CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED FAST-FOOD ORGANIZATIONS IN UYO, AWKA IBOM STATE

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Abstract
Businesses are always evolving as a result of the dynamic nature of today's business environments. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the influence of change management on the organizational performance of selected fast-food companies in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. A survey research design was employed for the investigation. From a population of 160 employees from the selected firms, 114 replies were determined using the Taro Yamane formula. The null hypotheses were evaluated at the 5% level of significance using linear regression analysis. Results show that change management has a considerable positive influence on the organizational performance of selected fast-food establishments in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among other things, that fast-food organizations in Uyo should invest more in new technical innovations/equipment and enhance their products/services to meet the changing demands of their clients. The study concludes that technology innovations, consumer preferences, and COVID-19 management methods all have a considerable beneficial impact on the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Keywords: Change, Management, Innovation, Strategies, Performance.

Introduction

Change is a common organizational occurrence given the dynamic character of the business sector, and may be evident in every element of organizational operations, with either positive or negative consequences. Political action, environmental issues, technical innovation, customer requirements and expectations, globalization, or a pandemic can all cause changes. A successful firm requires adaptability in coping with change. Managing change for a positive impact would thus require implementing corporate strategies, structures, procedures, and technology to meet the identified change within the organizational environment (Shaul and Yarden, 2019).

The fast-food business is one of the global industries that has provided customers with standardized eat-in and takeaway services on a large scale. It has created methods and food preparation technologies to cut production costs and delivery times.

Statement of the Problem

Businesses are continually changing as a consequence of today's dynamic business climate, making change an acceptable element of corporate life. Globalization, strong competition, greater technological innovation, changing consumer demands, and pandemics are all creating substantial market shifts. Because of the quick rate of change, businesses must adapt to market shifts and techniques of all types and levels to remain competitive and profitable.

The fast-food industry in Akwa Ibom State demands an effective change management strategy as an employer of employees. With increasing rivalry and a stifling corporate environment. The need for fast-food companies to adapt, innovate, and evolve in response to the changing realities of the twenty-first century

Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) sector has never been greater. When change is poorly managed, it has a negative influence on performance and may result in the organization's complete closure or the loss of important clients as a result of consumer dissatisfaction, lowering the organization's total profit margin. Thus, this research aims to examine the change management strategies utilized by fast-food establishments in Uyo and its effect on their performance.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of change management on selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study is to:

- **i.** Examine the influence of technological innovations on the organizational performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
- **ii.** Ascertain the effect of customer taste on the organizational performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
- **iii.** Find out the influence of Coronavirus (COVID-19) management strategies on the organizational performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide this study;

- i. What is the influence of technological innovations on the organizational performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State?
- ii. What is the effect of customer taste on the organizational performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State?
- iii. What influence do COVID-19 management strategies have on the organizational performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State?

Hypotheses of the Study

$H0_1$: Technological innovations have no significant influence on the organizational performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

$H0_2$: Customer taste has no significant effect on the organizational performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

$H0_3$: COVID-19 management strategies have no significant influence on the organizational performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Change Management

Change management is defined by the Society for Human Resource Management (2015) in Obialor et al (2023) as "the systematic approach and use of knowledge, techniques, and resources to cope with change." Change management, according to Cross (2019) in WHO, (2020), is a systematic strategy for coping with change at both the organizational and interpersonal levels. Change management refers to the process of bringing new ideas or habits into an organization in response to external and internal factors. It is the ongoing process through which a company aligns with its market to be more responsive and effective than its rivals (Mohammed, 2013 in Obialor et al, 2023).

Change management entails changing an organization's business procedures to deal with fast changes in the business environment while maximizing revenues. Change management refers to the technique of continually updating an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to meet the ever-changing demands of external and internal customers. According to Francis and Susan (2015) in Shaul and Yarden, (2019) change management is the art of directing and managing human emotions and behaviors to minimize the unavoidable reduction in productivity caused by change.

In the face of rapid technological innovation, environmental complexity, globalization, competitiveness, and changing consumer demands, change is becoming an ever-present feature of organizational life (Burnes, 2004 in Obialor, 2023). To become more competitive and profitable in this rapidly changing market, organizations must employ various types and degrees of strategies.

Technological Innovations

Technological innovation is defined as the act of introducing a novel device, technique, or material for application to commercial or practical goals. Technological innovation has also been defined as the commercialization of new items and processes resulting from new technology, as well as the effective exploitation of old technology through creative recombination (Coombs, Saviotti, and Walsh, 2017). Every business organization places a premium on technological innovation (Obialor, 2023). In today's deregulated economies and competitive marketplaces, each business organization's ability to outsmart its competitors decides its success or failure. According to Porter (2015) in Obialor, (2023), technological innovation is a fundamental driver of industry competitiveness and a formidable competitive weapon for any business. Technological innovation has a direct impact on a company's flexibility since it permits them to respond to external threats and enhance their market performance (Obialor, 2023). Many commercial companies today struggle to compete with their competitors, owing in part to their inability to innovate. While multinational corporations receive necessary incentives to promote overall business growth, most local industries lack necessary ingredients such as firm size, organizational resources, legal protection, innovation efficiency in areas of diversification and flexibility to respond to market changes, and incentives to use existing and new technologies (Teece, 2016). Because technological innovation is so important to every firm, its management is a crucial component of corporate activity. Successful technological innovation management in a company is based on top management's willingness to give the resources needed for people and groups to notice and adapt to technological developments (Obialor, 2023b).

Customer Taste

Taste is an individual's evaluative judgment about enjoying or hating something. Consumer taste is commonly characterized as the subjective preferences of different products or service bundles as assessed by utility. A consumer's preference for one set of goods or services over another is referred to as customer taste. The fast-food restaurant sector is now one of the fastest-growing industries in the world. As market trends alter, customers become more intelligent and demanding, and customer satisfaction has emerged as a significant business concern for restaurant owners (Se-Hak and Ariunzaya, 2020). The most important features of customers' restaurant eating experiences, according to Kim & Kim (2019), are meal quality, service levels, ambiance, and cost.

The atmosphere of a restaurant may be as important as the food itself. Food quality is an essential factor that people evaluate when picking which fast-food restaurant to visit. According to Ha and Jang, (2017), food quality is critical to meet the demands and expectations of restaurant visitors. Meal freshness, presentation, flavour, menu variety, and meal temperature have all been identified as important foundations for consumer satisfaction and intention to return. In other words, customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a certain product is the result of a comparison between expectations about a service supplied and opinions about how the service was performed (Ha and Jang, 2017).

COVID-19 Management Strategies

Covid-19 is a worldwide health and economic danger that has had a significant influence on the global economy. Governments responding to the health threat by shutting down parts of the economy to prevent the virus from spreading, as well as individuals responding cautiously to the threat by cutting back on services from restaurants, bars, cinemas, and the like, caused the economic disruption caused by Covid-19 (Nicolai, 2021 in Obialor, 2023). Many nations agreed to the World Health Organization's (WHO) COVID-19 guidelines, which address the use of physical separation measures as a method of avoiding disease transmission (WHO, 2020). The implementation of these methods resulted in the closure or modification of the company. Working from home, teleworking, and online or internet talks and meetings are becoming increasingly common for certain people, however, food industry specialists do not have the option of working from home and must continue to work in their traditional workplaces (WHO, 2020).

Maintaining the health and safety of all workers in food production and supply networks is important for survival. The World Health Organization recommended standard procedures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as frequent hand washing with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water; covering the nose and mouth with a flexed elbow or disposable tissue when coughing and sneezing; wearing a face mask; avoiding crowded areas; and avoiding close contact with anyone who has a fever or cough (WHO, 2020). To avoid the spread of Covid-19 to coworkers, fast-food restaurant employees must be taught how to limit the number of customers who enter the retail store to reduce congestion and specific precautions must be taken, including reporting symptoms as soon as possible.

Concept of Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is seen as a company's performance concerning its goals and objectives. Organizational performance is sometimes defined as an organization's actual results or outputs in comparison to its planned outputs (objectives). Organizational performance is defined as an organization's actual output or outcomes as assessed against its stated aims and objectives. In terms of profit, market share, and product quality, organizational performance refers to how a company competes with other organizations in the same industry. Organizational performance may alternatively be defined as an organization's capacity to achieve its goals (effectiveness) while utilizing as few resources as possible (efficiency). Continuous performance, on the other hand, is the goal of every organization since it is the only way for companies to evolve and adapt (Obialor and Ayandele, 2022).

Theoretical Review

Kurt Lewin (1951) Change Model

The Kurt Lewin (1951) three-phase transition model serves as the theoretical foundation for this investigation. The unfreeze/change/refreeze (1951) change model was developed by a German-American psychologist. The process of change, according to the notion, consists of creating the awareness that a change is needed, moving towards the desired level of behaviour, and establishing that new behaviour as the norm.

Unfreezing, according to Lewin, is recognizing the need for change and working to persuade others of the significance of doing things differently. Unfreezing broadens understanding of how the status quo or present degree of acceptance stymies companies. As a result, good communication is critical at this point to ensure that people understand the impending change, its reason, and how it will benefit them. According to Lewin, the more individuals who are aware of a change and believe it is critical and urgent, the more likely they are to embrace it.

Changing as the second phase, which refers to 'transitioning' or 'moving,' is signified by the execution of the change. Throughout the transition stage, people begin to adopt new habits and processes, as well as struggle with the new reality. The more prepared people are for this stage, the less difficult it will be. As a result, Lewin admits that education, communication, support, and patience are critical as individuals adjust to change.

Refreezing represents the reinforcement and stabilizing of the new situation as a result of the change. Changes in organizational processes, goals, structure, offerings, or personnel are accepted and frozen as the new normal or status quo. Lewin thought that the refreezing step was especially important in ensuring that people would not revert to their old ways of doing things before implementing the change. Positive reinforcement and praise of individual efforts, according to Lewin, should be used to reinforce the new state since favourably rewarded behaviour is likely to be repeated.

The Lewin (1951) model is a simple and effective paradigm for comprehending the transformation process. Understanding key stages in the change process increases the likelihood of successful change management. Thus, our model is important to our research because it provides a very clear and viable pattern for identifying critical milestones in the change process to successfully manage change. Furthermore, the model serves as a platform for Uyo-based fast-food companies to develop and implement successful change management strategies.

Methodology

The survey research design was used in this study. The Taro Yamane was used to choose 114 samples from a population of 160 staff members at five famous fast-food establishments in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State: De Choice Mall (fast-food) (38), Food Affairs (29), Chicken Republic (36), Big Daddy (22) and Crunchies (35). A pilot study was conducted to assess the instrument's reliability, and the alpha coefficient () was 0.89. The linear regression method was used to test the assumptions.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Out of the 114 questionnaires that were distributed, only 98 were duly filled and returned which was adopted as the sample size of the study.

Table 4.1: Response to Technological Innovations

S/N	Technological Innovations	SA (%)	A (%)	NS (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total (%)
i	Fast-food organization is committed to technological development	40 (40.82)	52 (53.06)	6 (6.12)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	**98 (100)**
ii	Fast-food organizations have ICT units of competent personnel	46 (46.93)	50 (51.02)	2 (2.05)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	**98 (100)**

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 4.1 indicates that fast-food organizations in Uyo are committed to technological development with 93.88%, and 97.95% of the respondents respectively agreeing/ strongly agree with the statement that technological innovations influence the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.2: Response to Customer Taste

S/N	Customer Taste	SA (%)	A (%)	NS (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total (%)
vi	The physical facilities of your organization's outlet are appealing	66 (67.35)	32 (32.65)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	**98 (100)**
vii	Your employees are usually well-dressed and groomed	64 (65.30)	34 (34.7)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	**98 (100)**

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 4.2 indicates that all respondents (100%) agreed/ strongly agreed with the statement that the physical facilities of their organization outlets are appealing. Also, 81.63%, and 96.92% of the respondents respectively strongly agreed with the statement that customer taste affects the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.3: Response to COVID-19 Management Strategies

S/N	Covid-19 Management Strategies	SA (%)	A (%)	NS (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total (%)
ix	Security personnel apply alcohol-based hand sanitizer on your customers before granting them entrance into the restaurant	53 (54.08)	45 (45.92)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	**98 (100)**
x	Restaurants have wide and attractive halls for effective social distancing of customers	51 (52.04)	47 (47.96)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	**98 (100)**

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 4.3 indicates the strategies fast-food organizations in Uyo use in managing the COVID-19 pandemic. From the Table, all respondents agreed/ strongly agreed 100% with the statement that COVID-19 management strategies influence the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.4: Response to Organizational Performance

S/N	Organizational Performance	SA (%)	A (%)	NS (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total (%)
xiii	Your organization is satisfied with its Return on Investment	37 (37.74)	58 (59.18)	3 (3.08)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	**98 (100)**
xiv	Your restaurant has repeated customers' patronage	48 (48.98)	45 (45.92)	5 (5.10)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	**98 (100)**

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 4.4 shows the responses of the participants on organizational performance. The Table indicates that 96.92% and 94.9% of the respondents respectively agreed/ strongly agreed to the statement that their organizations experienced new customers' patronage; and that customers are satisfied with the services rendered by their organization.

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypothesis One

$H0_1$: Technological innovations have no significant influence on the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.712[a]	.515	.465	.43549

a. Predictors: (Constant), Technological_innovation

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.147	1	1.147	10.193	.006[b]
	Residual	1.688	96	.113		
	Total	2.836	97			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational_Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Technological_innovation

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.029	1.026		1.003	.332
	Technological_innovation	.729	.228	.636	3.193	.006

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational_Performance

The result indicates a regression coefficient R of .712 or 71.2% implying that a positive relationship exists between the technological innovations and organizational performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo. The coefficient of determination R^2 of .515 shows that 51.5% variation in the dependent variable is due to technological innovations. The adjusted R-square value of .465 in the model summary indicates that the dependent variable is affected by 46.5% of the independent variable. This means that technological innovations are responsible for the performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. The p-value of 0.006 which is less than the t-statistic value of 3.193 and the standard error value of .228 indicates that technological innovations have a positive significant influence on the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. Thus, reject the null hypothesis.

Test of Hypothesis Two

$H0_2$: Customer taste has no significant effect on the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.831[a]	.799	.725	.20235

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer_Taste

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.221	1	2.221	54.252	.000[b]
	Residual	.614	96	.041		
	Total	2.836	97			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational_Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Customer_Taste

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.104	.599		-.173	.865
	Customer_Taste	1.006	.137	.885	7.366	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational_Performance

The result indicates a regression coefficient R of .831 or 83.1% implying that a positive relationship exists between the customer taste and organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. The coefficient of determination R^2 of .799 shows that 79.9% variation in the dependent variable is due to the customer's taste. The adjusted R-square value of .725 in the model summary indicates that the dependent variable is affected by 72.5% of customers' tastes. This shows that customer taste affects the performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. The p-value of 0.001 which is less than the t-statistic value of 7.366 and the standard error value of .137 indicates that customer taste has a significant influence on the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. Given this result, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

Test of Hypothesis Three

$H0_3$: COVID-19 management strategies have no significant influence on the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.823[a]	.678	.656	.24686

a. Predictors: (Constant), Covid_19_Management_Strategies

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.921	1	1.921	31.530	.000[b]
	Residual	.914	96	.061		
	Total	2.836	97			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational_Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Covid_19_Management_Strategies

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.761	.455		3.871	.002
	Covid_19_Management_Strategies	.596	.106	.823	5.615	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational_Performance

The result indicates a regression coefficient R of .823 or 82.3% implying that a positive relationship exists between the COVID-19 management strategies and organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. The coefficient of determination R^2 of .678 shows that 67.8% variation in the dependent variable is due to COVID-19 management strategies. The adjusted R-square value of .656 in the model summary indicates that the dependent variable is affected by 65.6% of the independent variable. This shows that COVID-19 management strategies influence the performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. The p-value of 0.000 which is less than the t-statistic value of 5.615 and the standard error value of .106 indicates that Covid-19 management strategies have a significant influence on organizational performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. Given this result, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the influence of change management on the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. From the statistical analysis of Hypothesis 1, the result revealed that the independent variable technological innovations have a significant positive influence on the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. This is in agreement with the findings of Shaul and Yarden (2019) whose study revealed that technological innovations have a significant effect on the organizational performance of firms.

The result of Hypothesis 2 shows that customer taste has a significant effect on the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. This is in line with the submission by Se-Hak and Ariunzaya, (2020) whose findings revealed a strong link between customer taste and organizational performance. The result of Hypothesis 3 indicates a positive influence of COVID-19 management strategies on the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. This is in agreement with the findings of Obialor, (2023b) whose study revealed that Covid-19 significantly influenced firm performance.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of change management on the organizational performance of selected fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The study compared three independent factors, technology advancements, consumer taste, and COVID-19 management practices, to the dependent variable 'organizational performance,' and was based on Lewin's theory of change. According to the findings of the three hypotheses examined, technological advancements, customer taste, and COVID-19 management methods all have a significant beneficial effect on the organizational performance of chosen fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations were made.

1. Due to frequent technological advancements, Uyo fast-food organizations should spend more on new technical innovations/equipment while upgrading their existing ICT units.
2. Uyo fast-food establishments should guarantee that the proper products and services, backed up by the correct advertising, are accessible to customers.
3. Uyo fast-food establishments should follow the World Health Organization's (WHO) standards for COVID-19 management techniques to prevent the virus from spreading further.

Conclusion

1. Technological Innovations have a significant influence on the

Organizational Performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State;

2. Customer taste has a significant influence on the Organizational Performance of fast-food organizations in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
3. Covid-19 management strategies have a significant influence on the Organizational Performance of fast-food organizations, in Akwa Ibom State.

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