



# Total Quality Management and Organisational Resilience: A Conceptual Focus on the Nigerian Food and Beverage Sector

Daniel E. UFUA

[daniel.ufua@covenantuniversity.edu.ng](mailto:daniel.ufua@covenantuniversity.edu.ng)

Centre for Economic Policy and Development Research (CEPDeR)  
Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria

Omoniyi, S. BABALOLA

[omoniyi.babalolapgs@stu.cu.edu.ng](mailto:omoniyi.babalolapgs@stu.cu.edu.ng)

B.E. & I Cluster  
Covenant University Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria

Hezekiah, O. FALOLA

[hezekiah.falola@covenantuniversity.edu.ng](mailto:hezekiah.falola@covenantuniversity.edu.ng)

Segun KEHINDE

[segun.kehindepgs@stu.cu.edu.ng](mailto:segun.kehindepgs@stu.cu.edu.ng)

Department of Business Management  
Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria

Mikémina PILO

[pilomikemina15@gmail.com](mailto:pilomikemina15@gmail.com)

Department of economics  
University of Kara, Kara, Togo

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**Abstract:** This study explored the impact of Total Quality Management (TQM) on organisational resilience. The study took on a conceptual approach, relying on the trend of findings and ideas from extant literature to understand the current practices of TQM in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. The study developed a suggested model for further improvement on current practices of TQM implementation in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. This had factors including the emphasises on collaboration for the creative development of TQM approaches that meet the stakeholders' expectations. Others included the need for adequate legal system support to business relationships and obligations with partners and the relevance of human resource management development to address the fickle nature of stakeholders' expectations. This was coupled with the need for operational process evaluation to re-examine an operational process's potency to identify improvement areas and further development of their operations. The study concluded that the TQM organisation and its stakeholders to embrace the connectivity required for effective creativity and innovation needed to support the implementation of TQM. This has the potential to facilitate the hedge and create respite to address identified challenges to the implementation of TQM in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. Part of the recommendation was to adopt an empirical approach to explore the topic further and develop new findings to contribute to TQM development in the Nigerian context.

**Keywords:** Food and Beverage Sector, Value Development, Nigerian context, Organisational Resilience, Stakeholder Involvement, Total Quality Management

## Introduction

The drive for sustainable resilience to enhance an organisation's operations remains a core focus of operations management (Ivanov, Tsipoulanis, & Schönberger, 2021). Managers and practitioners face the fundamental challenge of effective management of organisational resources. This leads to redirected interest in the development of suitable operational approaches that meet the customer and other stakeholders' expectations while pursuing their set objectives (Oluwafemi, & Okon, 2018; Akanmu, Hassan, Mohamad, & Nordin, 2023). Similarly, the global food and beverage sector has maintained a growth trend in its size and value chains due to extant factors such as the growth in world population size and technological and modelling support (Boukid, & Castellari, 2021). This compels practicing organisations in the food and beverage sector to either develop or select a suitable operational approach to achieving their operational resilience amidst emerging changes in the business environments

(Cluley, & Radnor, 2020; Al Azzani, Mat Jusoh, & Abbas, 2024; Sindhu, & Kumar, 2022). This also coincides with the new assumption among practitioners, which resolves around the fact that more value-added goods and services are needed to grow the economy, requiring the adoption of reliable approaches to sustain and boost the confidence of the affected stakeholders (Ufua, Itai, Kumar, & Al-Faryan, 2024; Independence Day Report, February 1, 2024).

A fundamental approach adopted by manufacturing firms is the TQM, which is a management technique deployed to support excellence by focusing on the quality of products and services offered (Canbay, & Akman, 2023). This involves the adoption of several principles in the firms' operational process to drive quality and satisfaction of the stakeholders who are either involved or affected by the implementation of TQM (Jumady, Sugiarto, & Latief, 2021). The adoption of TQM requires the implementation of its principles in the operational process to support the pursuit of quality and to meet the expectations of the stakeholders. These include customer focus operations, employee involvement, management commitment, input supplier quality management, continuous improvement and training and development (Helmold, 2023).

The aim of this study is to explore how the practice of TQM and its principles can enhance operational resilience and the drive for effectiveness in the Nigerian food and beverage production sector. The study focuses on how TQM can be deployed to support the drive to sustain operational resilience. The Nigerian food and beverage sector demonstrates the conspicuous potential to emulate the growth trend. The practice of operational philosophies such as TQM among organisations continued to gain popularity to enhance the competence and commitment of stakeholders both within and outside the organisation, to meet critical expectations of the stakeholders and partners in the sector (Adebisi, Odigie, & Ekpudu, 2021; Ufua, Olujobi, Tahir, Okafor, Imhonopi, & Osabuohien, 2022). The food and beverage sector contributes about 22.5% of the manufacturing industry, generating an

estimated 1.5 million jobs and 4.6% of the country's GDP (Market Overview, October 30, 2020).

However, contextual challenges to the practice of TQM, especially in the Nigerian context, tend to hamper its success in Nigeria. These include insufficient human resource multitasking among practising organisations, minimal public sector support to private sector organisations and a weak legal system (Ufua, 2015). While TQM has continued to feature in the Nigerian food and beverage sector, a gap attracting the focus of this study is the need for more study focus on examining the impacts on the resilience and sustainability of businesses of various sizes and structures in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. For instance, studies identify critical challenges in the market and business environmental complexity faced by Nigerian food and beverage organisations, adversely affecting their strive to meet customers' and other stakeholders' expectations. They suggest the adoption of sophisticated approaches such as TQM in the production and delivery of food products that satisfy the customers' expectations and enhance their competitiveness and sustainability (Aworh, 2021; Permana, A., Purba, & Rizkiyah, 2021; Aladejare, Ebi, & Ubi, 2022).

While TQM has been proven to succeed in these other locations across the globe (see Ioppolo, Ciliberto, & Szopik-Depczyńska, 2024), the drive to adopt its principles in the Nigerian context prompts the critical query among researchers and practitioners on how TQM as an operational technique can be re-modelled or re-invented to facilitate improvement and meet stakeholders' expectations in the Nigerian food and beverage production sector? This study aims to address these questions.

- What are the contextual challenges currently facing the implementation of TQM implementation in the Nigerian food and beverage sector?
- How can implementing TQM be redeveloped to address contextual challenges in Nigerian food and beverage production?

The current study is motivated by the observation of (Ehie, and Muogboh (2016), who note that the experience of stiff foreign competitors justifies the search for improved operational approaches such as TQM by Nigerian manufacturing companies. Similarly, existing studies in developing economic backgrounds suggest that the implementation of TQM requires certain factors such as service design, information analysis, continuous process improvement, quality assurance, and benchmarking. These commentators maintain a common argument, noting that effective TQM practices can result in improved performance and sustainability of the organisation (Ali, Hilman, & Gorondutse, 2020; Olaleye, Abdurrashid, & Mustapha, 2024).

This study adopted systems theory to explore the developmental trend of TQM practices in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. This provided a lens to view the topic from the perspectives of the affected stakeholders and partners

who are either involved or affected by the practice of TQM in the Nigerian food and beverage production sector. Systems theory also directed the focus to the current challenges and opportunities presented in the Nigerian market, characterised by diverse consumer preferences, logistical complexities, and regulatory dynamics, underscoring the motivation of this study for a focused inquiry into the relationships between TQM and operational resilience in the context of the Nigerian food and beverage sector (Abu-Rumman, Mhasnah, & Al-Zyout, 2021). This study aims to address this problem and contribute to the existing body of knowledge. System theory recognises connectivity in terms of relationships existing within an operational structure that function towards the achievement of a set purpose. It is set out to provide insights into the effectiveness of TQM practices through the reliance on the development trends in extant literature on the efforts of organisations to meet customers' distinct needs and expectations in the Nigerian food and beverage sector (see Babalola, 2024). The study is, therefore, designed to develop a comprehensive understanding of the current practices of TQM, considering the organisational drive for resilience, and provide a suggested model for improving the current practices of TQM in the context of the Nigerian food and beverage sector.

The rest parts of this study are structured as follows. The next section is the literature review, which provides a detailed review of the trend of TQM practices in the Nigerian context. This is followed by the underpinning theory adopted in this study. The next step is the methodology, the suggested model, and further discussion. The theoretical and managerial implications and the conclusion follow this.

## Literature Review

The drive to sustain quality delivery has remained a central focus of management practice across sectors. It is largely conceived as everyone's responsibility in an operational process. Juran (2018) defines quality as "fitness for use," highlighting the notion that a product or service must meet customer needs and expectations considered by the customers. Similarly, TQM is defined as the attainment of operational process control and superior quality through a process of reformation based on the knowledge of customers' expectations (Ayandele, & Akpan, 2015). The critical models in TQM are continuous improvement, teamwork, customer focus, and stakeholder participation. Others are top management commitment, process management, value development and improvement. These aim to produce and deliver high-quality products and services to the market (Aburayya, Alshurideh, Al Marzouqi, Al Diabat, Alfarsi, Suson, & Salloum, 2020). However, the notion of quality and its pursuit, as noted by observers, tends to be more focused on producing value to satisfy customers, hoping to secure their loyalty to the organisation's brand of products and services. This presents the extant challenge of developing an extensive approach that duly considers the expectations of other stakeholders involved or affected by an organisation's operations. As a result, the TQM practices provide a gamut of activities that project a comprehensive organisational

approach that seeks to develop models for satisfaction that goals beyond mere customer satisfaction and to include other stakeholders' expectations and thereby facilitate the drive for operational resilience for the long-term competitive advantage of the practising organisation (Dale, Papalexi, Bamford, & van der Wiele, 2016). Moreover, the application of TQM provides an encompassing approach that allows the adoption of various strategies, such as creativity and innovation, to address organisational challenges that have the potential to position the practising organisation on a terrain of resilience to uncontrollable environmental forces that can pose significant threats to the flow of their operational processes (Omotayo, Kulatunga, & Bjeirmi, 2018.; Ufua et al., 2024).

TQM has emerged as a crucial management philosophy, emphasising continuous improvement, customer satisfaction, employee engagement and meeting broad stakeholder expectations across all facets of organisational operations (Dale et al., 2016; Ogbaje, & Victor, 2018). As the Nigerian food and beverage sector continues to expand, the integration of TQM practices becomes increasingly pertinent for organisations seeking to thrive in a competitive market and meet the discerning expectations of consumers. According to Dahlgaard, Reyes, Chen, & Dahlgaard-Park, (2019), TQM entails the management of suppliers, workforce, consumers, and other partner stakeholders, aiming to meet or surpass customer expectations and requirements. Shafiq, Lasrado, and Hafeez (2019) argue that TQM is a significant instrument that every firm, both in the manufacturing and services sectors, can adopt to strengthen their competitiveness. These studies observe that TQM practices can be used to optimise both financial and non-financial performance, which can facilitate operational resilience that supports the long-term competitive advantage of firms (Dawabsheh, Hussein, & Jermisittiparsert, 2019). TQM enables organisations to adapt to dynamic market demands, foster innovation, and fortify their position as leaders in their respective industries (Babalola, 2024).

The basic principles of TQM include customer focus, employee involvement, integrated systems, standardised processes, feedback loops, systematic flow, continuous monitoring, fact-based decision-making, and relationship management (Luthra, Garg, Agarwal, & Mangla, 2020). These commentators note that these basic principles hinge on the fundamental operational questions ranging from who designs the operational structure to enable the required flexibility for modifications, how can the practising organisation develop a formidable team to handle the TQM processes, how disagreement and conflicts be resolved, how are control and evaluation for improvement on TQM processes be appropriated, and how can the structure of operational connectivity be maintained? (See Canbay, & Akman, 2023; Dagasani, Kitapci, & Kilic, 2023).

However, Mohammadpour, Afrasiabi, and Yazdani (2024), found that the lack of top commitment to TQM is a critical barrier to its success in operations management. This corroborates the argument of several studies that caution that TQM managers should be ready to embrace flexibility and adaptation to changes in the operational process to drive the

production of value-adding products and services that meet the stakeholders' expectations. They argue that such flexibility can enhance food production organisations' resilience through informed decisions that support their drive for competitive advantage in the market (Haq, Colwill, Backhouse, & Franceschini, 2022). Moreover, actualising the systemic effects of its implementation, such as lower unit costs and production efficiency, requires time and consistent commitment from the affected stakeholders in decision-making, implementation, and evaluation. These enhance the drive for operational resilience that reflects the broad objectives of the organisation (Baba, & Nwuche, 2021; Olaosebikan, Bello, Utoblo, Okoye, Olutegbe, Garner, & Madu, 2023; Radnor, Holweg, & Waring, 2012; Leite, Radnor, & Bateman, 2022).

### Overview of TQM in the Nigerian Food and Beverage Sector

Studies have shown that environmental factors can affect or influence the progression of TQM implementation. This is especially the case of a developing economic background such as Nigeria which seems to be fraught with critical environmental issues of concerns such as inflation, weak legal systems support, and supply chain relationship breaches that adversely affect the planning and implementation of critical operational philosophies such as TQM in the food and beverage sector, focused in this study (Osuagwu, & Linus, 2002; Egwunatum, Anumudu, Eze, & Awodele, 2022). According to Ofogebu, and Gilbert (2023), the practice of quality management in the Nigerian food and beverage production process can have positive long-run effects, such as agility due to the embedded values, such as continuous improvement drive in its implementation, needed to position the operational process of the organisation on a platform for effective adaption to emerging changes, both in the business environment and enhance the competitiveness of the organisation. This is corroborated by practitioners of TQM, who acknowledge its proven success among organisations. These commentators suggest the need for contextual adaptability, which requires the skilful modification of its models to fit with the unique features in the environment where it is practised (Belton, Rosen, Middleton, Ghazali, Mamun, Shieh, & Thilsted, 2021; Akpan, Johnny, & Sylva, 2022). This leaves the managers and stakeholders with the responsibility to develop or re-invent the content of their approaches for effective operational trends that reflect critical innovation and the commitment of the affected stakeholders. This will also address the possibility of marginalisation of participants' interest in the process of its implementation and evaluation for improvement (Ufua *et al.*, 2024).

The key food and beverage products distributed in the Nigerian economy range from agrarian produce and drinks. These include fruits, grains, vegetables, poultry, dairy products, meat, seafood, beverages, and snacks, which are primarily produced or refined in Nigeria for the Nigerian market and exported to other locations. The activities of the Nigerian food and beverage sector are under the regulation of the National Food and Drug Administration and Control

(NAFDAC), an agency that functions on behalf of the Nigerian government (Joadre Report, November 14, 2022). The Nigerian food and beverage sector is a testament to the efficacy of TQM practices within the entire private sector of the economy. Abbas (2019) highlights the comprehensive adoption of TQM by practising organisations in the Nigerian food and beverages sector, emphasising quality control across various facets of their operations, demonstrated in their drive to meet stakeholders' expectations. TQM practices are reflected in their supply chain management, production processes, and engagement with client communities (Ufua, Ibidunni, Papadopoulos, Matthew, Khatoon, & Agboola, 2022). This strategic approach enables the TQM organisation to enhance its operational focus on developing the required resilience to engage and maintain a competitive edge, expressed in critical operational drives such as fostering higher levels of customer satisfaction (Babalola, 2024). The emphasis on practising TQM among organisations Nigerian food and beverage organisations has culminated in their development of inclusive strategies. These encourage ownership mentality and commitment, with high morale and productivity among these organisations' members, with the broad aim to develop and sustain value-adding products and services that meet the expectations of the stakeholders (Ufua, Ibidunni, Papadopoulos, Matthew, Khatoon, & Agboola, 2022; Mehralian, Moradi, & Babapour, 2021).

While empirical evidence suggests that the practice of TQM models has positioned Nigerian organisations in the food and beverage sector on a platform for adherence to rigorous quality control measures in their production processes, observers have reckoned that TQM implementation in Nigeria has extant challenges from the business environment that tends to pose a significant threat to its success in the sector. For instance, Ufua, Olujobi, Ogbari, Dada, and Edefe (2020) argue that the legal system provides weak support to business activities in the Nigerian private sector, which has resulted in breaches and lack of trust among partners in the value chain and relationships, poor access to credit facilities for business investment. These issues create a significant threat to effective TQM practices, especially among the small and medium-scale enterprises in the Nigerian food and beverage sector (see Onyeaka, Ekwebelem, Eze, Onwuka, Aleke, Nwaiwu, & Chionuma, 2021). In their study, Ukabuduzhiimkpa, and Onuoha (2023) suggest that competitive factors, such as technological and market intelligence, are required to facilitate resilience and adaptability in implementing TQM in Nigeria. This review narrative substantiates the potency of TQM implementation. However, an issue of concern is the need for a universally acceptable approach to applying the TQM to address operational process challenges. This is basically because of contextual variations in the business environments that affect the implementation of TQM practices. It is also due to differences in the focus of practising organisations that define their preferences such as 'resilience' in their implementation of operational models such as the TQM (Akinlolu, Ndiokubwayo, & Simpeh, 2020; Georgiev, & Ohtaki, 2020). Nevertheless, this study aims to explore the impact of TQM on operational resilience, with a specific focus on the context of the Nigerian food and beverage sector. It set

out to contribute to the debate on TQM practices by exploring existing TQM practices in the Nigerian context, such as value development processes and informed decision-making, and suggest a model for its use in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. The next section presents the underpinning theory adopted in this study.

### Theoretical Background

The current study adopts systems theory. Systems theory is grounded on the connectivity of the various parts that function within a structure towards achieving the set purpose. The adoption of systems theory facilitates an understanding of the key contextual factors that affect TQM practices in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. Systems (Blatti, Garcia, Cave, Monge, Cuccinello, Portillo, & Schwebel, 2019; Cabrera, & Cabrera, 2023). There are extant operational theories that explain operational practices such as TQM. For instance, the Resource View (RBV) is a theoretical approach that emphasises key operational approaches, such as collaboration with relevant partners, to develop a competitive advantage that can sustain the drive for an organisation's objectives. However, critics object to the adoption of RBV, noting that it may compromise the organisation's unique identity. Other critics of RBV opine that it may need to be sufficiently able to explore the variety of interests and expectations of stakeholders (see Ozdemir, de Arroyabe, Sena, & Gupta, 2023; Ren, Wu, Lim, & Tseng, 2023). The adoption of systems theory in this study is due to the search for a comprehensive package that can facilitate the exploration of the variety of interests and expectations of various stakeholders and how these can support the effective implementation of TQM and organisational resilience in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. Systems theory acknowledges the relevance of stakeholder involvement in the processes of an organisation's operations. Such a participatory process prompts creativity and innovation that can advance the development of identified issues of interest, such as TQM and organisational resilience in the Nigerian food and beverage sector (He, Zhao, Li, Liu, & Wei, 2023).

Similarly, while other theories, such as the RBV, strive for competitive advantage and mere customer satisfaction, the adoption systems theory takes a comprehensive approach, considering the vested interest of both the internal operational structure and the external stakeholders from the broad business environment. These include the environmental issues that affect TQM implementation in the Nigerian context, such as government regulations, cultural factors, and infrastructural limitations (Ufua et al., 2020; Saleh, Zaid, & Omar, 2024). Systems theory requires the consideration of these key issues in decision-making in the implementation of operational philosophical packages, such as TQM, by the practitioners in the Nigerian food and beverage sector (Cabrera, Cabrera, & Cabrera, 2022; de Villez, 2024). Systems theory is aptly in tandem with the conceptual focus of this research, which aims to develop new knowledge through a process of synthesis of existing ideas and findings from extant literature to identify extant gaps that need to be addressed with advanced models (Hulland, 2020; Mambrey, Timm, Landskron, & Schmiemann,

2020). This facilitates an evocative platform for an all-round development of knowledge that considers the interest of all concerned stakeholders, thereby mitigating the chances of marginalisation, as expressed in systems theory (see Mambrey et al., 2020). According to Jackson (2023), systems theory provides a platform to explore the problem situation, which, in this study, is TQM practices and organisational resilience in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. The adoption of systems theory in this study is based on its potency to enable the topic to be explored from the perspectives of the stakeholders, who are either involved or affected by the practice of TQM in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. Similarly, systems theory adopts boundary critiques that provide the platform for the demarcation of issues and boundaries that define their depth in terms of consideration in an intervention. This equally guides the process of impact evaluation of those factors considered in the implementation of identified factors, such as TQM practices and organisational resilience, which are focused on in this study (Ufua, Papadopoulos, & Midgley, 2018; Midgley, 2023). This can project operational advantages such as the commitment of the affected stakeholders (Velez-Castiblanco, Brocklesby, & Midgley, 2016; Ufua, 2020; Sahan, Jaaffar, & Osabohien, 2024). The next section presents the methodology adopted in this study.

### Methodology

This study applied a conceptual review to explore the topic. Conceptual research is conducted by selecting and analysing existing information from relevant literature on a topic. It allows the researcher to engage in the interpretation of collected from existing literature to develop a new and suitable understanding of a research topic of interest. This offers an opportunity to explore a wide range of literature on the topic, engaging the guidance of selected theory to develop enhanced understanding for improved learning on the subject of interest (Jackendoff, 2012; Xin, Tribe, & Chambers, 2013). According to Jaakkola (2020), the use of a conceptual research approach has gained popularity among scholars due to its potency in exploring a wider research scope that makes its findings more reflective of the current situation regarding the prevailing context.

Several studies have engaged quantitative approaches, basing their focus on numerical analysis to conduct and contribute to the debate on TQM and organisational resilience. For instance, Akanmu et al. (2023) adopted a quantitative approach in their study, using a survey and questionnaire to gather data from a clearly defined population to make contributions to TQM practices in the Australian food and beverage sector. Similarly, studies in the Nigerian background, such as Oluwafemi, and Okon (2018); Vyas, Makinde, Akinlabi, and Adefulu (2023), applied quantitative approaches to contribute to the debates about TQM practices and organisational resilience in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. Similarly, some studies adopted a single case study approach to explore TQM and organisational resilience in Nigeria. They assume that their choice of case study can provide a detailed exploration of certain unique features that can project further

learning and contribution to the debate and development of TQM and organisational resilience in Nigeria (Rendtorff, 2015; Abimbola, Oyatoye, & Oyenuga, 2020).

However, a common factor in quantitative studies is the restriction to certain assumptions and boundaries in their analysis as dictated by the analytical models adopted in their research process to achieve the reliability of findings (Egwunatum, et al., 2022). This study argues that while these approaches have significant levels of potency in terms of findings, there seem to be certain limitations capable of creating an intrinsic aberration in their findings that may not reflect the contextual realities about the research phenomenon of interest, such as TQM and organisational resilience, focused in this study. Corroborating this, Namazi, and Namazi (2016) argues that these intrinsic weaknesses of quantitative approaches can make the validity of its findings misleading.

This study relied on the trend of findings from extant literature related to the topic, which prompted the development of a suggested model for improvement. Systems theory supported the study's aim to advance TQM practices through reflection on the trends in the development of ideas and approaches from extant literature in the Nigerian economy (Jaakkola, 2020). While other approaches, such as the empirical and quantitative approaches, are useful for a clearly defined research process, such as case studies and surveys, the adoption of systems theory was grounded on the development of an all-encompassing approach embedded in the conceptual research process, to identify and address gaps in the wider practice of TQM in the Nigerian food and beverage sector (Goertzen, 2017; de Villez, 2024).

### Selection of Literature

The selection of literature was based on their relevance to TQM practices in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. The keywords selected in this study were also used as a guide to sieve and select literature for further analysis. This was meant to enhance understanding of the current wave of impact of TQM practices and to facilitate the development of a suggested model for improvement on the current practices of TQM in the Nigerian economy (Smith, & Shaw, 2019). Relevant literature were sourced from various engines, such as Science Direct, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Others were from academic Journal sources like Springer Nature, Wiley, and Emerald. Sources such as the authors' personal and institutional libraries, and newspaper reports were also considered. This was adopted because they also project the relevance and the contribution of their thoughts to the argument projected in this study (Table 1; Krtalić, & Dinneen, 2022; Lund, Wang, Mannuru, Nie, Shimray, & Wang, 2023).

Similarly, all selected literature were duly published either in print or retrievable online forms. Only published literature materials in retrievable platforms were considered for selection. Publications from predatory or baseless sources were deliberately excluded. This was to enhance the authenticity of the discussion in this study. Moreover, the authors ensured that all literature materials cited in this study

were duly referenced to maintain an ethical balance (Jiang, Naqvi, & Abbas Naqvi, 2020; Ufua, Emielu, Olujobi, Lakhani, Borishade, Ibidunni, & Osabuohien, 2021). Table 1 presents the summary of the key criteria for literature selection in this study.

**Table 1: Criteria for selection of literature**

Selection Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Selected literature must align with the keywords adopted for this study.	No literature outside the focus of the study was selected.
Selected literature must be published.	Unpublished literature materials were not selected. Also, literature published in predatory journals should be excluded
The materials must be significantly recent.	Literature older than 15 years were largely excluded to maintain the recency of the argument presented in the study.

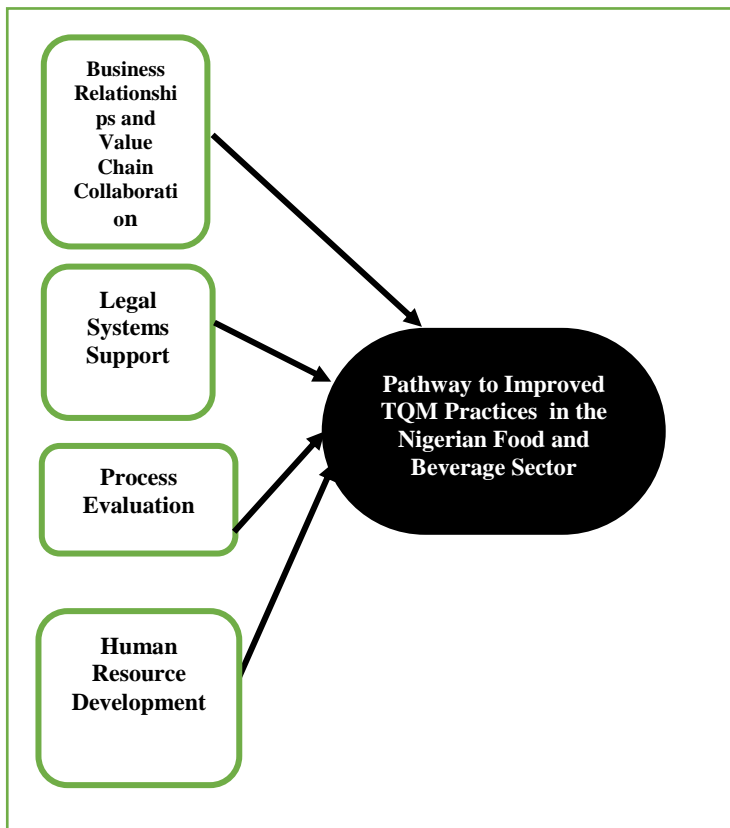
**Source: Authors' Compilation**

### Results

#### Proposed Model for Improved TQM Practices in the Nigerian Food and Beverage Sector

This study proposed a conceptual model for the improved TQM practices in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. The proposed model presents relevant factors needed for improved TQM practices that can enhance further productivity in the Nigerian food and beverage sector, which is the focus of this study (Figure 1). Further discussion on these factors is presented based on findings from extant literature.

Figure 1: Suggested Model for Improved TQM Practices in the Nigerian Food and Beverage Sector



Source: Authors' Compilation

## Further Discussion of Findings

### Business Relationships and Value Chain Management

The drive for effective TQM practices in the Nigerian food and beverage sector requires suitable relationship management for effective value chain management practices. These are needed to support the implementation, which requires factors such as the timely inflow of input materials for smooth processing to meet critical operational orders and key stakeholders' expectations. Relationship management is paramount to identity preservation, which can help portray the operational culture and consider the interests of the affected stakeholders and partners, such as input material suppliers (Sahoo, 2019). This provides a formidable platform to boost confidence and ensure trust among investors who provide the resources needed to implement the details of TQM practices to improve current Nigerian food and beverage sector operational practices. For instance, Adebiyi, Adediran, Shodiya, & Olusola, 2021) found that customer relationship management enhances overall performance in the Nigerian production section. However, this study supports wider relationship management practices that support a comprehensive operational approach that considers the interests of broader stakeholders such as the host community, downstream customers, and internal organisation members. The stance of this study is that wider relationship management practices can consolidate trust among partners in the value chains, which is

needed for effective TQM implementation that can contribute to the productivity of the food and beverage sector focused on in this study. Effective communication will secure the trust and commitment of value chain partners who are either involved or contributing to TQM practices, such as the timely arrival of input material supply for operational effectiveness. This leaves the practising TQM organisations responsible for developing an extensive relationship management approach that can secure the commitment of their partners to support the drive for their set TQM objectives.

However, Ufua et al. (2022). caution that the management of relationships with partners must be clearly defined to avoid the chances of compromise of the operational objectives of the organisations. Other commentators note that practising organisations are responsible for embracing clear negotiation and timely fulfilment of their contractual obligations with partners to facilitate an unbroken relationship practice that can provide seamless support to TQM and organisational resilient practice. Similarly, the adoption of systems theory in this study lends to learning across boundary demarcations, providing room for specialisation among value chain partners that is relevant to the drive for continuous improvement and creating the leverage for effective TQM practices. This is achievable through collaboration processes with partners that can position the TQM practising organisation to meet key stakeholders' expectations, such as customer order fulfilment for high-quality products and services. These can provide the respite for the return on investment and the preservation of the organisation's reputation through effective corporate citizenship practices (see Ayandele, & Akpan, 2015). Adopting a systems approach to value chain management has the potential to hedge their relationships against emerging profane issues that can result in unforeseen disruption to their relationship content, thereby equipping the TQM organisation with the resilience to withstand such disruption through the unwavering support of the value chain partners.

### Legal Systems Support

Support from legal systems is required for effective TQM practices in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. The legal system comprises the institutions and functionaries that coordinate and regulate business activities among partners and stakeholders in the sector. The legal system also interprets the laws to cover the operations of business activities within the sector to ensure the legality and protect relationships among partners within value chains (Adejugebe, & Adejugbe, 2016; Mustapha, Kunhibava, & Muneeza, 2021). Studies show that the activities of the legal system can enhance the reassurance of TQM practitioners and partners in their quest for justice in business relationships (Ufua, Olujobi, & Al-Faryan, 2023).

The support of the legal system is also anchored on the fact that critical business practices such as TQM require partnership involvement with stakeholders and partners who are required to provide the functional support to complement the organisation's operational models in its implementation. The support of the legal system, therefore, facilitates the commitment of partners to the terms of business relationships



across the entire food and beverage sector in Nigeria, where most business organisations rely on hard-earned resources, with minimal public sector support for their operational survival (Ufua et al., 2020; Olujobi, 2023). This study argues that effective legal systems support can be leveraged by TQM participants to deliver optimally to the expectations of the various stakeholders, especially the customers. This is because the legal system is responsible for ensuring fairness in business relationships and mitigating the marginalisation of lower-status partners, such as small-scale business partners, in the Nigerian food and beverage sector (see Midgley, & Lindhult, 2021). This is achievable through the availability of the legal system, which provides extant legislation and regulations needed to improve business relationships among practitioners and stakeholders in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. It is also responsible for the provision of a relevant platform for redress by aggrieved who may wish to explore the use of litigation to see justice in the practice of TQM in the sector (Erhun, 2015; Onafuwa, 2021).

On the other hand, the stance of this study is that TQM-practising organisations need to embrace the responsibility to comply with the dictates of the legal system by complying with the rules of engagement while driving their pursuit of TQM and operational resilience. This is because the laws define the boundaries of relationships and interactions with partners and TQM organisations. Corroborating this, Shuaib, and He (2023) found that the organisational culture can be structured to support the pursuit of organisational practices such as TQM and resilience, which are the focus of this study. This study argues that practising organisations in the Nigerian food and beverage sector need to develop their operations' cultural practices in tandem with the requirements of the legal system that validate the legality of their operational practices. However, studies have also identified the challenges of delayed legal systems responses to complaints and reports from aggrieved business partners, especially the small and medium-scale enterprises that can pursue justice in Nigeria (see Ufua et al., 2020; Akpuokwe, Adeniyi, Bakare, & Eneh, 2024). While such incidents may seem uncontrollable to the aggrieved business organisations, it is the stance of this study for such complainant organisations to maintain their stance while they legally press for justice. This is because overruling extant legal systems procedures can result in a further offence that may attract unwanted sanctions.

Furthermore, in tandem with systems theory, it is noteworthy to highlight that the legal systems also need the support of related umpire stakeholders such as NAFDAC, which provides institutional rules for engagement among participant organisations in the Nigerian food and beverage sector, to facilitate the harmonisation of the synergy between the extant rules and certification that underpins their operational models such as the TQM. It is, therefore, arguable to note that only a legal system with the systemic support of institutional stakeholders can effectively enhance business activities such as TQM and operational resilience in the Nigerian food and beverage sector (Areneke, Adegbite, & Tunyi, 2022). The following sub-section discusses the relevance of process evaluation to TQM practice.

## Process Evaluation

Implementing TQM practices requires the regular evaluation of the operational process operated by the TQM practicing organisation. Evaluation is a deliberate effort made by an organisation and its representatives to re-examine the potency of an operational process to identify areas of improvement and further development of their operations and business models. According to Adu, and Opawole (2020), process evaluation has the potential to create a new lens to facilitate the interpretation of operational dynamics such as a variety of changes in the market demands, diversity among teams and position the managers to drive cohesion among organisation members and partners, which can effectively sustain TQM practices in the operational process of the organisation (Nebo, & Ogbuene, 2021).

The engagement of process evaluation can leverage the potent practice of TQM as demonstrate the prompting of the practising managers to embark on questing their adopted operational process to ascertain 'what can be done better?' how can we improve on existing practices without compromising the quality of our services to the stakeholders?' These support the further search that can provide a platform for continuous improvement that can yield long-term operational efficiency and enhance other benefits such as competitive advantage, especially in a developing economic background where key operational indicators are likely to be subject to quick changes (John, 2020; Egwunatum et al., 2022). TQM researchers suggest that while evaluation will require extra effort from the managers and stakeholders, it has the potency to create a new awareness among organisation members to the realities of the operation in terms of adjustment in quality standards, TQM objectives, and the overall commitment to meeting extant changes in the stakeholder's expectations (Ayeeni, & Sadiku, 2020). The practices of evaluation align with systems theory as they embrace the coverage of the entire operational process of the TQM practising organisation, resulting in systemic improvement that seeks to project all-around effectiveness with minimal waste of resources. However, whilst evaluation facilitates continuous commitment and improvement in an operational process, TQM authors highlight the need to juxtapose such improvement drive with motivation for the organisation members to avoid the chances of undue exploitation that can result in adverse effects such as staff turnover and brain drain which can disrupt the consistency required for effective and sustainable TQM practices (Ufua et al., 2018). The study recommends practising TQM organisations to adopt periodic evaluation of their operational processes through the engagement of the affected stakeholders, such as organisation members and partners involved in the TQM implementation and the drive for resilience. The stance of this study is that such participatory evaluation will prompt acceptable creativity and innovation, which are required to address identified issues with their TQM practices.



## Human Resource Development

TQM practice requires the embrace of continuous human resource development and training that reflect the drive to address the fickle nature of stakeholders' expectations. Studies affirm the potency of effective human resource development in the implementation of TQM practices such as work design, evaluation and analysis of operational progressions that inform the time engagement of resources to address identified issues and keep the pursuit of effective TQM in focus. The development of human resources also supports the promotion of organisational benchmarks to ensure compliance with set standards across the entire structure of the organisation's operation. This provides the organisation with a consolidated advantage that preserves the identity and goodwill of the TQM organisation. Observers note that the commitment of these developed human resources ultimately results in advantageous effects such as the continuous customers' loyalty to their brand of products and services and the trust of stakeholders and partners in the TQM practicing organisation (Verma, Kumar, Mittal, Gupta, & Hsu, 2022; Rajaguru, Matanda, & Siaw, 2024; Skaf, El Abiad, El Chaarani, El Nemar, & Vrontis, 2024). Other studies note that human capital development can enhance the competitive advantage of the firm by securing its market share and other partners' trust and commitment to the firm's offers. This is achievable through the engagement of the skills and ideas of organisation members in a joint process of development of suitable operational strategies that support the drive to achievable set objectives through the productive deployment of their acquired resources. Similarly, the embrace of human resource development, while it requires the organisation's commitment in terms of human development budgets and costs, they observe that it has an unfailing tendency to benefit the organisation, both in their TQM operational process, yielding minimal errors and operational cohesiveness, it also results in the optimal of their range of products and services to meets the expectations of the stakeholders (Ufua, Salau, Ikpefan, Dirisu, & Okoh, 2020; Arifin, Darmawan, Hartanto, & Rahman, 2022).

In their study in Nigeria, Davies, Nsiegebe, & Egbuchulan (2024) highlight the relevance of the TQM strategy of training and development for human resource and organisational performance regarding quality deliveries that meet market expectations. The stance of this study is that the extent of success of TQM in the Nigerian food and beverage sector hinges on the level of commitment of the practicing organisation and its stakeholders to provide the required human resource training to precede optimum implementation of TQM practices that can guarantee continues stakeholders' trust in the operational offers of the organisation (see Abrokwhah-Larbi, 2023). According to Akdere, and Egan (2020), quality human resource training and development can also position the organisation with the skills for the timely identification and addressing of emerging profane issues that can pose threats to the implementation of TQM in their operations. For instance, effective human resource development can create a critical hedge to address issues such as lack of customer satisfaction due to poor-quality products.

Therefore, human resource training is required to address these fundamental issues in the business environment, especially in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. This is because most practicing Nigerian organisation have minimal access the public sector support (Zaidi, & Ahmad, 2020; Baptista, Costa, & Gonçalves, 2024). The Nigerian food and beverage organisations, therefore, need to productively engage their human resource in a process of creativity and innovative use of their lean resources to maximise output for the market, without compromising quality and standard benchmarks. Observers note that effective human resource development can change their operational process from command and control to commitment, communication, evaluation and cooperation, coupled with an overall interest in delivering on the set objectives of the organisation (Ahmed, & Siddiqui, 2020; Ufua, Salau, Saleem, Ogbari, Osibanjo, Osabuohien, & Adeniji, 2022).

Finally, it is noteworthy to state that the development of human resources for effective TQM practices must be supported by suitable rewards to maintain the drive for human resource retention that enables the long-term commitment of the developed human capital to the organisation. This has the potential to secure the continuous innovative strategies that underpin the implementation of TQM. It also provides a hedge against possible disruption to the international processes and the broad business model adopted by the organisation. The stance of this study is that the practicing Nigerian food and beverage organisation must pair their human resource development plans with significant reward packages, otherwise, it can quickly result in undue exploitation and other effects such as brain drain among organisations in the sector (see Kim, 2018; Emejulu, 2020; Diri, & Elisha, 2021). The next section presents the Theoretical implications of this study.

## Conclusion

This study explored the implementation of TQM practices and organisational resilience. It focused on the contextual issues facing the TQM managers and organisations in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. The study presented a suggested model for improvement on the current TQM practices in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. This entails legal system support, effective business relationships and value chain management, process evaluation and human resource development. The study emphasised the need for the TQM organisation and its stakeholders to embrace the connectivity required for effective creativity and innovation needed to support the implementation of TQM in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. The study noted that such a collaborative platform has the potential to facilitate the hedge and create respite to address identified challenges to the implementation of TQM in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. It will also position the TQM practising organisation for positive effects in the long run.

## Theoretical and Managerial Implications

The implications of this study suggest that the TQM managers have the responsibility to embrace the task of identifying and collaborating with the right stakeholders, ranging from organisation members and partners, to participate in implementing TQM. Findings from this study present food and beverage sector organisations with the platform for continuous engagement in the act of creativity and innovation, which is needed to support the TQM drive on the focus in their organisation. According to systems theory, such collaboration can help the practising manager to enhance effective connectivity between the operational processes of their organisation and its stakeholders and partners, which can ultimately result in the optimum maximisation of their acquired resources in meeting the expectations of the stakeholders and also secure the reputation of the organisation. As discussed in this study, the practising TQM managers need to pay attention to their organisation's relationships with their partners to have a seamless operational value development experience that supports their drive for operational resilience, especially in the context of a developing economy such as Nigeria, where business environments can pose significant disruptions to their operational practices such as TQM focused in this study. This means that more attention must be given to the development and rewards for their human capital contributions, which are at the forefront of implementing organisational practices such as TQM. This can facilitate long-term efficiency while sustaining their reputation. This is because only an emerging change-compliant and retained human resource team can support the operational consistency needed to drive the implementation of TQM for the long term.

Theoretically, TQM practices, especially in the Nigerian food and beverage sector, require the enactment of connected thinking that spans from the organisation and its structure and the external stakeholders with whom it interacts to develop values. This also leaves the TQM researchers with the responsibility to develop extensive awareness through further research on value development in line with the expectations of the stakeholders, such as the downstream customers, that inform the direction of their operational activities. Finally, while the researchers are finding better approaches to TQM through research, the practising managers need to embrace the responsibility to adapt their operations to emerging t-changes that can improve on current practices of TQM in the Nigerian context.

## Limitations and Future Research Perspectives

While this study covered a trending issue of interest, it has a limitation in that it could not focus on other key economic indicators that affect implementation in the Nigerian economy. This presents the need for further learning from other research methodological perspectives to validate or even probe the findings of this study. Similarly, it is apt to suggest the need for further study to explore the adoption of an empirical approach to explore this topic that can generate a quantitative valuation of the TQM implementation among organisations in the Nigerian food and beverage sector. Such will drive further

learning beyond the extended adoption of the conceptual approach applied in this study. It will portray the practice of TQM and the drive for resilience in specific individual organisations' operations that can project consolidated learning to about the subject of TQM and the drive for organisation resilience in the Nigerian food and beverage sector.

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