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Strategic Quality Management Practices and Firm Profitability of Selected Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Manufacturing Companies in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies are crucial to economies, supplying daily essentials like food and household items that boost consumer spending and economic stability. To enhance profitability, these firms have adopted innovative strategies, improved supply chain efficiency, and utilized digital platforms to meet changing consumer needs. However, many still face declining profits, possibly due to ineffective strategic quality management that misaligns operations with market demands or fails to maintain product quality. This highlights the importance of studying strategic quality management's impact on profitability, especially in a dynamic market like Lagos State, Nigeria, where FMCG companies encounter distinct challenges and opportunities, requiring deeper analysis for sustainable financial success. This research adopted a survey approach, with a population of 10,375 managers from different FMCG manufacturing companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. A sample of 419 was determined using the Research Advisor's sampling table, with the sample allocated proportionally across the chosen firms. Respondents were picked through simple random sampling. Data was collected using a validated, structured questionnaire, with Cronbach's alpha reliability scores ranging from 0.72 to 0.91. The response rate was 94.5%. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential (multiple regression) statistics. The findings revealed that strategic quality management practices had a positive significant effect on firm profitability ($Adj.R^2 = 0.214$, $F(5, 418) = 23.694$, $p < 0.05$) of selected FMCG manufacturing companies in Lagos State. The study concluded that strategic quality management practices significantly influence the profitability of selected Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) manufacturing companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. This finding emphasizes that a deliberate focus on quality management not only enhances operational efficiency but also directly contributes to financial performance. Given the findings, it is recommended that FMCG manufacturing companies in Lagos State prioritize the adoption and implementation of strategic quality management practices to boost their profitability.

Background to the Study

Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies play a vital role in economies worldwide by providing essential, everyday products like food, beverages, and household items that drive consumer spending and economic stability. Efforts to improve profitability in these firms have included adopting innovative strategies, enhancing supply chain efficiency, and leveraging digital platforms to meet evolving consumer demands. However, despite these initiatives, many FMCG firms have experienced a decline in profitability, potentially due to poor strategic quality management practices that fail to align operational processes with market needs or ensure consistent product quality. This underscores the need to examine strategic quality management practices and their impact on firm profitability, particularly in a dynamic market like Lagos State, Nigeria, where selected FMCG manufacturing companies face unique challenges and opportunities, necessitating a deeper analysis to identify effective solutions for sustainable financial success.

In America, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector are important to United States economy and a substantial employer with significant workforce over 20 million people, both directly and indirectly, and has a GDP contribution of over 2.5%, however, United Staes of America also face challenges that affect FMCG growth (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2020; National Association of Manufacturers 2020). Further, the challenges have adversely affected key business outcomes, including brand loyalty, customer patronage (Adama & Okeke, 2024). Ruchijoshi (2023) highlights the significant disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which not only interrupted supply chains but also altered consumer behavior. This led to a surge in customer patronage on FMCG goods while simultaneously intensifying competition and firm profitability challenges (Asgharizadeh et al., 2023). Furthermore, rising innovation cost has huge overhead cost exacerbating the financial pressures on firms and constraining firm profitability (Qodenext, 2023; Shakur et al., 2024). The increased costs of raw materials, coupled with ongoing supply chain disruptions, have further undermined profit margins (Ruchijoshi, 2023). Currently, shifting consumer preferences toward sustainability and digital engagement have compelled firms to innovate at an accelerated pace, often incurring substantial costs that erode profitability (Qodenext, 2023). The competitive landscape has become increasingly challenging, with new entrants leveraging technology to attract customers, thereby threatening the ability of established brands to sustain customer loyalty and patronage (Shinall et al., 2024).

In Brazil, the fast-moving consumer goods had been struggling with a complex array of challenges significantly affecting crucial business outcomes, including competitive advantage, and profitability (Scaliza et al., 2021). Economic instability, characterized by high inflation rates and volatile consumer spending, has weakened brand loyalty, decrease in profitability diminished customer patronage. According to Panhwar et al. (2022); Dávila and Anjos (2021), the rise of local competitors, coupled with the necessity for ongoing innovation to meet shifting consumer preferences, has further intensified the pressure on firms to invest heavily in research and development. However, these

investments often do not yield immediate returns, reducing the overall level of innovativeness within the sector (Shinall et al., 2024). Additionally, FMCG firms with lower economies of scale face heightened difficulties in adapting to these challenges, resulting in reduced profitability (Deloitte, 2023; Mancini et al., 2021). Collectively, these factors have constrained the ability of firms to effectively manage costs while also making necessary strategic investments, thereby impeding overall profitability.

In Pakistan, fast-moving consumer goods sector has experienced significant growth in recent years, retail sector contributing 18% to GDP and employees 16% of the Pakistan's workforce, in the midst of growth, FMCG in Pakistan is facing intense competition, logistical challenges, stringent regulatory, and complex tax laws which laid to challenges on firm profitability and firm growth (Qazi 2020; Haq, 2022). However, FMCG has encountered significant challenges that have adversely affected key business outcomes such as competitive advantage, and profitability (INP, 2024). Prominent companies such as Unilever Pakistan and Nestlé Pakistan have grappled with supply chain disruptions and inflationary pressures, which have impeded their ability to maintain consistent product availability and stable pricing as stated by International Narcotics Control Board (INP, 2024). Similarly, Procter & Gamble has faced substantial challenges due to regulatory changes and escalating operational costs, negatively affecting their profitability and competitive positioning (Asghar, 2019; Shaikh et al., 2022). The intense competition within Pakistan's FMCG sector has necessitated continuous innovation; however, limited financial resources and high operational costs have constrained these efforts (Qodenext, 2023; Qureshi et al., 2019). Furthermore, the regulatory landscape in Pakistan, characterized by frequent shifts in tax policies and compliance requirements, has added complexity to the operational environment, exacerbating the challenges faced by firms (Haider, 2022; Tanudiharjo et al., 2021). Local firms such as Hilal Foods and Young's Private Limited have also had to contend with rising raw material costs and evolving consumer preferences, which have complicated their market strategies and further strained their operations (Prashar, 2022; Singh, 2024). These multifaceted challenges have collectively undermined brand loyalty, customer patronage, and overall profitability, making it increasingly difficult for FMCG firms to sustain growth and maintain market relevance in Pakistan's competitive and dynamic market (Asghar, 2019; Haider, 2022; Singh, 2024).

Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) firms in South Africa have faced a multitude of challenges that have significantly affected key business outcomes such as brand loyalty, customer patronage, firm innovativeness, competitive advantage, and profitability. Leading companies have struggled with logistics barriers and constraints, disrupting production and elevating costs, while illicit trade has further eroded market share and profitability (Hweshure, 2022). Similarly, most African companies faced economic volatility and shifting consumer preferences towards sustainability and health-conscious products, complicating its market positioning. While other major player, has been challenged by logistics barriers and power constraints, affect supply chain efficiency amid regulatory and economic pressures (Ngomane, 2023).

The broader economic environment, marked by high inflation and unstable commodity markets, has further eroded consumer purchasing power, reducing customer patronage and weakening brand loyalty. Power outages and poor transport infrastructure have exacerbated operational costs and profitability concerns, while illicit trade continues to undermine legitimate businesses (Ventures Africa, 2019). Despite opportunities for innovation, many FMCG firms have been slow to embrace digital transformation and leverage on artificial intelligence (AI) and information systems, limiting their ability to enhance supply chain resilience and drive innovation (Hirsch et al., 2024). These compounded challenges have collectively hindered the ability of FMCG firms in South Africa to sustain competitive advantage and achieve long-term profitability.

The Nigerian FMCG was valued at N2.3 trillion growing at a compound annual growth rate of 10.3% hence driven by increasing demand for food, beverages, and personal care products but FMCG has economic instability which include high inflation and cuurency fluctations, infrastructure challenges such as eratic power distribution, competition making it challenging for companies to differentiate themselves and these has range of significant challenges that have adversely affected key business outcomes, including brand loyalty, customer patronage, firm innovativeness, competitive advantage, and profitability (Etuk et al., 2022). High operating costs, driven by infrastructural deficiencies, regulation complexities, and fluctuating exchange rates, have severely eroded profit margins (Ikpoto, 2024). Additionally, inconsistent government policies and regulation has strained operations, leading to compliance difficulties and increased costs (Oduogu et al., 2024). The intense competition from both local and international players has pressured firms to continuously innovate, often stretching their resources. The devaluation of the naira and the removal of petrol subsidies have exacerbated financial instability, further reducing consumer purchasing power, diminishing customer patronage, and weakening brand loyalty (Rahayu et al. 2020; Park et al. 2023). Moreover, frequent changes in import tariffs and duties have created an unpredictable business environment, stifled firm innovativeness and eroded competitive advantage. These persistent challenges have driven some multinational companies to exit the Nigerian market, underscoring the sector's vulnerability (Oduogu et al., 2024). Consequently, many FMCG firms have reported significant losses arising from perceived risk, including financial risk can impact consumer decision-making and brand loyalty, inviarably undermining both profitability and long-term sustainability (Yeboah et al. 2018). Collectively, these challenges have hindered the ability of FMCG firms in Nigeria to maintain a competitive edge and achieve sustainable profitability.

The challenges facing fast-moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria highlight significant deficiencies in the sector, despite efforts to address these issues through strategic quality management practices. These practices such as commitment from top management, business process reengineering, continuous improvement, strategic quality planning, and customer focus are intended to enhance business outcomes such as brand loyalty, customer patronage, firm innovativeness, competitive advantage, and profitability. However, these exacerbated challenges have laid to decline in competitive advantage

and profitability, and underscoring the sector's ongoing struggle for improved business outcome (Golrizgashti et al., 2022; Zego & Husny, 2023; Soyege et al., 2023; Abiodun et al., 2024; Ezeoke et al., 2024).

The effect of strategic quality management practices on firm profitability within fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Lagos State, Nigeria, highlights a series of critical issues and inefficiencies. Despite the implementation of practices such as top management commitment, business process reengineering, continuous improvement, strategic quality planning, and customer focus, many firms struggle to achieve significant financial success. The commitment from top management to produce meaningful financial results will adequately aligne resource with the actual operational needs of the firms (Olubiyi, 2023). Business process reengineering initiatives is to control profit margins rather than enhancment (Adamu & Hamidah, 2023). Continuous improvement efforts are made support sufficiency in organisation, in other to achieve profitability and operational efficiency (Abdulmalik, 2023). Strategic quality planning is to maximise material waste enhance profitability (Aimuyedo et al., 2023). Though, implementation of customer focus strategies significantly improvements revenue generation or market performance (Owolabi, 2023). Collectively, these measures contribute an increase in profitability, as FMCG companies struggle to effectively navigate the financial pressures and market demands that characterize financial growth.

Numerous scholars (Golrizgashti et al., 2022; Khalil, 2021) have examined the effect of strategic quality management practices on firm profitability, yet the findings often present inconsistencies and are heavily context-dependent. However, the research emphasized on the crucial roles of customer focus and continuous improvement in enhancing profitability by driving customer satisfaction and operational efficiency (Khan et al., 2018). In contrast, other studies highlight top management commitment and strategic quality planning as essential components for achieving cost savings and revenue growth (Nozari et al., 2021). This divergence in evidence regarding the overall effect of these practices on profitability suggests a significant research gap, particularly within Nigeria's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, where the combined effects of these practices on firm profitability remain insufficiently explored (Olutimehin et al., 2024). Despite the recognized importance of strategic quality management practices, many Nigerian FMCG firms continue to grapple with inconsistent profitability.

This instability can largely be attributed to poor alignment between strategic planning and financial outcomes, inadequate process reengineering, and a limited focus on continuous improvement (Eze et al., 2024). Additionally, it is important to note that insufficient customer-centric strategies and weak top management involvement in quality initiatives have further exacerbated the situation, contributing to increased costs and diminished returns (Adejare et al., 2022). These challenges raise serious concerns, as these FMCG firms struggle to meet profitability requirements and targets, ultimately jeopardizing their financial viability. The inability to effectively implement quality management practices not only hampers the firms' profitability but also effects their competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market.

Hypothesis Development

Research establishes that strategic quality management practices positively influence firm profitability through various mechanisms. Nguyen, Phan, and Matsui (2018) demonstrate that these practices enhance the sustainability performance of firms, indirectly boosting profitability. Potkány et al. (2020) confirm that quality management practices improve business performance in Slovak manufacturing enterprises, leading to increased profitability. Al-Sabi et al. (2023) show that integrating quality management practices with employee empowerment significantly enhances innovation performance in the hotel industry, resulting in higher profitability. Lu et al. (2019) provide evidence that quality management practices improve inter-organisational project performance and, when combined with governance mechanisms, directly support profitability. Top management commitment serves a critical driver of firm profitability. Basana et al. (2022) establish that commitment to green purchasing and production improves operational performance, translating into increased profitability. Rahman, Zahid, and Al-Faryan (2023) confirm that top management commitment enhances firm profitability by strengthening the impact of sustainability strategies. Protus Lumiti et al. (2024) highlighted on the role of top management commitment in improving employee performance and financial support, directly contributing to profitability. Additionally, Protus Lumiti et al. (2024) showed that top management commitment reinforces the effect of employee pension services on organisational performance, further supporting profitability.

While the positive impact of strategic quality management practices on profitability is well-documented, some studies identify limitations influenced by contextual factors. Nguyen et al. (2018) report that although quality management practices contribute to sustainability, their direct impact on profitability is shaped by market conditions. Potkány et al. (2020) highlight industry-specific variations in the profitability benefits of these practices. Al-Sabi et al. (2023) emphasize that market competition and industry characteristics moderate the profitability gains from quality management practices. Basana et al. (2022) note that resource limitations and external constraints may reduce the effectiveness of top management commitment in driving profitability. Sikandar et al. (2024) identified public sector complexities as a limitation in realizing BPR's profitability potential, while Gonzalez-Aleu et al. (2021) and Henrique et al. (2021) reveal that the profitability benefits of continuous improvement practices are influenced by implementation costs and organisational context. Therefore, the study hypothesizes that:

H_0: Strategic quality management practices have no significant effect on firm profitability.

Literature Review

This section discussed the various variables in form of conceptual, empirical and theoretical reviews.

Strategic Quality Management Practices

Saleh et al. (2024) defined Strategic Quality Management Practices (SQMPs) as a comprehensive set of systematic processes that integrate quality management with strategic initiatives, aiming to enhance product and service quality while fostering both exploitative and explorative innovations to sustain organizational growth and competitive advantage. Building on this, Ali-Albagawi and Hadi (2024) emphasize how SQMPs enable firms to leverage existing market knowledge for immediate gains while simultaneously exploring new avenues for innovation, highlighting their dual role in driving short-term efficiency and long-term adaptability. In contrast, Parast et al. (2024) provide a broader perspective through a comparative analysis, illustrating SQMPs' versatility across diverse sectors like manufacturing and services, which underscores their adaptability to varying organizational contexts. Meanwhile, Msendema et al. (2024) strengthen this argument by positioning SQMPs as a dynamic tool that ties quality practices to strategic management, ensuring organizations achieve operational excellence and long-term sustainability. Together, these insights reveal SQMPs as a pivotal framework that transcends traditional quality assurance, aligning it with strategic goals to enhance overall business performance (Perera, 2024).

The advantages of strategic quality management practices extend beyond basic efficiency improvements and play a crucial role in shaping organizational performance. One primary benefit is the enhancement of customer satisfaction, as organizations employing SQMPs are better equipped to meet and exceed customer expectations through consistent quality delivery. This was observed by Perera (2024), who noted that SQMPs allow organizations to create products and services that resonate with customers, fostering trust and loyalty. Further, Torre et al. (2024) highlight that SQMPs also contribute to reduced operational costs by identifying inefficiencies and areas for improvement, ultimately leading to cost savings and better resource utilization. Another significant advantage of SQMPs is their ability to foster continuous improvement, as organizations using these practices cultivate a culture of ongoing refinement, which enhances both employee performance and overall operational effectiveness. This aligns with the views of Saleh et al. (2024), who argue that the continuous feedback loop embedded in SQMPs ensures that quality is consistently improved, contributing to long-term sustainability.

Top Management Commitment

Kitsis and Chen (2021) argue that top management commitment is essential for overcoming resistance to change, as leadership plays a crucial role in addressing concerns and motivating employees to embrace new quality management practices. Latif and Vang (2021) add that top management commitment also involves leading by example, where senior leaders demonstrate their dedication to quality by actively participating in quality initiatives and embodying the principles they promote. Yong et al. (2022) emphasize that top management commitment should be visible and tangible, with leaders taking proactive steps to ensure that quality initiatives are adequately supported and resourced. Memon et al. (2022) conclude that the ultimate goal of top

management commitment is to embed quality as a core organisational value, ensuring its integration into every aspect of the business. The benefits of top management commitment are numerous, contributing significantly to the overall success of quality management initiatives. Basana et al. (2022) argue that one of the primary benefits is improved organisational performance, as top management commitment ensures that quality initiatives are effectively implemented and sustained over time. Rahman et al. (2023) further highlight that top management commitment can enhance employee engagement and morale, as employees are more likely to be motivated and committed to quality initiatives when they see that their leaders are genuinely invested in these efforts. Lumiti et al. (2024a) add that top management commitment can lead to better decision-making, as leaders who prioritize quality are more likely to make informed and strategic choices that align with long-term organisational goals. Lumiti et al. (2024b) emphasize that top management commitment can also enhance organisational resilience, as a strong commitment to quality can help organisations navigate challenges and adapt to changing environments.

Business Process Reengineering

Djamarullah et al. (2023) highlight that Business Process Reengineering (BPR) often involves leveraging technology to enable new ways of performing processes, thus driving significant improvements. Al-Shammari (2023) emphasizes the importance of aligning BPR initiatives with organisational strategy to ensure that the redesigned processes contribute to overall business objectives. Saragih et al. (2021) note that successful BPR implementation requires strong leadership and change management to overcome resistance and ensure smooth transitions. Riyanto et al. (2019) discuss that BPR is often necessitated by changes in the external environment, such as technological advancements or shifts in market conditions, which demand more agile and efficient business processes. The benefits of BPR are significant, offering numerous advantages to organisations that effectively implement it. Sikandar et al. (2024) argue that one of the primary benefits is the potential for substantial cost savings, as BPR helps eliminate inefficiencies and streamline operations. Petrova et al. (2024) further emphasize that BPR can lead to improved customer satisfaction by enhancing the speed and quality of service delivery. Pshenychna (2024) adds that BPR enables organisations to achieve greater flexibility and responsiveness, allowing them to adapt more quickly to changes in the market or industry. Naugolnova (2024) highlights that BPR can drive innovation by encouraging the development of new processes and technologies that better meet customer needs.

Continuous Improvement

Mihaela and Aztefania (2020) emphasize that continuous improvement requires a proactive approach, where organisations actively seek opportunities for enhancement rather than waiting for issues to arise. Arredondo-Méndez et al. (2021) argue that continuous improvement is essential for maintaining competitive advantage, as it helps organisations adapt to market changes and evolving customer needs. Lameijer et al. (2021a) add that successful continuous improvement involves engaging all levels of the

organisation in the improvement process, fostering a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility. Lameijer et al. (2021b) further elaborate that continuous improvement is driven by a commitment to quality and efficiency, with organisations constantly seeking ways to enhance their processes and outcomes. Weimann (2018) discusses the advantage of increased employee engagement, noting that a focus on continuous improvement can boost morale and motivation by involving employees in the improvement process. Khattak et al. (2020) argue that continuous improvement enhances organisational agility, allowing organisations to quickly adapt to changes in the market or industry. Galeazzo et al. (2021) highlight that continuous improvement supports long-term sustainability, as organisations that consistently improve are better positioned to maintain their competitive edge. Negulescu (2020) concludes that continuous improvement also contributes to enhanced customer satisfaction, as organisations that continuously refine their processes and offerings are more likely to meet or exceed customer expectations. Van Elp et al. (2022) add that continuous improvement strengthens organisational resilience, enabling organisations to better withstand and recover from challenges and disruptions.

Strategic Quality Planning

Strategic quality planning is a critical process in ensuring that an organisation's quality objectives align with its overall strategic goals. De-Angelis et al. (2020) define strategic quality planning as a systematic approach to establishing quality objectives that support and enhance the organisation's long-term strategy. This approach involves setting clear quality goals, developing strategies to achieve these goals, and aligning quality management efforts with the broader organisational strategy. Senaratne and Jayarathna (2012) emphasize that strategic quality planning requires a comprehensive understanding of both internal capabilities and external market conditions to develop effective quality strategies. Wazirman et al. (2020) further argue that successful strategic quality planning involves stakeholder engagement and buy-in, ensuring that all relevant parties are aligned with the quality objectives. The benefits of strategic quality planning are substantial and contribute significantly to organisational success. Tallentire et al. (2019) argue that one of the primary benefits is enhanced alignment between quality objectives and organisational strategy, ensuring that quality efforts support broader business goals. Kelesbayev et al. (2020) further emphasize that strategic quality planning leads to improved resource allocation, as quality initiatives are prioritized based on their effect on strategic objectives. Junior et al. (2022) highlight that strategic quality planning can enhance organisational performance by setting clear quality goals and developing targeted strategies to achieve them.

Customer Focus

Customer focus, a concept integral to contemporary business practice, has been subject to various interpretations across the academic spectrum. Efremova (2023) defines customer focus as an organisation's orientation towards consistently delivering value that meets or exceeds customer expectations. This definition aligns with the perspective of Yangailo (2023), who emphasizes the role of customer satisfaction as a determinant of long-term

business success. In juxtaposition, Thongkhum et al. (2023) approach customer focus from a relational angle, viewing it as the cultivation of strong, enduring customer relationships through personalized service. This relational perspective resonates with Alhmoudi et al. (2019), who argue that customer focus is characterized by proactive engagement strategies that anticipate customer needs rather than merely reacting to them. The benefits of a customer-focused approach are substantial, offering a competitive edge in today's dynamic market environment. Liang et al. (2021) argue that customer focus leads to enhanced customer loyalty, as organisations that consistently meet customer needs are more likely to retain their customer base over the long term. Han et al. (2021) support this view, suggesting that customer focus contributes to brand differentiation by creating a unique value proposition that resonates with customers. Mutuku et al. (2024) further argue that customer focus enhances organisational agility, enabling firms to respond swiftly to market changes and emerging customer trends. This agility is particularly important in rapidly evolving industries, where customer preferences can shift quickly.

Firm Profitability

Firm profitability is a concept in the field of business economics and is extensively studied to understand its various dimensions and implications for businesses. While definitions of profitability vary, most emphasize its relation to the firm's ability to generate income relative to its expenses and other costs. According to Aliyi et al. (2021), profitability is defined as the capacity of a firm to generate profit after accounting for its costs. Raddant and Takahashi (2022) take a broader view, positioning profitability not just as a static measure but as a dynamic function of the firm's operational and market environments. This view captures profitability's dependence on the interplay between internal practices and external market conditions, thus giving it a more comprehensive meaning. Yin and Yang (2022) extend this definition, asserting that profitability should be understood as an indicator of a firm's sustainability over time, influenced by both strategic decisions and broader economic factors.

The advantages of firm profitability are numerous and crucial to a company's success. First, profitability directly correlates with a firm's financial health, offering the firm the ability to sustain its operations, invest in growth, and provide returns to shareholders (Kumar et al., 2022). This financial security allows firms to weather economic downturns and reinvest profits into innovation or expansion, a benefit particularly noted by Raddant and Takahashi (2022). Moreover, profitability facilitates access to capital, as profitable firms are considered less risky by investors and lenders, enabling them to secure favorable financing conditions (Yang & Liu, 2023). This increased access to resources can lead to further profitability, creating a positive feedback loop. Another advantage highlighted by Badawy et al. (2022) is that profitability strengthens a firm's market position, providing a buffer against competitors. It allows firms to absorb shocks from market volatility and price fluctuations, which may otherwise hinder the performance of less profitable competitors. Furthermore, profitability enhances a firm's capacity for strategic flexibility, enabling it to take on new projects or enter new markets without being constrained by a lack of financial resources (Almaqtari et al., 2022).

Empirical Review on Strategic Quality Management Practices and Firm Profitability

Research, such as Nguyen et al. (2018), has demonstrated that strategic quality management substantially influences profitability, often through its enhancement of sustainability performance. This argument, however, posits that its impact on profitability is direct and significant, extending beyond sustainability alone. This perspective builds on Potkány et al. (2020), who linked quality management to business performance in Slovak manufacturing, but shifts the focus to the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry, where rapid market shifts and intense competition heighten its importance. Furthermore, Business Process Reengineering (BPR) further enhances strategic quality management's profitability impact, aligning with Sikandar et al. (2024), who connect it to improved operational efficiency. This challenges Pshenychna (2024), who claimed BPR's profitability benefits are limited by organizational constraints, proposing instead that integrating strategic quality management into reengineered processes sustains profitability, especially via digital advancements, as Petrova et al. (2024) illustrate. Naugolnova (2024) supports this, suggesting that both gradual and transformative BPR approaches increase profitability when paired with dynamic capabilities, highlighting strategic quality management's key role. Though resistance to change can be an obstacle, strategic quality management overcomes this by promoting a culture of ongoing improvement, directly enhancing profitability through proactive management and process redesign. Continuous improvement practices also reinforce strategic quality management's profitability impact, consistent with Gonzalez Aleu et al. (2021), who tied these efforts to better service quality. Countering Henrique et al. (2021), who noted challenges in maintaining such practices, this argument asserts that a robust strategic quality management approach embeds them into operations, driving profitability. Beraldin et al. (2022) add that employee participation in continuous improvement boosts production results, an effect intensified within a strategic quality management framework. Similarly, customer focus, integral to strategic quality management, significantly lifts profitability, as shown by Islamgaleyev et al. (2020) and Mutuku et al. (2024). This view challenges Liang et al. (2021), who linked customer focus to short-term impulse purchases, arguing instead that a consistent customer-centric strategy fosters lasting profitability. Firms that adapt quality management to evolving consumer needs, as Han et al. (2021) recommend, heighten the effect of strategic quality management practices on profitability.

Theoretical Review

Dynamic Capabilities Theory serves as a compelling foundation for exploring the interplay between strategic quality management practices and firm profitability, particularly within the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector in Lagos State. This theory emphasizes a firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources to address rapidly changing environments, thereby fostering continuous innovation and adaptability (Harry et al., 2021). In the context of Lagos State's volatile market, characterized by economic shifts, regulatory changes, and evolving consumer demands, this adaptability is essential for FMCG firms to maintain profitability (Makinde et al., 2023). By leveraging strategic quality management

practices, such as process optimization and customer-focused innovation, firms can enhance their responsiveness to these dynamics, driving improved business outcomes (Nkeiruka et al., 2024). The theory's focus on resource reconfiguration and continuous improvement provides a robust lens to examine how these practices enable firms to sustain competitiveness and achieve superior financial performance (Oluwajinmi & Longe, 2023). Furthermore, its comprehensive approach to managing change aligns seamlessly with the need for FMCG companies to remain agile and profitable in a challenging landscape (Sunday & Olasoji, 2023), making Dynamic Capabilities Theory highly relevant for understanding the linkage between quality management and profitability (Okegbemiro et al., 2023).

Conceptual Model

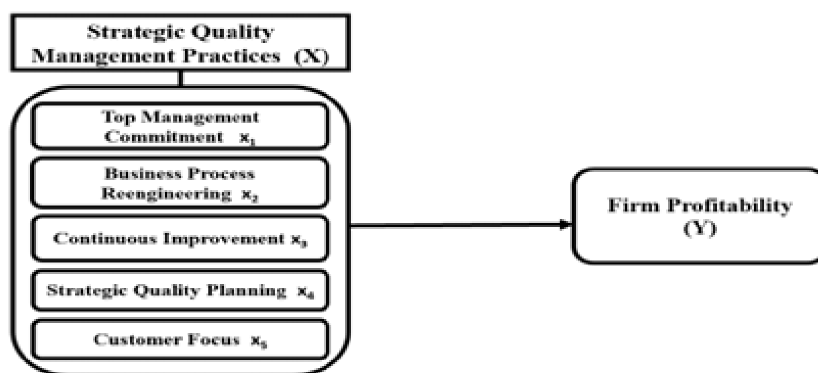

Figure 1: Conceptual Model for Strategic Quality Management and Firm Profitability
Source: Researchers' Conceptualization (2025)

Methodology

This study employed a survey research design, focusing on a population of 10,375 managers from various FMCG manufacturing firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. A sample size of 419 was determined based on the Research Advisor's sampling table. The samples were distributed proportionally across the selected FMCG companies, with participants chosen using a simple random sampling method. Data was gathered through a structured and validated questionnaire, achieving Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients between 0.72 and 0.91. The response rate reached 94.5%. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and adopting multiple regression analysis at a 5% significance level.

Model Specification

The model for the variables is denoted in the equations below:
X = Strategic Quality Management Practices (SQMP)
Y = Firm Profitability (FPT)

Independent Variables
x_1 = Top Management Commitment (TMC)
x_2 = Business Process Reengineering (BPR)
x_3 = Continuous Improvement (CI)
x_4 = Strategic Quality Planning (SQP)
x_5 = Customer Focus (CF)

Dependent Variables
Y = Firm Profitability (FPT)

Hypothesis
$y_{1=} f(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5)$
$y_1 = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_{4X4} + \beta_5 x_5 + \mu$
$FPT = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 TMC + \beta_2 BPR + \beta_3 CI + \beta_4 SQP + \beta_5 CF + \mu$ .... Equ (1)

Results and Discussion
The data were analysed using version 27.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, maintaining a 5% significance level throughout all analyses to ensure the results supported the research goals. The researcher distributed 419 questionnaires to senior, middle, and lower-level managers, with 396 completed and returned, yielding a response rate of approximately 94.5%. This was deemed a suitable response rate for the study population. The analysis incorporated both descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

Restatement of Research Hypothesis
H_0: Strategic quality management practices have no significant effect on firm profitability

In the hypothesis, the independent sub-variables consist of strategic quality management practices, which include top management commitment, business process reengineering, continuous improvement, strategic quality planning, and customer focus, while the dependent variable is firm profitability. The data for strategic quality management practices (SQMP) were calculated by summing the response scores for all items within each practice to produce independent scores. Similarly, the data for firm profitability were derived by aggregating the responses to all items under the variable to form an index. The findings from the analysis, along with the parameter estimates, are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis

N	Model	*B*	T	Sig.	ANOVA (Sig.)	R	Adjusted R^2	F (5, 418)
396	(Constant)	9.996	6.798	.000				
	Top management commitment	.070	1.655	.099	0.001[b]	0.472[a]	0.214	23.694
	Business process reengineering	.078	1.642	.101				
	continuous improvement	.184	3.865	.000				
	strategic quality planning	.042	.845	.399				
	Customer focus	.231	4.619	.000				
	a. Dependent Variable: Firm Profitability							
	b. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Focus, Top Management Commitment, Business Process Reengineering, Continuous Improvement, Strategic Quality Planning							

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2025

Interpretation

Table 1 presents the multiple regression analysis results for the effect of strategic quality management practices on firm profitability in selected fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) manufacturing companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. The results reveal a complex relationship between various strategic quality management practices and firm profitability, with some practices showing a significant influence, while others do not.

The analysis indicates that continuous improvement ($\beta = 0.184$, $t = 3.865$, $p < 0.05$) and customer focus ($\beta = 0.231$, $t = 4.619$, $p < 0.05$) have significant positive effects on firm profitability. These practices are essential for enhancing the profitability of FMCG manufacturing firms by improving operational efficiencies, customer satisfaction, and overall market performance. Customer focus stands out with the highest beta value of 0.231, emphasizing its critical role in driving profitability. Continuous improvement also demonstrates a strong effect, with a β value of 0.184, highlighting its importance in refining business processes, reducing waste, and boosting profitability over time.

However, top management commitment ($\beta = 0.070$, $t = 1.655$, $p = 0.099$), business process reengineering ($\beta = 0.078$, $t = 1.642$, $p = 0.101$), and strategic quality planning ($\beta = 0.042$, $t = 0.845$, $p = 0.399$) do not show significant effects on firm profitability. While these practices are still positively correlated with profitability, their impact is not statistically significant in this context. This suggests that, although important, these strategic quality management practices do not directly influence firm profitability to a large extent in the selected FMCG manufacturing companies. The lack of significance for these practices may be due to the complex and multifaceted nature of profitability, which is influenced by numerous factors beyond strategic quality management practices alone.

The correlation coefficient of 0.472 suggests a moderate positive relationship between strategic quality management practices and firm profitability. This indicates that as strategic quality management practices improve, firm profitability also tends to increase, although the relationship is not exceptionally strong. The adjusted R2 of 0.214 means that 21.4% of the variation in firm profitability can be attributed to the strategic quality management practices included in the model, while the remaining 78.6% is likely explained by other factors not captured in this analysis. This suggests that while strategic quality management practices have a notable impact on firm profitability, other external and internal factors play a significant role in shaping profitability outcomes.

The regression model provides a clearer picture of the baseline level of firm profitability and the influence of each practice. The baseline firm profitability, when all strategic quality management practices are set to zero, is 9.996. This suggests that even without the implementation of strategic quality management practices, there is still a baseline level of profitability in the selected FMCG manufacturing companies. This indicates that while strategic quality management practices are important, other factors contribute to the observed profitability levels.

The predictive and prescriptive multiple regression models can be expressed as follows:
Predictive Model: FP = 9.996 + 0.070TMC + 0.078BPR + 0.184CI + 0.042SQP + 0.231CF + Ui
Prescriptive Model: FP = 9.996 + 0.184CI + 0.231CF + Ui

Where:
FP = Firm Profitability
TMC = Top Management Commitment
BPR = Business Process Reengineering
CI = Continuous Improvement
SQP = Strategic Quality Planning
CF = Customer Focus

From the predictive model, it is clear that continuous improvement and customer focus are the most significant predictors of firm profitability, while top management commitment, business process reengineering, and strategic quality planning do not significantly contribute to profitability in this study. Therefore, FMCG companies aiming to improve profitability should prioritize continuous improvement and customer focus, ensuring that these practices are deeply embedded in their operational strategies.

The F-statistics (df = 5, 418) = 23.694, with a p-value of 0.001, indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant. This p-value suggests that the effect of strategic quality management practices on firm profitability is not due to random chance. The results highlight that customer focus and continuous improvement are the most critical drivers of profitability in the selected FMCG manufacturing companies in Lagos State.

Based on the results, the null hypothesis (H_0) stating that strategic quality management practices have no significant effect on firm profitability is rejected. This confirms that strategic quality management practices do indeed have a significant effect on firm profitability, particularly through the practices of continuous improvement and customer focus. These findings suggest that FMCG manufacturing companies should focus on enhancing these two practices to boost their profitability. Additionally, future research could explore other factors contributing to profitability, such as market dynamics, cost management strategies, and external economic conditions.

Discussion of Findings

The hypothesis was tested and it was revealed that strategic quality management practices have a significant effect on the profitability of the selected FMCG firms. The findings of this study confirm that strategic quality management practices significantly influence the profitability of selected FMCG firms, aligning with existing literature while also offering critical ideas into the nuanced mechanisms underlying this relationship. As noted by Nguyen et al. (2018), quality management enhances sustainability performance, which can indirectly lead to improved profitability. However, this study advances the discourse by demonstrating that strategic quality management exerts a direct and substantial effect on profitability, beyond mere sustainability considerations. While Potkány et al. (2020) found that quality management contributes to business performance in Slovak manufacturing enterprises, this study situates these findings within the dynamic FMCG sector, which is characterised by rapid market shifts and intense competition. The assertion that quality management practices enhance innovation (Al-Sabi et al., 2023) is also supported, particularly in the context of top management commitment to quality-driven strategic initiatives. However, the study also diverges from certain perspectives, such as the proposition by Rahman et al. (2023) that sustainability strategies moderate the effect of top management commitment on firm profitability. Here, it is argued that while sustainability may play a role, strategic quality management itself is a fundamental driver of profitability, particularly when integrated with agile business processes and a strong customer focus.

The theoretical lens of Dynamic Capabilities Theory provides a compelling foundation for interpreting these findings, particularly in understanding how firms leverage internal capabilities to respond to external market dynamics. Unlike the static resource-focused view proposed by the Resource-Based View (Binuyo et al., 2019), this study supports the notion that profitability within the FMCG sector is contingent on a firm's ability to continuously reconfigure resources and adapt strategic quality management practices to evolving market conditions (Owoseni & Twinomurinzi, 2018). This reinforces Akpan et al.'s (2021) assertion that rapid product turnover and shifting consumer preferences necessitate an adaptable management approach. Furthermore, the findings extend Makinde et al.'s (2023) argument that firms in volatile environments must develop strong dynamic capabilities to sustain competitive advantage. In contrast to Stakeholder Theory, which underscores the balance of multiple interests but lacks an emphasis on adaptability (Harry et al., 2021), this study underscores that strategic quality

management fosters not only internal efficiency but also external competitiveness through its alignment with market-driven quality expectations. The argument here is that firms should not merely respond to external stakeholder demands but proactively integrate strategic quality management as a key dynamic capability to drive profitability.

Business process reengineering (BPR) emerges as a critical enabler of profitability, corroborating Sikandar et al. (2024), who highlight its role in enhancing operational efficiency. However, the study presents a counterpoint to Pshenychna (2024), who posits that BPR's profitability effects may be limited by organisational constraints. Instead, it is argued that firms capable of embedding strategic quality management into reengineered processes achieve sustained profitability, particularly when leveraging digital transformations, as demonstrated by Petrova et al. (2024). This argument aligns with Naugolnova (2024), who notes that both evolutionary and radical approaches to BPR can yield significant profitability gains, provided firms possess the dynamic capabilities to execute these changes effectively. The empirical evidence suggests that while resistance to change may exist, strategic quality management practices when embedded within BPR frameworks can mitigate these challenges by fostering a culture of continuous improvement and efficiency-driven profitability. This refutes deterministic perspectives that attribute profitability stagnation solely to external constraints, asserting instead that managerial agency and strategic reconfiguration play defining roles in firm performance.

Continuous improvement practices also demonstrate a strong linkage with profitability, reinforcing the conclusions of Gonzalez Aleu et al. (2021) that such practices enhance service quality. However, unlike Henrique et al. (2021), who argue that sustaining continuous improvement can be challenging, this study suggests that firms with a strong strategic quality management orientation can institutionalise continuous improvement as part of their operational ethos. This perspective is further supported by Beraldin et al. (2022), who find that employee involvement in continuous improvement significantly enhances production outcomes. The study extends these findings by demonstrating that such involvement is most effective when embedded within a broader strategic quality management framework that aligns with organisational objectives and market realities. This further aligns with the tenets of Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which posits that continuous learning and reconfiguration are critical for maintaining competitive advantage (Oluwajinmi & Longe, 2023). However, it is also acknowledged that the extent to which continuous improvement translates into profitability may be mediated by industry-specific conditions and the effectiveness of managerial execution, as noted by Van-Assen (2021).

Customer focus, as an integral aspect of strategic quality management, is shown to significantly enhance profitability, substantiating Islamgaleyev et al. (2020) and Mutuku et al. (2024). However, this study critiques Liang et al. (2021), who associate customer focus primarily with impulse buying, arguing instead that a sustained customer-centric approach fosters long-term financial performance rather than sporadic sales spikes. The evidence suggests that firms that align quality management practices with evolving

consumer expectations, as advocated by Han et al. (2021), are better positioned to achieve sustained profitability. However, contrary to the deterministic perspectives that attribute customer focus benefits solely to consumer preferences, this study posits that profitability gains are contingent upon firms' ability to dynamically integrate customer ideas into strategic decision-making. This further supports the assertion of Nkeiruka et al. (2024) that adaptability is essential for leveraging strategic quality management in volatile markets. Overall, the findings underscore that while quality management practices are a strong determinant of profitability, their effectiveness is mediated by firms' ability to dynamically reconfigure internal capabilities, respond to market shifts, and sustain long-term customer engagement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that strategic quality management practices significantly influence the profitability of selected Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) manufacturing companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. This finding emphasizes that a deliberate focus on quality management not only enhances operational efficiency but also directly contributes to financial performance. By ensuring consistent product quality, optimizing processes, and aligning quality initiatives with business objectives, these companies can reduce costs, minimize waste, and increase customer satisfaction, all of which bolster profit margins. The research suggests that in the competitive FMCG sector, strategic quality management serves as a critical driver of economic success.

Given the findings, it is recommended that FMCG manufacturing companies in Lagos State prioritize the adoption and implementation of strategic quality management practices to boost their profitability. Top management should demonstrate strong commitment by allocating resources, setting clear quality objectives, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement across all levels of the organization. Additionally, firms should invest in reengineering their business processes to eliminate inefficiencies and align operations with strategic quality goals. Emphasizing customer focus through regular feedback mechanisms and tailored product offerings will further enhance market competitiveness. Policymakers and industry leaders could also support these efforts by providing training programs and incentives to encourage the widespread adoption of these practices among FMCG companies.

Suggestion for Further Study

For further study, researchers could explore the specific mechanisms through which strategic quality management practices influence profitability in FMCG companies, such as the role of customer perceptions, supply chain efficiency, or technological integration. Investigating these factors across a broader geographical scope beyond Lagos State or comparing FMCG firms with other industries could provide deeper insights into the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, longitudinal studies examining the long-term impact of quality management on profitability would enhance understanding of its sustained effects in dynamic market conditions.

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