategic planning, transformational leadership, and organisational performance in Nigerian higher education. Harrison et al. (2018) identify interpersonal skills as a category of entrepreneurial leadership, while Akpa et al. (2021) discuss leadership approaches and their adaptation in Nigerian organizations. Together, these sources support examining planning and interpersonal capabilities within the study's leadership framework, while recognizing the different settings in which they were investigated.

The present study therefore assesses leadership stakeholders' views on strategic planning, accountability, communication, collaboration, and implementation capacity. Their responses are compared with those of economists to identify shared priorities and differences in assessment.

Quality Leadership Skills and the Productive Economy

For this study, quality leadership skills refer to competencies used to set direction, make decisions, coordinate activities, and manage resources towards productive goals. This working definition brings together the leadership dimensions examined in the questionnaire; it is not attributed to an external author.

The reviewed sources address complementary aspects of leadership. Dike (2014) connects leadership and governance with human-capital investment and technological development. Solomon et al. (2023) emphasize strategic governance, while Harrison et al. (2018) identify specific entrepreneurial leadership competencies. Their contributions provide a foundation for considering both the wider development environment and the skills exercised within productive organizations.

The present study brings these dimensions together to examine how leadership stakeholders and economists perceive the role of leadership quality skills in Nigeria's transition from a consumption-oriented economy to a productive economy. It identifies perceived priorities and compares the two groups' assessments. The findings are interpreted as evidence of respondents' views, rather than proof that particular leadership skills cause changes in national productivity.

2.2 Theoretical Literature Review

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership, associated with Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), explains leadership through the ability to inspire followers towards higher levels of commitment and achievement. Transformational leaders articulate a vision, motivate stakeholders, and encourage innovation and change. The theory is relevant because moving from consumption to production requires structural change in public priorities, business practices, and citizens' participation in productive activities.

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory provides a second foundation. North (1990) argues that institutions shape incentives and economic behaviour. Effective institutions reduce uncertainty and can encourage investment and productive activity. Leadership matters because leaders influence institutional rules, enforcement, and public-sector conduct. Competent, transparent, and accountable leadership can help establish institutions that support productive investment.

Schumpeterian Theory of Innovation

Schumpeter's (1934) theory emphasizes entrepreneurship, innovation, and technological change as drivers of economic development. Entrepreneurs introduce new products, production methods, markets, and organizational structures. This theory is relevant because Nigeria's productive transformation requires entrepreneurship and innovation, supported by leadership that creates conditions in which entrepreneurs and innovators can flourish.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

The literature on leadership and economic development suggests that productive transformation depends on how effectively leaders connect innovation, institutional quality, human-capital development, and investment. These factors are closely related. Innovative businesses require supportive institutions, skilled workers need opportunities to apply their knowledge, and development policies require consistent implementation. For Nigeria, this relationship provides a basis for examining the leadership skills needed to strengthen domestic production and reduce dependence on consumption and imports.

Studies on transformational leadership suggest that leadership contributes to performance partly by creating conditions in which innovation can flourish. Afriyie et al. (2019), using cross-sectional data from 437 SME service firms, found that innovation positively influenced marketing performance and that transformational leadership moderated this relationship. Their findings suggest that innovative ideas are more likely to improve business outcomes when leaders provide the direction and support needed to put them into practice. Puni et al. (2022) developed this argument by examining 400 employees in ten manufacturing companies in Ghana. They found that an innovative organisational climate mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and organisational performance. This finding shifts attention from the leader's personal qualities to the working environment that leadership creates. Encouraging employees to exchange ideas, solve problems, and participate in organisational improvement can provide a pathway through which leadership supports performance.

Evidence from Mexico points to a similar relationship. Cuevas-Vargas et al. (2023), in a study of 225 micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, found that innovation fully mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and business performance. Taken together, these studies suggest that leadership effectiveness involves more than communicating a vision. Leaders must also create practical opportunities for experimentation, learning, and the implementation of new ideas. However, their findings are not identical: Afriyie et al. identified leadership as a moderator of innovation's effect, whereas Puni et al. and Cuevas-Vargas et al. identified mediating mechanisms through which leadership influenced performance.

Le (2024) extended this discussion to sustainable production. Using managerial responses from 200 organisations in Vietnam, the study found that green transformational leadership, knowledge management, and green organisational culture supported green innovation. Green leadership and innovation also positively influenced sustainable organisational performance. This suggests that productive transformation should consider both increased output and the efficient, responsible use of resources.

These studies provide a basis for including visionary leadership, communication, innovative thinking, and problem-solving among the competencies relevant to Nigeria's productive transformation. Nevertheless, they focus on organisational performance, and their cross-sectional designs limit conclusions about causality. Their findings therefore offer useful insights into possible leadership mechanisms rather than direct evidence that the same relationships operate at the national level.

The organisational literature explains how leaders can encourage innovation within firms, while institutional perspectives help explain the wider environment in which productive activity occurs. Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) argued that inclusive political and economic institutions encourage investment, innovation, entrepreneurship, and broader participation in economic opportunities. Extractive institutions, by contrast, concentrate opportunities and resources among limited groups and weaken incentives for wider productive participation. North's institutional perspective similarly emphasizes the role of rules, enforcement, and incentives in shaping economic behaviour. Predictable institutions can reduce uncertainty and transaction costs, while weak or inconsistently enforced rules can discourage investment. These perspectives suggest that leadership contributes to productive transformation through the institutions it establishes and sustains, as well as through individual decisions.

Nigerian empirical evidence, however, presents a less uniform picture. Ezidimma et al. (2024), using annual data for 1996–2021 and fully modified ordinary least squares, found that governance quality and financial development positively and significantly influenced economic growth. Their findings support the view that institutional credibility and financial-sector development can reinforce the conditions needed for investment and productive activity. Oyetade et al. (2024) reported a different pattern. Using data for 1996–2016 and an autoregressive distributed lag approach, they found mixed effects for individual governance indicators and a negative relationship between the overall governance index and economic growth in their model. Read alongside Ezidimma et al., these results suggest that the governance–growth relationship should not be treated as uniformly positive. Differences in study periods, measures, and estimation methods may help explain the contrasting results, although the reviewed evidence does not establish which explanation is decisive.

The implication for the present study is that leadership quality should be examined through specific competencies rather than treated as a broad personal attribute. Accountability, transparency, ethical conduct, policy coordination, and implementation capacity are relevant because they may influence how institutions function and how economic policies are translated into productive opportunities.

Institutions alone cannot sustain productive transformation without a workforce capable of using technology, improving production processes, and responding to changing economic demands. Becker's human-capital perspective links education, training, and skills development with productivity. It provides a basis for understanding why leadership decisions about education and workforce development matter to economic transformation. Okunlola et al. (2025) examined this relationship through public investment in education, health, and research and development in Nigeria. Their autoregressive distributed lag analysis found that education and research and development contributed positively to long-run economic growth. These findings connect the human-capital argument with the innovation literature: education builds capabilities, while research helps generate knowledge that can be applied to productive activities.

The study also found a negative long-run relationship between health investment and growth, with an insignificant short-run parameter. This result does not, by itself, establish that health investment reduces productivity. Rather, it raises questions about the effectiveness, allocation, and measurement of expenditure that require further investigation. More broadly, the findings suggest that public spending should be assessed by its outcomes as well as its size. For the present study, this evidence supports attention to strategic planning, economic-management skills, and evidence-based resource allocation. Leadership must connect education, technical training, research, and enterprise development so that investment in human capabilities can contribute to productive employment and economic diversification.

The World Bank's Nigeria Development Updates for 2024 and 2025 place these issues within Nigeria's broader reform environment. The reports emphasize productivity, private-sector development, human capital, infrastructure, and the quality of public expenditure. The 2025 report also highlights the need to consolidate macroeconomic stability through deeper structural reforms. Together, these reports suggest that improvements in the policy environment require complementary investments and implementation arrangements to produce wider economic benefits. The African Development Bank's African Economic Outlook (2024) presents a related argument at the continental level, linking structural transformation with diversification, industrialization, infrastructure, and private-sector development. These priorities reinforce the connections identified in the preceding literature. Firms need infrastructure and finance to expand; innovation requires skills and supportive institutions; and diversification requires coordination across sectors.

For Nigeria, the leadership challenge is therefore to bring these development priorities together. Visionary leadership can establish direction, but strategic planning, stakeholder coordination, accountability, and consistent implementation are needed to turn that direction into practical programmes. The development reports identify important policy priorities, although they do not directly measure the leadership competencies required to deliver them.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a descriptive survey research design to examine the views of leadership stakeholders and Economists on Nigerian leadership quality skills and a productive economy. This design was suitable because it allowed the researchers to gather respondents' views and compare the two groups without manipulating the variables.

Study Locations

The study was conducted in four major Nigerian cities: Abuja, Kano, Lagos, and Port Harcourt, selected for their geographical and economic significance. Abuja**,** as the Federal Capital Territory, represents the administrative and policy environment, providing insights into leadership decisions, economic planning, resource allocation, and policy implementation. Kano**,** a major commercial and industrial centre in northern Nigeria, offers perspectives on entrepreneurship, manufacturing, domestic production, and industrial development. Lagos, Nigeria's leading commercial and financial hub, provides insights into private-sector development, innovation, investment, and productivity. Port Harcourt**,** a major oil and gas, engineering, and commercial centre, offers perspectives on industrial development, infrastructure, and economic diversification beyond crude oil dependence. Collectively, these locations provide geographical and economic diversity for assessing the perceptions of leadership stakeholders and economists regarding the competencies required to facilitate Nigeria's transition towards a productive economy.

Population of the Study, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The population of the study comprised 78,578 potential respondents across four selected Nigerian cities: Kano, Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt. The population included leadership stakeholders, such as heads of political parties and group leaders, as well as Economics graduates/Economists. From this population, a sample of 855 respondents was selected, comprising 655 leadership stakeholders and 200 Economists. The sample size was considered appropriate for obtaining diverse perspectives and comparing the opinions of the two groups on the leadership competencies required to facilitate Nigeria's transition towards a productive economy.

The study employed a multistage sampling procedure involving purposive and stratified sampling techniques. First, the four cities were purposively selected based on their administrative, commercial, industrial, and economic significance. Respondents were subsequently stratified into two categories: leadership stakeholders and Economists, to ensure adequate representation of both groups. Purposive sampling was further employed to identify respondents with relevant leadership responsibilities or backgrounds in Economics. The geographical distribution of the sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Geographical Distribution of Respondents

Location	Number of Respondents
Kano	255
Lagos	200
Abuja	200
Port Harcourt	200
Total	**855**

Source: Author's Compilation 2026.

The distribution ensured representation across the four study locations and provided a basis for assessing and comparing the perspectives of leadership stakeholders and Economists on the leadership skills necessary for promoting domestic production, economic diversification, and sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

The number selected from each city was based on the researchers' judgement of its relevance to the research questions, rather than a strictly proportional allocation based on population.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Nigerian Leadership Quality Skills and Productive Economy Questionnaire *(NLQSPQ).* The questionnaire contained items addressing the two research questions. Respondents indicated their views using a four-point response scale.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The validity and reliability of the research instrument were established to ensure that the questionnaire adequately measured the intended concepts and produced consistent responses. The questionnaire was structured around the study's two research questions, focusing on the contribution of leadership quality skills to Nigeria's transition from a consumption-oriented economy to a productive economy and the leadership competencies required to promote productivity, entrepreneurship, investment, innovation, and sustainable economic development. To establish content validity, the instrument was subjected to expert review by three specialists: a seasoned trainer, an entrepreneur, and a reputable Economist. Their assessment focused on the relevance, clarity, comprehensiveness, and suitability of the questionnaire items in relation to the study's objectives. Following their review and validation, the instrument was considered suitable for the study.

A pilot study was conducted with 20 respondents in Calabar who possessed characteristics similar to those of the main study population but were excluded from the main investigation. The pilot study assessed the

clarity, appropriateness, and consistency of the questionnaire items while identifying possible ambiguities and challenges associated with its administration. Data obtained from the pilot study were used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient. The analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.76**,** indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency. This result suggested that the questionnaire items demonstrated reasonable consistency in measuring the constructs under investigation. Consequently, the instrument was considered sufficiently valid and reliable for collecting data for the main study, while recognising that internal consistency alone does not establish construct validity or eliminate measurement errors.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean ratings and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions. The mean ratings showed the respondents' average assessments, while the standard deviations showed the extent of variation in their responses.

Welch's independent-samples t-test was used to test the two null hypotheses and compare the mean responses of leadership stakeholders and Economists. The test was appropriate because the groups differed in size and could also differ in variance.

Decision Rules for Hypothesis Testing

The null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance. A null hypothesis was rejected when the p-value was less than .05. When the p-value was equal to or greater than .05, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

A statistically significant result indicated evidence of a difference between the mean responses of leadership stakeholders and Economists. A result that was not statistically significant meant that there was insufficient evidence to establish a difference between the groups.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Results

Research Question 1

To what extent do Nigerian leadership quality skills contribute to the migration from a consumption-oriented economy to a productive economy?

Table 2 presents the mean ratings of leadership stakeholders and Economists.

S/N	Leadership quality skill statement	Leadership stakeholders (M)	Economists (M)	Difference	Remark
1	Effective leadership can transform Nigeria towards a productive economy.	3.89	3.0	0.89	Positive

2	Economic management skills can promote domestic production.	3.87	3.07	0.8	Positive
3	Competent leadership supports agriculture, manufacturing, and industry.	3.86	3.03	0.83	Positive
4	Appropriate policies can reduce excessive dependence on imports.	3.89	3.1	0.79	Positive
5	Commitment to infrastructure can improve productivity.	3.89	3.14	0.75	Positive
6	Sound financial management can improve resource allocation.	3.67	3.0	0.67	Positive
7	Leadership can create an enabling environment for local businesses.	3.93	3.2	0.73	Positive
8	Prioritizing human capital can increase productive capacity.	3.97	3.07	0.9	Positive
9	Leadership can encourage citizens to become producers.	3.77	3.0	0.77	Positive
10	Effective leadership is essential for a sustainable productive transition.	3.89	3.06	0.83	Positive

Source: Authors' Compilation 2026.

All ten statements received positive ratings. Leadership stakeholders gave particularly high ratings to human-capital development (3.97), creating an enabling environment for local businesses (3.93), and leadership's overall transformative role, infrastructure, and reducing import dependence (each reported at 3.89). Economists also gave positive ratings across all items. Respondents therefore generally viewed leadership quality as an important catalyst for Nigeria's transition towards production.

The highest leadership-stakeholder rating concerned human-capital development, indicating recognition of education and skills as inputs into productive capacity. This is consistent with Becker's (1993) human-capital perspective and the World Bank's (2024) emphasis on productivity and human capital. The findings also suggest that leadership needs to integrate economic management with infrastructure, business support, and policies for agriculture and manufacturing. This is consistent with North's (1990) argument that institutions and incentives shape economic behaviour. The transition is therefore not simply a matter of

increasing public expenditure; it also requires conditions that encourage citizens and businesses to produce, invest, innovate, and expand.

Research Question 2

What leadership quality skills are most effective in promoting productivity, entrepreneurship, investment, innovation, and sustainable economic development?

Table 3 presents the respondents' mean ratings.

S/N	Leadership quality skill statement	Leadership stakeholders (M)	Economists (M)	Difference	Remark
1	Strategic decision-making can promote productivity.	3.78	3.04	0.74	Positive
2	Innovative leadership can encourage technological development.	3.88	3.22	0.66	Positive
3	Entrepreneurial leadership can stimulate SMEs.	3.97	3.13	0.84	Positive
4	Accountability and transparency can improve investor confidence.	3.78	3.04	0.74	Positive
5	Effective communication can increase participation in productive activity.	3.84	3.1	0.74	Positive
6	Problem-solving can address constraints facing industries and businesses.	3.83	3.0	0.83	Positive
7	Visionary leadership can attract investment into productive sectors.	3.98	3.0	0.98	Positive
8	Policy implementation skills can improve development programmes.	3.89	3.19	0.7	Positive

9	Ethical leadership can reduce corruption and resource diversion.	3.78	3.06	0.72	Positive
10	Science, technology, and innovation skills can accelerate a knowledge-based economy.	3.89	3.09	0.8	Positive

Source: Authors' Compilation 2026.

All ten leadership skills received positive ratings. Visionary leadership had the highest mean among leadership stakeholders (3.98), followed by entrepreneurial leadership (3.97). Policy implementation and science, technology, and innovation each received 3.89. Among Economists, innovative leadership recorded the highest mean (3.22), followed by policy implementation (3.19) and entrepreneurial leadership (3.13).

The findings indicate that productive transformation requires several complementary skills. Vision provides direction, entrepreneurship supports business creation, innovation strengthens technological capacity, and accountability and ethical leadership can support confidence and reduce resource diversion. The emphasis on entrepreneurship and innovation is consistent with Schumpeter's (1934) theory of economic development and Drucker's (1985) discussion of innovation and entrepreneurship. The emphasis on accountability and transparency also aligns with North's (1990) institutional perspective.

Hypothesis 1

Table 4: Nigerian leadership quality skills do not significantly contribute to the migration of Nigeria from a consumption-oriented economy to a productive economy.

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Leadership stakeholders	655	3.88	0.89				
Economists	200	3.86	0.85	343	0.29	0.774	Retain H_{01}

Source: Authors' Compilation 2026.

Leadership stakeholders recorded a mean of 3.88 (SD = 0.89), while Economists recorded a mean of 3.86 (SD = 0.85). The reported t-value was 0.29, with approximately 343 degrees of freedom and p = .774. Because p exceeds .05, the study retains H_{01}. The reported result indicates no statistically significant difference between the groups' views on the contribution of leadership quality skills to productive transformation. The similar means suggest broad agreement about the relevance of leadership competence, economic management, human-capital development, infrastructure, and policy efficiency.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in the views of leadership stakeholders and Economists on effective leadership quality skills and the promotion of productivity, entrepreneurship, investment, innovation, and sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

Table 5: Leadership Stakeholders' and Economists' Perceptions of Effective Leadership Quality Skills in Promoting Productivity, Entrepreneurship, Investment, Innovation, and Sustainable Economic Development in Nigeria

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Leadership stakeholders	655	3.87	0.87				
Economists	200	3.84	0.86	333	0.43	0.667	Retain H_{02}

Source: Authors' Compilation 2026.

Leadership stakeholders recorded a mean of 3.87 (SD = 0.87), while Economists recorded a mean of 3.84 (SD = 0.86). The reported t-value was 0.43, with approximately 333 degrees of freedom and p = .667. Since p exceeds .05, H_{02} is retained. The reported result indicates no statistically significant difference between the groups' views concerning leadership skills that promote productivity, entrepreneurship, investment, innovation, and sustainable development. The close means reinforce the perceived relevance of visionary, entrepreneurial, innovative, ethical, accountable, and implementation-oriented leadership.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The findings suggest that respondents view leadership quality skills as important to Nigeria's transition from a consumption-oriented economy towards a productive economy. Positive ratings across Tables 1 and 2 indicate that leadership stakeholders and economists recognize the importance of how economic resources are managed. This interpretation is consistent with Dike's (2014) discussion of leadership, governance, human-capital investment, and technological capabilities as important considerations in Nigeria's economic development.

First, both groups rated leadership quality as contributing to productive transformation, particularly through human-capital development, support for local businesses, infrastructure, economic management, and reduced import dependence. The emphasis on human capital and infrastructure corresponds with Dike's (2014) argument that investment in education, skills, and the foundations of production is necessary for Nigeria's industrial development. These similarities support the relevance of the respondents' priorities, although the survey ratings do not establish their effects on national productivity.

Second, respondents considered visionary, entrepreneurial, innovative, and policy-implementation skills important. Visionary leadership received the highest rating from leadership stakeholders, while innovative leadership received the highest rating from economists. The emphasis on entrepreneurial competencies relates to Harrison et al. (2018), who identified technical and business, interpersonal, conceptual, and entrepreneurial skills within Nigeria's retail pharmacy sector. However, that study's sector-specific findings provide contextual support rather than direct confirmation of the present study's national implications.

Third, the reported hypothesis tests found no statistically significant differences between leadership stakeholders and economists on either issue. Together with the similar group means, these results suggest broadly comparable assessments among the respondents. They indicate insufficient evidence of a difference between the groups, rather than proving that their views are identical.

Finally, recognizing desirable leadership skills does not ensure their effective application. The practical implication is that leadership development should be connected with implementation, accountability, and assessment of productive outcomes. Solomon et al. (2023) similarly emphasize the connection between leadership and strategic governance in Nigeria's sustainable socioeconomic development. The present findings therefore point to the perceived importance of leadership competencies alongside the institutional arrangements needed to put them into practice.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that leadership stakeholders and economists perceive Nigerian leadership quality skills as important potential catalysts for the transition from a consumption-oriented economy to a productive economy. Respondents identified strategic decision-making, economic management, visionary and entrepreneurial leadership, innovation, accountability, ethical conduct, communication, problem-solving, human-capital development, and policy implementation as relevant competencies. The absence of statistically significant differences between the groups suggests broadly similar assessments of their importance. These findings highlight the need to translate leadership competencies into consistent policies, accountable institutions, and measurable productive outcomes.

5.2 Recommendations

a) **Strengthen leadership competencies:** Political and institutional leaders should receive continuous training in strategic planning, economic management, innovation, entrepreneurship, accountability, and policy implementation to strengthen their capacity to support Nigeria's transition towards a productive economy.
b) **Translate leadership skills into productive outcomes:** Government and institutional leaders should apply these competencies through coordinated policies that support domestic production, human-capital development, infrastructure, and enterprise growth. Implementation should involve economists and relevant stakeholders, with transparent monitoring of employment, investment, productivity, and domestic output.

REFERENCES

Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). *Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity, and poverty*. Crown Business.

African Development Bank. (2024). *African economic outlook 2024: Driving Africa's transformation—The reform of the global financial architecture*.

Afriyie, S., Du, J., & Ibn Musah, A.-A. (2019). Innovation and marketing performance of SME in an emerging economy: The moderating effect of transformational leadership. *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research, 9*, Article 40. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40497-019-0165-3

Akpa, V. O., Asikhia, O. U., & Okusanya, A. O. (2021). Leadership styles and organisational performance in Nigeria: Qualitative perspective. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Research, 11*(1), 46–53. https://doi.org/10.31033/ijemr.11.1.7

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.
Chibuike, H. I. (2018). *Nigerian politics and development implications* [Departmental seminar presentation]. Abia State University (ABSU).
Cuevas-Vargas, H., Lozano-García, J. J., Morales-García, R., & Castaño-Guevara, S. (2023). Transformational leadership and innovation to boost business performance: The case of small Mexican firms. *Procedia Computer Science, 221*, 1139–1146.
Dike, V. E. (2014). Leadership and the Nigerian economy. *SAGE Open, 4*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014523792
Drucker, P. F. (1985). *Innovation and entrepreneurship: Practice and principles*. Harper & Row.
Ezidimma, J. A., Nwokoye, E. S., & Ezenekwe, U. R. (2024). Governance quality, financial development and economic growth in Nigeria. *Journal of Economic Studies, 21*(1). https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/jes/article/view/4503
Faith, Z. C. (2022). *Economy and Nigerian challenges* [Conference presentation]. Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU).
Fineface, R. T. (2021). *Leadership in African perspective: Factor evaluation in Nigeria* [Seminar presentation]. Abia State University (ABSU).
George, W. E. (2019). *Nigerian development policies and their interpretations/performance* [Conference presentation]. Abia State University (ABSU).
Habeeb, Y. O., & Eyupoglu, S. Z. (2024). Strategic planning, transformational leadership and organization performance: Driving forces for sustainability in higher education in Nigeria. *Sustainability, 16*(11), Article 4348. https://doi.org/10.3390/su16114348
Harrison, C., Burnard, K., & Paul, S. (2018). Entrepreneurial leadership in a developing economy: A skill-based analysis. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, 25*(3), 521–548. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-05-2017-0160
Isaac, D. C. (2022). *Nigerian development policies and way-out* [Conference presentation]. Abuja Summit, Abuja, Nigeria.
John, A. M. (2020). *Leadership, stakeholders, and corruption menace* [Conference presentation]. IEAS.
Kind, G. F. (2020). *Economy and Nigerian factors: Challenges and remedies* [Proposed conference presentation]. Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
Le, T. T. (2024). How green transformational leadership drives environmental performance and firm performance? Empirical evidence from an emerging economy. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*. https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.2872
Madu, A. O. (2017). *Education and economy: The vision of tomorrow* [Conference presentation]. Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU).
Moses, A. O. (2023). *Leadership qualities and management within an economy* [Budget presentation]. Enugu, Nigeria.
North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*. Cambridge University Press.
Okunlola, O. C., Sani, I. U., & Ayetigbo, O. A. (2025). Socio-economic governance and economic growth in Nigeria. *Journal of Business and Socio-economic Development, 5*(2), 187–203. https://doi.org/10.1108/JBSED-03-2023-0019
Oyetade, O., Waliu, S., & Oluwakemi, S. (2024). Examining the effects of governance indicators on economic growth in Nigeria: An ARDL approach. *Journal of Governance and Development, 20*(1), 89–104. https://repo.uum.edu.my/id/eprint/32123/
Puni, A., Hilton, S. K., Mohammed, I., & Korankye, E. S. (2022). The mediating role of innovative climate on the relationship between transformational leadership and firm performance in developing countries: The case of Ghana. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 43*(3), 404–421.
Rejoice, S. V. (2020). *COVID-19, economy and Nigerian factors: Challenges* [Online conference presentation]. Abuja, Nigeria.

Schumpeter, J. A. (1934). *The theory of economic development: An inquiry into profits, capital, credit, interest, and the business cycle*. Harvard University Press.

Solomon, K. C., Ekanem, S. A., Egbai, M. J., Ogar, T. E., & Ushie, A. I. (2023). Leadership and strategic governance: The pathway to socio-economic sustainable development in Nigeria. *European Journal of Sustainable Development, 12*(2), 307–317. https://doi.org/10.14207/ejsd.2023.v12n2p307

Success, G. H. (2022). *Leadership qualities and prayers for a coordinated economy: COVID-19 era*.

World Bank. (2024). *Nigeria development update: Staying the course—Progress amid pressing challenges*.

World Bank. (2025). *Nigeria development update: Building momentum for inclusive growth*. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/publication/nigeria-development-update-ndu.