International Journal of Research in Engineering and Science (IJRES)
ISSN (Online): 2320-9364, ISSN (Print): 2320-9356
www.ijres.org Volume 11 Issue 4 ǁ April 2023 ǁ PP. 155-165

The Manager as a Strategic Planner, Decision Maker and Problem Solver: A Study of Nigerias' Fast Food Industry

Awanah Esther Nkoyenim,
Department of Business Administration
European Global School-University, Paris- France

Orok A. Imagha PhD,
Department of Business Management
Faculty of Business Administration
University of Uyo, Uyo

Nsikan John
Department of Business Management
Covenant University, Idiroko Road, Ota-Ogun State

Unyime Joseph Udounwa,
Department of Business Administration and Management,
Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene.

Obiyo, Chinyere Bridget
Department of Business Management
Faculty of Business Administration
University of Uyo, Uyo

Ubong Augustine Akpaetor
Department of Business Administration
Akwa Ibom State University

ABSTRACT
This study investigated the role played by managers as strategic planners, decision makers and problem solvers in selected fast food companies in Port Harcourt. It examined how dimensions such as strategic planning, decision making and problem solving could impact on the managerial capability of fast food operators in Port Harcourt. It employed a methodology of descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, a three-dimensional questionnaire to collate data. The analysis revealed that strategic planning is the most important dimension of the role of a manager of a fast food company. Hence, the study sees evidence to recommend that the vision and mission thrust of a fast food company should be inculcated into the workforce of the business.
Keywords: *Manager, Strategic Planner, Decision Maker, Problem Solver*

Date of Submission: 25-03-2023 Date of acceptance: 07-04-2023

I. INTRODUCTION

A manager is a person who is responsible for a part of a company, primarily exercising managerial functions of planning, organizing, directing and controlling of human and material resources. Gordon (2022) posits that a manager is an individual within an organization who is in charge of coordinating the efforts of individuals or the allocation of resources. As such, a manager is one who undertakes management activities.

Managers may be in charge of a department, unit or section and the employees who work in it, managing them on a day-to-day basis. As such, they may have the power and authority to hire, fire, discipline, appraise performance, and monitor their work attendance. They also have the authority to approve overtime, grant vacations and work leave. However, in some institutions, the manager is the boss, who is in charge of the entire organization. Illustratively, a restaurant manager takes complete responsibility of the whole restaurant business (Market Business News, MBN 2022).

According to Adeniyi *et al*. (2021), the concept of fast food retailing, which is also known as quick service restaurants evolved in Nigeria about 35 years ago by UAC. It started from the coffee shops of its Kingsway Departmental Stores, which later transformed into Kingsway Rendezvous. The organized fast food industry is fast emerging in the country. The industrial landscape has witnessed the influx of unprecedented numbers of fast food operators since the opening of the first fast food outlet in Nigeria, at Yaba, in 1986 by Mr. Biggs, a subsidiary of UAC Nigeria Plc. At present, there are over 150 brand names in the country (Fakokunde, 2011).

Fast food refers to food that can easily be prepared and served very quickly in an outlet to consumers (Adeniyi, *et al*., 2021). It can be served directly from oven to table (sit-in) or presented in form of take-out packages (take-away). Common fast food menu found in outlets worldwide apart from drinks may include; pies, chips, fries, sandwiches, pizzas, noodles, chilis, salads, potatoes, rice, ice-cream, coffee, candies, hamburgers, fish, beef, chicken, turkey, hot dogs etc. Equally, various sizes, types and kinds of outfits exist worldwide for the purpose of retailing fast foods. These range from wagons, stands, kiosks, restaurants, and modern day fast food retail outlets.

With intense competitiveness in the fast food industry, within their primary discharge of the managerial functions, managers of this business today are faced with balancing different responsibilities and multitasking during their workday to complete their duties efficiently. They are faced with the quest to providing strategic planning, decision making and problem solving competencies. Given their continuous interaction with an ever-changing business environment and aggression of competition, keeping up with these numerous responsibilities becomes the measuring criteria of managerial performance and business profitability.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Saturation of the fast food market with its consequent volatility in Port Harcourt calls for significant concern that needs scholarly and empirical attention. Virtually every major junction, cross-roads and highbrow vicinities of the town have several establishments of fast food companies aggressively competing for vintage physical space and loyal customer patronage. Harsh business competition resulting from proliferation of new business entrants becomes the order of the fast food market in Port Harcourt. Inevitably, surreptitious compromise on the quality of food as a result of high cost of production and hike in acquisition or leasing of property and premises has become widespread; thereby aggravating the capital investment requirements of fast food companies in Port Harcourt. Besides, frequent displacement by government developmental policies that results in business relocation weighs adversely on the business survival and profitability of fast food companies in Port Harcourt.

Granted, as it were, that people will always eat when they are hungry no matter the economic situation, this disturbing narrative and commentary of the fast food market in Port Harcourt would pose innumerable challenges to managers of these fast food companies. To a great extent, it is disturbing to have corporate managers of fast food companies in Port Harcourt operate their businesses in the midst of these difficulties and instability. What's more, these undesirable circumstances of the business environment would stifle strategic planning thereby compelling managers to mainly direct resources and focus attention on tactical and operational planning. This limits the scope of their authority into subordination to the dictates of the environmental threats and factors of harsh climate of fast food business in Port Harcourt.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

On a general note, the major objective of this study is to assess the impact of the manager as a strategic planner, decision maker and a problem solver in select fast food companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. However, on specific terms, the study gives rise to the following precise objectives that are stated hereunder:

1. To determine whether the role of the manager as a strategic planner has any bearing on the success or failure of fast food companies in Port Harcourt.
2. To evaluate whether the role of the manager as a decision maker has any influence on the success or failure of fast food companies in Port Harcourt.
3. To ascertain whether the role of the manager as a problem solver has any consequence on the success or failure fast food companies in Port Harcourt.

III. REVIEW OF CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

3.1 The Manager as a Strategic Planner

Strategic planning caught the attention and embrace of corporate managers in the mid-1960s, wherein they accepted it as "the one best way" to devise and implement strategies that would enhance the competitiveness of each business unit (Mintzberg, 1994). True to scientific management pioneered by Frederick Taylor, this one best way involved separating thinking from doing and creating a new function staffed by specialists: strategic planners. Planning systems were expected to produce the best strategies as well as step-by-step instructions for carrying out those strategies so that managers could not get them wrong. As we now know, planning has not exactly worked out that way.

While certainly not dead, Sharma and Shreya (2017) opine that strategic planning has long since fallen from its pedestal. But even now, few people fully understand the reason: strategic planning is not strategic thinking. Indeed, strategic planning often spoils strategic thinking, causing managers to confuse real vision with the manipulation of numbers. And this confusion lies at the heart of the issue: the most successful strategies are visions, not plans posited Trump (2014).

Strategic planning, as it has been practiced, has really been strategic programming, the articulation and elaboration of strategies, or visions, that already exist. Steele and Liu (1983) maintained that when companies understand the difference between planning and strategic thinking, they can get back to what the strategy-making process should be: capturing what the manager learns from all sources (both the soft insights from their personal experiences of others throughout the organization and the hard data from market research and the like) and then synthesizing that learning into a vision of the direction that the business should pursue.

The manager as a strategic planner adopts a process to identify and select goals and courses of action for the organization (Wirtz and Lwin, 2009). The organizational plan that results from the planning process details the goals and objectives to be accomplished. The pattern of decisions managers take to reach these goals is the organization's strategy spearheaded by the manager, and particularly managers of fast food companies in Port Harcourt. This responsibility of strategic planning requires fast food company managers to acquire the necessary training and skills to analyze markets, sales trends, and niches and offer recommendations to upper management regarding marketing approaches (Moriarty & Burnett, 2006). The strategic planner should be able to engage in research, analyze data and generate reports, as well as to work effectively with team members. Their ultimate goal being to maintain existing markets, as well as to research future opportunities for a business to improve profit share and revenue.

3.2 The Manager as a Decision Maker

By any measure, decision making is a vital management skill (Simplilearn 2022). Managers of fast food companies face a variety of decisions every day. Resources must be allocated, employees selected, and the attractiveness of franchising venture evaluated; all must be done in a highly complex and competitive business environment. All decisions involve choices between alternatives. However, many of these choices are made almost automatically because of culturally based scripts that individual managers have for the situation. In addition, when confronted with a new or very important decision, managers of fast food companies can invoke a more thorough consideration of differently weighted alternatives (Leung et al,1995; Smith and Bond, 1999).

An indecisive manager or waffling supervisor can quickly erode a corporate culture with employee frustration, loss of momentum, a dip in team morale, and there can be bottom-line consequences. On the other hand, having a manager prone to making impulsive decisions based on emotion or without the necessary facts can have similar negative consequences for a fast food company (Cheng et al, 2009). Making informed, sound, and collaborative decisions can help build a solid organizational direction and have a favorable impact on costs.

Hence, the author indicated that management decision making is choosing a course of action after considering different options to accomplish an organization's goals. Management involves problem-solving, budgeting, coaching, planning, organizing, staffing, controlling. Therefore, the process that goes into management decision making serves as a continuous, dynamic check (Wang et al, 2009) and balance system to steer an organization to sustained success.

When making a decision, the following steps can help organize the manager's thoughts and go about decision making more deliberately and thoughtfully (Caudill & Murphy, 2000):

- Step 1: Identify the decision – Define the problem and determine if a decision is required.
- Step 2: Gather relevant information – Collate internal and external useful data. Gather internal information with self-assessment and consider your motivations. Capture external information from colleagues, online, books, and other resources.
- Step 3: Identify the alternatives – Identify and list all possible courses of action as they arise.
- Step 4: Weigh the evidence – Visualize the possible consequences of taking each course of action, drawing on your information and emotions. Consider if the situation in step 1 would be addressed or solved with each alternative. Rank your possible decisions based upon your value system.
- Step 5: Choose among alternatives – Select the best course of action to take. It may even be a combination of other options.
- Step 6: Take action – Implement your decision.
- Step 7: Review your decision and its consequences - Lastly, evaluate the results of your decision and determine if it addressed the issue identified in step 1.

As the decision makers that they are, managers of fast food companies have need for embarking on research in coming up with alternatives for management decision making, drawing from a collection of decision-making techniques and tools (Asiegbu et al, 2011). Listed hereunder is an assortment of techniques and tools a manager can use to explore different options to land upon a chosen decision:

Marginal Analysis

Marginal analysis helps managers of fast food companies to allocate resources to increase profitability and benefits while achieving costs reduction. For instance, (Adiele&Opara, 2014) cited that if a fast food company has the budget to hire an employee, a marginal analysis could show that hiring that staff provides a net marginal benefit because the ability to produce more products outweighs the increase in labour costs.

SWOT Diagram

This tool helps managers of fast food companies to study a situation in four quadrants:

- Strengths: Where does the organization excel compared to its competition? Considering their inherent capabilities.
- Weaknesses: What could the fast food company improve?
- Opportunities: How can the fast food company leverage its strengths to create new avenues for business success. How could addressing a specific weakness provide a unique opportunity?
- Threats: Determine what obstacles prevent the fast food company from achieving its goals (Copeland, 1924),

Decision Matrix

A decision matrix can provide clarity when dealing with different choices and variables. It is like a pros and cons list, but decision-makers can place a level of importance on each factor. According to Ateke et al (2015), to build a decision matrix:

- List your decision alternatives as rows
- List relevant factors as columns
- Establish a consistent scale to assess the value of each combination of alternatives and factors
- Determine how important each factor is in choosing a final decision and assign weights accordingly
- Multiply your original ratings by the weighted rankings
- Add up the factors under each decision alternative
- The highest-scoring option wins

Pareto Analysis

The Pareto principle helps identify changes that will be the most effective for an organization. It's based on the principle that 20 percent of factors frequently contribute to 80 percent of the organization's growth. For example, suppose 80 percent of an organization's sales came from 20 percent of its customers (Belch and Belch, 2012). A business can use the Pareto principle by identifying the characteristics of that 20 percent customer group and finding more like them. By identifying which small changes have the most significant impact, an organization can better prioritize its decisions and energies observes Ahluwalia et al, (2001).

Taking a systematic approach to decision making helps managers of fast food companies avoid making quick and hasty decisions without adequately considering the consequences to the company or their reputation and career. Under listed hereunder are potential pitfalls of decision making as noted by Ayinla and Bakare (2014) that fast food company managers should avoid:

i. Consultation ambiguity – This can be a scenario where a group of employees all feel like they have a vote in a decision or when a fast food manager asks for input but doesn't consider a group's views. It's important for managers of fast food companies to solicit feedback but to make sure that contributors understand it's the manager's final decision that prevails.

ii. Avoiding discomfort – Sound management decision making requires managers of fast food companies who do not confuse their need for comfort with making the best decision. Some of the most effective decisions involve a degree of discomfort for the manager.

iii. Appearing indecisive – Sometimes, a systematic decision making process has a downside. Being too rigorous in evaluating every possible angle can draw out the process and open the risk of appearing indecisive (Sheppard et all, 1988). Keep stakeholders informed about the timeline for a decision.

iv. Blind spots –According to Baker et al (2002), people have particular perspectives and ways of thinking that can create blind spots, which may be important for an effective decision but cannot be readily apparent. It can be helpful to seek input from trusted colleagues to provide a different perspective.

v. Group think – This occurs when a group's members want to minimize conflict and reach a comfortable decision at the expense of a critical evaluation of other ideas and viewpoints noted Baker et al, (2002). It's important to explore alternatives a group may not have considered.

Certainly without doubts, managers of fast food companies make dozens of routine decisions every day, such as which employee will work, what shift next week, what information should be included in a statement or how to resolve customers' complaints. Keep in mind that even though a decision seems easy to make or has been faced by a manager's a number of times before, it still is a decision.

The decision making role of managers of fast food companies is highlighted below:

i. **Employee Retention:** Effective leadership impacts an employee's decision to remain or leave an organization. Thus, the decisions a manager makes have a convincing impact on the company's overall worker retention numbers (Sheth, 1971).

ii. **Efficiency:** A manager's decisions typically impact however a workplace functions. This may alter the pace and consistency at which staff are ready to work among the system. Peter F. Drucker during this book, "Management-Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices," explains that the decisions of a manager will speed or slow the pace of labor staggeringly (Cheng et al, 2012). For instance, if a manager decides that additional work are going to be needed for every dealings processed by a sales representative, it's going to block their pace. If a manager decides to take a position in automatic filing systems for process those selfsame sorts of forms, they'll save the staff an oversized quantity of their time dashing up their work.

iii. **Customer Satisfaction:** A manager's decisions will for the most part impact client satisfaction. First, social control decisions will have effect on an employee's job satisfaction, which successively has an effect on their client service. A 2002 study conducted by Facet Communications and also the Radclyffe group found that people served by individuals reported low levels of satisfaction with their jobs (Chukwu and Uzoma, 2014).

iv. **Company Reputation:** Managerial decisions have an effect on the well-being of the whole company they decide for. Every day, managers are round-faced with necessary decisions concerning development, promoting and safety. Their judgment will build or break the corporate reputation as a full.

v. **Managerial Job Security:** On a lot of small scale, a manger's decisions impact his own livelihood. Failure in judgment might not perpetually have employee's consequences, however in some instances; poor decision-making will cause a manager to lose their job. Drucker explains that an organization cannot succeed with proficient employees and valuable product; they have sturdy leadership to purpose their efforts within the right direction (Copeland, 1924).

To some extent, everyone in a fast food company makes decision, but decision making is particularly important in a manager's job role. Decision making is part of all four manager's job functions. In fact, that's why it is said that decision making is the essence of management (Lewis, 2022). The fact that almost everything a manager does involve making decision doesn't mean that decisions are always time-consuming, complex or evident to an outside observer. Much of manager's decision making is routine.

3.3 The Manager as a Problem Solver

One of fast food managers' most important responsibilities is to solve problems. Finding the answers to difficult questions that are sometimes a source of great perplexity and distress for the company often falls to an organization's leaders. Fast food companies' success depends on managerial problem-solving capability (Glynn and Brodie, 2014). Issues arrive in all sizes, ranging from daily nuisances to organizational crises. According to Harcourt and Ikegwuru (2018), managers who have the ability to systematically think through the facts, diagnose the situation, and find an accurate and workable solution will help the business thrive and prosper.

Effective problem-solvers are able to guide teams towards the achievement of goals by eliminating frustration, confusion, and misunderstandings before they become unmanageable. So that they build cooperation and collaboration between individuals, eliminate the need for rework, and foster continuous improvement (Glynn and Brodie, 2014).

Butcher (2001) observed that the best managers can often sense problems with keen insight. They may notice a deviation from standard team performance, such as a missed deadline or an unmet sales goal—and when the team's plans go off the rails, these managers automatically begin the problem-solving process.

Fortunately, all fast food company managers can learn to solve problems more effectively by using this four-step process:

i. Identify and Define the Problem

Alert fast food company managers constantly watch for signals, symptoms, and signs that problems may exist (Baker and Crompton, 2000). Once they see a potential issue, they think through whether this is a problem they can solve and whether it will make a critical impact on the team or organization.

Once the problem has been defined as a priority, they create a clear, quantitative problem statement and describe the situation in specific, objective terms without making assumptions or jumping to conclusions (Centre for Management & Organization Effectiveness, CMOE 2022)

ii. Analyze the Problem

Ariffin *et al.* (2011) stated that the best problem-solvers analyze patterns and ask questions about what, who, when, where, and how much the problem has affected the business.

They are able to isolate and define the root cause of the issue so that once it's been resolved, it's unlikely to recur.

iii. Develop Solutions

While problems sometimes come with easy answers, managerial problem-solving cannot be impulsive, risking the mistake of making snap decisions. Instead, they use techniques like brainstorming ideas, creating prioritized lists, and evaluating the time, cost, and technology involved to assess the situation and design a long-term solution (Bloemer& Kasper, 2005).

iv. Plan and Act

Once the best solution has been identified, a good manager develops a solid implementation plan. This plan should include steps that will be taken to move forward, as well as contingency plans that will help the manager handle potential roadblocks. Barber and Scarcelli, (2009) posit that they must also secure the commitment of others, mobilize them to act, and hold them accountable for their responsibilities.

The managerial problem-solving process is a never-ending cycle of planning, doing, checking, and acting, while also monitoring the situation and the outcomes. As needed, managers make adjustments to their plans so that the team can continue to move towards the solution that will lead them to better business results (Bou-Llusar *et al,* 2001).

Every day of their business lives, managers of fast food companies are faced with situations that require them to decide what to say and do. They may require them to resolve circumstances which they perceive as being unsatisfactory in some way or simply to choose between several courses of action. They want to be able to deal with these problems as efficiently as possible, but don't know how. They are unclear perhaps about what options might be available to them, how they should choose between them and what their potential consequences might be (Hicks, 1991).

These problems are further aggravated by the fact that change and uncertainty now seem to be an inevitable part of corporate life. However, decision making has always been a problem, and this in itself is not really something new. The world around is more 'turbulent' than it used to be: it is susceptible to rapid and often unpredictable changes. The 'one-off' trial and error approaches to problem solving that managers have used in the past appear to be less satisfactory than before. Fast food company managers need more systematic, yet still flexible, problem solving strategies (Canny, 2014).

The Nigerian Fast Food Industry

According to Association of Fast Food and Confectioners of Nigeria (AFFCON), the Nigerian fast food industry is healthy and currently worth about N190 billion with the potential to grow bigger (Vanguard, 2009). Also, the industry is believed to be highly labour intensive. In Nigeria, it was identified as a leading overall employer of labour, considering the food supply chain from farm to the dining table. The management and operations of QSRs require and attract various job opportunities and professionals, including service providers and suppliers. These ranges from farmers, caterers, horticulturists, interior decorators, technicians, food technologists to estate agents, architects, engineers, auditors, accountants and so forth.

There are other numerous indigenous QSRs holding sway in Lagos, Abuja, Ibadan, Port-Harcourt and other urban locations, namely; Chicken Lovers, Chicken Licking, Spices, Mama Cass, Captain Cook, Sweet Sensation, Chicken Palace, etc. providing varieties of Africana and continental cuisines to teeming customers (Adeniyi *et al*., 2021). The presence of international brands such as Nandos, Steers and St. Elmos is also felt in the industry. Currently, there are about 100 brand names in the industry. Some big established outlets now offer franchise opportunities and arrangements for willing individual investors and entrepreneurs to own and operate fast food businesses with their brand names. Through these arrangements and others, it is planned that more restaurants will be opened in due course to meet the ever-yearning desires of Nigerians for an ideal fast food industry in the country (Ariyo, 2005; Raimi and Towobola, 2011).

Owing to the socio-cultural background of the various ethnic settlements of the country, the Nigerian formal fast food industry operates amidst its more active informal counterpart, which is characterized by unregistered indigenous operators also providing restaurant services to the populace. But, the fast food industry is quick in changing the existing pattern by distinguishing itself into an organised structure providing healthy, modern and local menus, with class, status and taste attached to it (Ariyo, 2005; Raimi and Towobola, 2011; Ukaegbu, 2000).

3.4 Empirical Review

Horsfall (2021) examined and evaluated the degree of the application of brand appeal in customer patronage in fast food firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The population of the study was 65 fast food firms, from which a sample of 39 was drawn based on the Taro Yamane's formula. The simple random sampling technique was employed to select 200 respondents from 39fast food firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data were gathered by questionnaire survey on 200 respondents. All 200 copies of questionnaires were retrieved, obtaining a 93 percent response rate. The simple regression statistics was used to test the hypotheses.

The results illustrated that emotional brand appeal has a strong, positive and significant influence on patronage intention, and a very strong, positive and significant influence on patronage action. The study also found that rational brand appeal has a strong, positive and significant influence on patronage intention and patronage action. The study therefore, concludes that brand appeal significantly influences customer patronage of fast food firms in Rivers State. The study recommends amongst others that fast food managers should focus particularly on emotional brand appeal to ensure that their companies adequately tackle patronage intentions and patronage action.

Herein comes the strategic planning competence of the fast food company manager. How do they deploy the necessary strategy policies to attract and retain customer patronage? On several notes, Horsfall (2021) tends to correspond to this study. However, they differ substantially. This is a case study geared towards the fast food industry in Port Harcourt. Whereas Horsfall (2021) is a correlational study of brand appeal and customer patronage.

Ollor and Onyemachi (2022) sought to find out the relationship between food service experience and customers' behaviour of selected fast-foods in Port Harcourt. They formulated four research objectives, questions and hypotheses. It was a quantitative study which adopted the survey method. The population of the study consisted of guests of all the hotels operating in Port Harcourt. A total of 10 hotels were selected for the study from which a sample size of 323 using Freund and Williams formula for an infinite sample size was determined. The study adopted the use of questionnaire for the collection of data and Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient was used in the testing of hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed a positive correlation between the dimensions of food service experience (service quality and servicescape) and the measures of customer behaviour (customers' loyalty and revisit intention). These implied that significant relationships exist between the independent variables (food service experience and the dependent variables (customers' behaviour). Owing to these findings, the study concluded that the quality-of-service delivery was a vital determinant and influencer of customer decision of where to dine. The study recommended that managers should evaluate their service delivery processes and also have feedback mechanisms in place so as to improve their services and enhance guest experience. Admittedly, Ollor&Onyemachi (2022) and this study share some commonness. However, they deviate from each other in terms of statistical analysis. They adopt different measures and techniques of analyses to arriving at their results and findings.

Anyanwu (2020) examined workplace behaviour and organizational efficacy of fast food restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Questionnaires were distributed to 384 fast-food restaurant workers in various fast-food outlets. Results showed that 12.5% gave a poor rating of organizational performance, 31.51% gave an average rating while 55.99% gave a very good rating of organizational performance. The study also revealed that that 40.89% were satisfied with their jobs while 59.11% were not satisfied with their jobs. The analysis of organizational motivational rating shows that 16.67% opined that the organizational motivational rating was poor, 60.42% noted that the organizational motivational rating was on the average while 22.92% of the respondents had 'very good' motivation. The findings of this study revealed statistically significant relationship between employee work behaviour and organizational efficacy (p value 0.012) at 95% ($p \leq 0.05$) probability level. However, the relationship between gender and employee work revealed no statistically significant relationship (0.571) at 95% ($p \leq 0.05$) probability level. The study recommended adequate motivation of employees so as to boost organizational efficacy and performance.

Fast food restaurants is simply the point of convergence between Anyanwu's work and this present study which has selected fast food companies as its case study of the manager being a strategic planner, decision maker and problem solver. However, between workplace behavior and organizational efficacy of Anyanwu's work, this present study tends more towards the manager as an instrument of organizational efficacy, than it does towards work place behavior.

Ollor and Adiele (2022) examined the relationship between food service delivery and consumer preference of fast food restaurants in Port Harcourt. Six research questions, objectives and hypotheses were formulated. Quantitative survey method was adopted. The population of the study consisted of customers of fast foods operating in Port Harcourt. A total of 10 hotels were selected from a sample size of 323 using Freund and William formula. An infinite sample size was determined. Questionnaire was adopted for the collection of data and Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient was used in testing of hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed a positive correlation between the dimensions of food service delivery (food quality, servicescape and price). The measures of customer preference (revisit intention and positive word of mouth). A significant relationship exists between the independent variables (food service delivery and the dependent variables (customer preference). The study concluded that managers should look out for elements that could influence customer decisions and take advantage by offering better dining experience packages than the competitors. Managers should be innovative in food service delivery; to meet the sophistication and expectation of customers. The study, therefore, recommended that managers should evaluate their service delivery process, pricing, and feedback mechanisms and put them in place to improve and enhance food service delivery.

Food service delivery and consumer preference are the focal direction of Ollor and Adiele's work. As obviously as can be deduced, food service delivery, to some extent, resonates with the strategic planning competence of a manager of a fast food company. However, customer preference is off that direction of depending upon the manager of a company. So this goes to justifying the necessity of adopting the manager as the predictor variable.

Chiboka, (2021) investigated the level-of total quality management implementation in Genesis Fast Food, basically five (5) outlets in Port Harcourt. Four (4) research questions were formulated to guide the study. Questionnaire was the instrument used in the collection data and information. 511 questionnaires were distributed, 450 to customers and 61 to staff. Out of the 450 given to thecustomers, 423 were returned representing 94% of the copies distributed which is the response rate. For the staff, the 61 questionnaires were returned. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the result. Descriptive statistics was employed in analysing the data. Also employed were percentages and mean to answer the research questions. The result indicated that Genesis fast food implements total quality management to a reasonable level which is basically the bed rock for their success for the past years.

The scope of study of both works seems to bear wide differences. Chiboka's study was centred on just one fast food restaurant the Genesis. Meanwhile, this present study takes a select quantity of fast food companies. Perforce their methodology adopted and deployed would differ from each other, to the extent that even empirical solutions and findings would be arrived at separately.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample consisted of 100 participants (40 men and 60 women). Participants aged from 18 - 59 years ($M = 29.41$, $SD = 9.45$). Regarding gender, women were 28.43 years old ($SD = 9.55$), while men were 30.86 years old ($SD = 9.23$). Regarding the level of education, 1 percent have not concluded secondary education, 74 percent have completed the secondary level, and 25 percent were university certificate holders. The average length of employment was 7.88 years ($SD = 8.39$). 73 percent worked in public sector, and 27 percent were employed in private sector. Participation was voluntary, and all participants were treated in accordance with ethical guidelines.

Measurements

Demographic questionnaire which included questions that ascertain age, gender, level of education, and marital status of respondents. Managerial Strategy Decision and Solution Index (MSDSI) is a three-dimensional measuring instrument that includes (a) strategic planning SP (7 items), (b) decision making DM (4 items), and (c) problem solving PS (5 items). Response options were delivered on a Likert Scale ranging from 1 (to a small extent) to 5 (to a large extent), with higher scores indicating a higher level of perceived organizational justice. Cronbach´s alpha values were (a) SP .85, (b) DM .89, and (c) PS .91.

V. RESULTS

In the present sample, a repeated measures ANOVA with Greenhouse-Geisser correction determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the levels of the measured variables of the manager as a strategic planner, decision maker and problem solver - $F (2.796; 276.778) = 19.580$; $p < .001$. Post hoc tests using Bonferroni correction revealed a significant difference with the dimensions of the manager as a strategic planner, decision maker and problem solver, specifically: SP x PS ($p < .001$), SP x DM ($p < .001$), and PS x DM ($p < .001$). The assessment of the manager as a strategic planner, decision maker and problem solver showed that SP was the most important for respondents ($M = 3.82$; $SD = .99$). There were no significant gender differences in the dimensions of the manager as a strategic planner, decision maker and problem solver (Table 1).

Table 1 Descriptive Analysis and Gender Differences of the Manager as a Strategic Planner, Decision Maker and Problem Solver

	M	SD		M	SD	t	P
Strategic planner (SP)	3.82	.99	Men	3.79	.88	.216	.829
			Women	3.84	1.06		
Decision maker (DM)	3.28	1.01	Men	3.35	.86	- .603	.548
			Women	3.23	1.09		
Problem solver (PS)	3.63	.91	Men	3.72	.94	.714	.269
			Women	2.94	.67		

VI. DISCUSSIONS

The research explored the manager as a strategic planner, decision maker and problem solver in fast food companies in Port Harcourt. It tested gender differences in the manager as a strategic planner, decision maker and problem solver of fast food companies. The results showed that strategic planning was the most important dimension of the manager. It signifies that the development and direction of strategic and long-range goals of fast food companies matters a whole lot to the human elements of organizations, be they employees or management. Strategic and long-range goals may include increased monthly net restaurant sales which might be the most important metric for a fast food company. Other goals are increased daily net restaurant sales, improved new revenue streams, improved top selling items, testing new menu items, and testing service charges.

Strategic planning goals provide benchmarks for filling seats and selling meals, while also mapping out plans for introducing new foods or creating new food production processes. Unlike long-term goals, which address a fast food company's vision and purpose, strategic goals name specific outcomes and measurable criteria for gauging the success of fast food companies (Bies and Moag, 1986).

Once customers arrive, restaurant earnings increase as they order for more items. Suggestive selling techniques such as table tents, samples and upselling can yield real results with minimal investment. Menu overhauls or expansions also can add to sales volume by increasing the number of appealing options. A strategic goal for a fast food company manager specifies a targeted money amount per person or per table, and designates a period of time for achieving this objective. This is how the strategic planning thrust of fast food company manager functions to increase average daily earnings (Colquitt &Rodell, 2011).

In light of strategic planning of fast food companies, Kim (2009) found that restaurant owners also set strategic goals for profitability, specifying a targeted profit margin. Achieving this profit margin usually will involve growing more efficient and less wasteful about food and labor costs, the two largest spending categories for most fast food businesses. By breaking down strategic goals for profitability into targets for separate expenditure categories, a fast food company can further fine-tune its projections and its mechanisms for measuring results (Moorman et al, 1993).

Second to strategic planning, the results showed that problem solving was also an important dimension of the manager. Problem-solving and conflict management skills serve a vital role in the fast food business management position. Conflicts can cost an organization a lot, lost profits in lost time, lower productivity and poor decision-making could even aggravate an already worsening situation of corporate conflicts and problems. It is to this end that Lee et al, (2000) recommended problem solving and decision making competencies for managers of companies. It suffices to say then to state that strategic planning, decision making and problem solving are paramount working experiences that imparts to the success or otherwise of fast food companies in Port Harcourt.

VII. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Management of fast food companies is an all-inclusive experience that has to be given all the attention that they require. Given the findings of this study, implications for managers of fast food businesses in Port Harcourt would signify that:

i. Managers of fast food companies should be well informed of the corporate vision and mission of their employers.
ii. Managers of fast food companies should utilize every opportunity to deploy and integrate their corporate vision and mission into their corporate core values.

iii. Managers of fast food companies should inculcate their staff with organizational citizen behavior, whereby the vision, mission and core values of their companies incarnates into their behavioral tendencies.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study on the manager as a strategic planner, decision maker and problem solver has made salient findings that will be helpful both to theorists and management practitioners; especially in the food industry. The study found out that the manager as a strategic planner serves most importantly than as a decision maker and problem solver, even though both of the latter cannot be discounted out rightly.

Based on the findings and conclusion, author recommends that managers of fast food firms should provide up-to-date and efficient services (especially in quality product content), provide constant support (24 hours), promote appropriate behaviour and accountability of the employees, and employ straightforward, user-friendly machinery to increase the quality of their services and, thus, improve their performance.

REFERENCES

[1]. Adeniyi, M., Tolutope, F. and Olawumi, A. (2021). The Quick Service Restaurant Business in Nigeria: Exploring the Emerging Opportunity for Entrepreneurial Development and Growth. Global Journal of Commerce and Management Perspective, 3(3), 8-14.

[2]. Adiele, K. C., and Opara, B. C. (2014). Analysis of corporate identity on customer patronage of banks in Nigeria. International Review of Management and Business Research, 3(4), 1809.

[3]. Ahluwalia, R., Unnava, H. R. &Burnkrant, R. E. (2001). The moderating role of commitment on the spillover effect of marketing communications. Journal of Marketing Research, 38(4), 458-470.

[4]. Andaleeb, S. S. & Conway, C., (2006). Customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry: An examination of the transaction-specific model. Journal of Services Marketing, 20(1), 3-11.

[5]. Anyanwu, O. (2020). Workplace behaviour and organizational efficacy of fast food restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. International Journal of Advanced Academic Research. 68-80.

[6]. Ariffin, H. F., Bibon, M. F. & Raja Abdullah, R. P., (2011). Restaurants atmospheric elements: What the customer wants. Journal of Asian Behavioral Studies, 1(2), 33-43.

[7]. Ariffin, H. F., Bibon, M. F., & Abdullah, R. P., (2011). Restaurant's Atmospheric Elements: What the Customer Wants. Journal of Asian Behavioural Studies, 1(2), 33-43

[8]. Ariyo, D. (2005). Small firms are the backbone of the Nigerian economy. Lagos. Pheblish publishers.

[9]. Asiegbu, F. I., Awa, H. O., Akpotu, C., & Ogbonna, U. B. (2011). Sales force competence development and marketing performance of industrial and domestic products firms in Nigeria. Far East Journal of Psychology and Business, 2(3), 43-59.

[10]. Ateke, B. W., Onwujiariri, J. C., and Nnennanya, D. A. (2015). The relationship between celebrity endorsement and brand image in the fast food industry in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. European Journal of Business and Management, 7(27), 177-186.

[11]. Baker, D. A., & Crompton, J., (2000). Quality, Satisfaction, and Behavioural Intention. Annals of Tourism Research, 27(3), 785–804

[12]. Baker, J., Parasuraman, A., Grewal, D. and Voss, G. (2002). The influence of multiple store environment cues on perceived merchandise value and patronage intentions. Journal of Marketing, 66, 120-141.

[13]. Barber, N., and Scarcelli, J. M., (2009). Clean restrooms: How important are they to restaurant consumers? Journal of Foodservice, 20(6), 309-320.

[14]. Belch, G.E. and Belch, M.A. (2012). Advertising and promotion: An integrated marketing communication perspective, 9th Ed, McGraw-Hill. Singapore, 290-294.

[15]. Bies, R. J. and Moag, J. F. Interactional justice: Communication criteria of fairness. Research on Negotiations in Organizations, 1, 43-55.

[16]. Bloemer, J.M.M. and Kasper, H.D.P. (2005). The Complex Relationship between Consumer Satisfaction and Brand Loyalty. Journal of Economic Psychology, 16, 311-329

[17]. Bou-Llusar, J. C., Camison-Zornoza, C. &Escrig-Tena, A. B., (2001). "Measuring the Relationship between Firm Perceived Quality and Customer Satisfaction and its Influence on Purchase Intentions", Total Quality Management, 12(6), 719-734

[18]. Butcher, K. (2001). Evaluative and Relational Influences on Service Loyalty. Markets: Exploring the Mediating Role of Client Satisfaction. Managing Service Quality, 14(2/3): 235-248

[19]. Canny, I.U. (2014). Measuring The Mediating Role of Dining Experience Attributes on Customer Satisfaction and its Impact on Behavioral Intentions of Casual Dining Restaurant in Jakarta. International Journal of Innovation, Management and Technology, 5(1), 25-29.

[20]. Caruana, A. (2002). Service Loyalty. The Effects of Service Quality and the Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction. European Journal of Marketing, 36(7/8), 811-828.

[21]. Caudill, E. M., and Murphy, P. E. (2000). Consumer online privacy: Legal and ethical issues. Journal of Public Policy and Marketing, 19, 7-19.

[22]. Centre for Management and Organization Effectiveness (2022). https://cmoe.com/blog/managers-must-effective-problem-solvers/

[23]. Cheng, S. Y., White, T. B. and Chaplin, L. N. (2012). The effects of self-brand connections on responses to brand failure: A new look at the consumer–brand relationship. Journal of Consumer Psychology, 22(2), 280-288

[24]. Chiboka, A. (2021). Total quality management in Genesis Fast Food Port Harcourt. https://repository.mouau.edu.ng/work/view/total-quality-management-in-genesis-fast-food-port-harcourt-7-2

[25]. Chukwu, B., and Uzoma, I. (2014). Impact of social media networks on consume patronage in Nigeria: A study of Jumia and Konga Nigeria limited. European Journal of Business and Management, 6(30), 63-70.

[26]. Colquitt, J. A., and Rodell, J. B. (2011). Justice, trust, and trustworthiness: A longitudinal analysis integrating three theoretical perspectives. Academy of Management Journal, 54(6), 1183-1206.

[27]. Copeland, M. T. (1924), Principles of Merchandising, Aano Press, NY. Dipeolu, A., Adewuyi, S., Ayinla, M., & Bakare, A. (2014).Customer satisfaction in fast food restaurants in Ibadan metropolis. Journal of Marketing and Consumer Research, 5, 12-19.

[28]. Gordon, J. (2022). What is a manager? https://thebusinessprofessor.com/en_US/management-leadership-organizational-behavior/what-is-a-manager

[29]. Harcourt, H. and Ikegwuru, M. (2018). Analyzing the impact of brand loyalty on market performance: A study of food and beverage firms in Rivers State. Journal of Business and African Economy. 4(1), 25 -38.
[30]. Hollebeek, L. D., Glynn, M. S. and Brodie, R. J. (2014). Consumer brand engagement in social media: Conceptualization, scale development and validation, Journal of Interactive Marketing, 28(2), 149- 165.
[31]. Igbokwe, P. (2009). Introduction to research and research methodology. Research Methodology and Grant writing pg1-10 published by Rex Charles & Patrick Ltd. Anambra State, Nigeria.
[32]. Igwenagu C.M (2006). Statistical estimation, Basic Statistics and Probability. Enugu. First Ed. Prince Press and Communications.
[33]. Kim, H. (2009). Integrating organizational justice into the relationship management theory. Journal of Management, 15(1), 288-297.
[34]. Lani, J. (2013). Dissertation workshop. http://www.statisticssolutions.com Accessed 4th June, 2020. Research Methodology
[35]. Market Business News (2022). https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/manager-definition-meaning/
[36]. Moorman, R. H., Niehoff, B. P., and Organ, D. W. (1993). Treating employees fairly and organizational citizenship behavior: Sorting the effects of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and procedural justice. Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal, 6(3), 209-225.
[37]. Moriarty S. and Burnett J. (2006). Advertising principles and practices 7thedn. Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River: 2006.
[38]. Ollor, H.Y. and Onyemachi, J. (2022). Food service experience and customer behaviour in fast-food establishments in Port Harcourt. African Journal of Agricultural Science and Food Research, 3(1), 11-24
[39]. Ollor, H.Y. and Adiele, S. D. (2022). Food service delivery and consumer preference of fast-food restaurants in Port Harcourt. African Journal of Management and Business Research. 3(5), 1-17
[40]. Raimi, L. and Towobola, W. L. (2011). Open Distance Learning (ODL): A Catalyst For Educational and Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria. Continental Journal of Education Research, 4 (3): 1 –11
[41]. Sharma, S. & Shreya J. (2017). An empirical study on impact of emotional advertising in print and electronic media on selected youngsters of Udaipur. Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research, 3(3), 406-412.
[42]. Sheppard, B. H., Hartwick, J. and Warshaw, P. R. (1988). The theory of reasoned action: A meta-analysis of past research with recommendations for modifications and future research. Journal of Consumer Research, 15(3), 325-343
[43]. Sheth, J.N. (1971). Word of mouth in low-risk innovation. Journal of Advertising Research. 11(3), 15-18.
[44]. Simplilearn (2022). Management Decision Making: What is it, Process, Techniques, and Tools. https://www.simplilearn.com/management-decision-making
[45]. Steele, C. M. & Liu, T. J. (1983). Dissonance processes as self-affirmation, Journal of personality and Social Psychology, 45(1), 5.
[46]. Trump, R. K. (2014). Connected consumers' responses to negative brand actions: The roles of transgression self-relevance and domain, Journal of Business Research, 67(9), 1824-1830.
[47]. Ukaegbu, C.C. (2000). Working conditions and employee commitment in indigenous private manufacturing firms in Nigeria: managing business organizations for industrial development. The Journal of Modern African Studies, 38(1): 295-324
[48]. Wang K, Wang Eric T. G. & Cheng, K. F. (2009), Influence of Web advertising strategies, consumer goal directedness and consumer involvement on Web advertising effectiveness. International Journal of E Commerce, 13 (4), 67-95
[49]. Wirtz, J & Lwin, M.O (2009). Regulatory focus theory, trust, and privacy concern. Journal of Science Research, 12(2), 190-207.