

## Perception Management: A Strategy for Effective Decision Making and Productive Managerial Performance in Business Organizations: A Survey of Selected Manufacturing Firms in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This paper is a critical analysis of perception management as a strategy for effective decision making and productive managerial performance in Business Organizations. The specific focus was on selected manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The study adopted a simple empirical survey method with a view of eliciting relevant data for analytical purpose so as to answer several questions and attain the objectives of the study. Both primary and secondary sources of data collection were used in a bid to attain the necessary results. Five point Likert rating scale questionnaire were used in obtaining the views and opinions of respondents (i.e., strongly agree: 5, agree: 4, undecided: 3, disagree: 2, and strongly disagree: 1). Three (3) hypotheses were formulated and tested. A parametric tool, Analysis of variance test — ANOVA is used to test the three (3) formulated hypothesis. The study found that there are troublesome errors, distortions and biases in perceptions of employees responsible for poor quality decision making and judgments in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria affecting quality performance attainment leading to low profits. The second finding was that there exist numerous factors affecting perception of reality in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria. And the third finding reveals that there are several strategies for managing perception in organizations. In the light of the findings of the study, it is hereby recommended that managers of manufacturing firms in Nigeria needs a constant training, mentoring and orientations on how to be transparent in their transactions and dealings with clients, subordinates colleagues. Supervisors and necessary stakeholders to the organizations as they make decisions pertaining to them and organization in order to attain high performance status. Again, it was recommended that strategies for effective perception management ranging from careful diversity management, impression management of employees, cultural backgrounds, race, and nationality, religious affiliations, ethnic and tribal differences is pertinent for high performance attainment. The study also recommends that managers of the organizations needs to rethink their attitudes, motives, interest, past experiences and expectations to ensure that there is no disharmony with organizational goals and objectives in their respective perceptual inclinations to facilitate decision making process of organizations.

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**Key words:** perception; strategy; effective decision making; productive; managerial performance; business organizations

**JEL codes:** M1, M3

## **1. Introduction**

The uniqueness of each individuals set of opinions, values, and styles of behavior arises partly from differences in what individuals perceive of the world around them

An individual perceptions influence the formation of attitudes. Values, in turn help to shape perceptions, and they have a direct influence on attitudes.

Perception is the process of noticing and making sense of information. The information reaches us through any of the five (5) senses namely, Sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. According to Wright and Noe (1996), we count on our senses to give us accurate information. In other words, we trust what we see, hear, touch, taste and smell accurately reflects the world as it objectively is.

As noted by Robbins (1998), perception could be defined as a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. However, what one perceives can be substantially different from objective reality. It needs not be, but there is often disagreement.

For example, it is possible that all employees in a firm may view it as a great place to work-favorable working conditions, interesting job assignments, good pay, an understanding and responsible management- but as most of us know, it is very unusual to find such agreement in the organizations.

As observed by Mcshane and Glinow (2000), the perceptual process often leads to inaccurate assumptions and inappropriate behaviors towards people who are different from us. For example by making unfavorable decision, through our attitudinal predispositions towards them by way of beliefs, feelings and intention on them.

The chief executives of organizations or young recruiters may form and rely on inaccurate stereotypes for example and assume that older workers aren't as productive as younger applicants. That older workers are rigid, inflexible, rigid and may cause stagnation and low performance to occur in organizations. However, it is interesting for the management teams of organizations to note that with increasingly diverse workforce, we need to pay closer attention to the perceptual process to minimize these misconceptions, errors and distortions that may arise to subvert attainment of organizational goals and objectives.

It is rewarding to stress at this point that proper perception can result to proper attribution of cause of behavior, decision making and formation of attitudes in a work place this resulting to high organizational performance.

This paper may attempt to address the statement of the research problem, Objectives of Research, Research questions, research hypothesis, review of related literature (i.e., perceptual Errors, factors influencing perception, Remedies and Management of perception in organizations). Theoretical framework on attribution, Methodology, hypothesis testing/discussion of findings, summary conclusion and Recommendations

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

To understand how and why individuals in organizations perceive the same information and attribute meanings to it differently has been a worrisome and problematic trend in Business Organizations. This overtime has affected the quality of decision making process and judgments in organizations resulting to low performance

level. This may be principally as a result of perceptual errors, biases and distortions consistently experienced by Business Organizations in the process of decision making process and judgment of issues which in most cases potentially causes employment discriminations as well as the stress and career limitations that go with this problem. This perceptual biases/errors by manager also threatens the organizational survival.

This have necessitated the curiosity of the researcher to establish how these errors, biases and distortions have effect on our perceptions resulting to poor quality decision making and judgments causing low performance trends in Business Organizations and see how it can be remedied.

### **3 Objectives of the Study**

(1) To identify the troublesome errors, biases and distortions in perceptions responsible for poor quality decision making and judgments of Manufacturing organizations in Nigeria.

(2) To determine the factors influencing perception of reality (e.g., attitudes, motives, interest, expectations) and its effects on the performance of manufacturing organizations in Nigeria.

(3) To determine the strategies for effective Management of perception in Nigerian Manufacturing organizations by Managers.

#### **3.1 Research Questions**

(1) To what extent have troublesome errors, biases and distortions in perceptions responsible for poor quality decision making process and judgments in manufacturing organization in Nigeria?

(2) To what extent have the factors influencing perception of reality such as attitude, motives, interest, expectations, amongst other affects performance in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria?

(3) To what extent have the strategies for effective management of perception in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria enhanced performance?

#### **3.2 Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>01</sub>: There are no significant troublesome errors, biases and distortions in perception responsible for poor quality decision making process and judgment in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria?

H<sub>02</sub>: There are no significant factors influencing perception of reality such as attitude, motives, interest, expectations amongst others affecting performance in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria?

H<sub>03</sub>: There are no significant strategies for effective management of perception in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria that have enhanced performance.

### **4. Review of Related Literature**

As noted by Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2005), perception is the process by which people select, organize, interpret, retrieve and respond to information from the world around them. They maintained that, the information is gathered from the five (5) senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. The perception or response of any two (2) people are also not necessarily identical, even when they are describing the same event.

Through perception people process information inputs into response involving feelings and actions. Perception is a way of forming impressions about oneself, other people and daily life experiences. It also serves as a screen or filter through which information passes before it has an effect on people. The quality or accuracy of a person perception, therefore, has a major impact on his or her responses to a given situation.

Perceptual responses are also likely to vary between managers and subordinate in instances of interview

performance appraisals, future performance goals, career development amongst others (Griffin, 1997).

To Buchanan and Huczynski (2004), Perception is the dynamic psychological process responsible for attending to organizing and interpreting sensory data.

He further emphasized in his research that, the main sources of errors in person's perception include the followings:

- (1) Not collecting enough information about other people
- (2) Basing out judgments on information that is irrelevant or insignificant.
- (3) Seeing what we expect to see and what we want to see, and not investigating further.
- (4) Allowing early information about someone to affect our judgment despite later and contradictory information

- (5) Allowing our own characteristics to affect what we see in others and how we judge them
- (6) Accepting stereotypes uncritically.
- (7) Attempting to decode non-verbal behavior out with the context in which it appears.
- (8) Basing attribution on flimsy and potential irrelevant evidence.

Mitchell (1987) explained perception as the process by which an individual gives meaning to the environment. It involves organizing and interpreting various stimuli into a psychological experience perception is empirical in that it is based on the individuals past experience. Different people will therefore perceive the same thing in different ways. As Ivancevich et al. comment, "*while we think we are describing some objective reality, we are in fact describing our subjective reactions to that reality*". And it is this perception of reality that shapes behavior. To a large extent people interpret the events and the actions of others from their own view point. They see what they want to see.

As noted by Robbins (1998) there exist several factors influencing perception of reality. When an individual looks at a target and attempt to interpret what he or she sees, that interpretation is influenced by personal characteristics of the individual perceiver, the target and the situation. In other words, the existence of several sub-processes of perception gives evidence of the complexity of the nature of the concept.

(a) The Perceiver

Among the more relevant personal characteristics of the perceiver are his attitudes, motives, interest, past experiences, and expectations.

Our attitude towards an issue, object determines the interpretation we give to it. People differs in their attitudes towards issues and objects Hot food makes me seek" "I love it, even hot".

All of these varying preferences will affects our attitudes toward timing of our canteen lunch break.

Unsatisfied needs or motives stimulate individuals and may exert a strong influence on their perceptions as well. Individual interest is capable of channeling our perception. Our attention is influenced by our interest. A supervisor who was recently reprimanded by her boss for high level of lateness among his staff is more likely to be stricter with later coming.

Again, expectations can distort your perceptions in that you will see what you expect to see. If you expect police officers to be authoritative, young people to be unambitious, personnel directors to "like people" or individual holding public office to be unscrupulous, you may perceive them as such regardless of their actual traits.

More to the above, as a manager, your experience with lip service subordinates in your previous jobs may make you indifferent to a new subordinate who display some excessive loyalty even though he is sincere.

(b) The Target

A target is the object of stimulation or the stimuli. Characteristics of the target can affect our perception, e.g., we tend to notice loud people or attractive individuals in a group than quiet or unattractive ones. Motion, sound, size and other attributes of a target will influence the way we see it.

Also, the relationships of a target to background influenced perception. On this premise, we tend to group close or related and similar things together for example Ijesha's and Ekiti's are close tribes in Western part of Nigeria and are grouped as one and perceived as highly educated people.

(c) The Situation

The context in which we see objects or events is important. The elements in the surrounding environment influence our perceptions. For example, I may not notice a 25 year old female in an evening gown and heavy make up at a Night club on Saturday Night. Yet the same woman so attired for my Monday morning management lectures. Class would certainly catch my attention (and that of the rest of the class). The time at which an object or event is seen can influence attention, as can location, light, heat, or any number of situational factors.

## 5. Common Perceptual Distortions, Troublesome Errors and Biases in Decision Making of Organizational

As illustrated in Mcshane and Glinow (2000), Jones and George (2006) some common kinds of distortions and troublesome errors that can make the perception process inaccurate and affect the response include the following;

(1) **Stereotype:** An individual set of beliefs about the characteristics or attributes of a group, e.g., Ekitis, Ijebus, Hausas, Female managers, Ibo traders etc.

Stereotypes are not always negative and it may or may not be accurate. Stereotype can lead to poor decision. It can create employment barriers for women (e.g., nursing mothers) and people of a particular creed, colour or age. It can undermine employee loyalty and job satisfaction.

According to Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) Stereotyping also works at an international level as shown below:

S/No	Culture	Stereotyped Image
1	American	Demonstrative, talkative, emotional, romantic, bold, artistic
2	English	(b) Manana attitude, Mache, Music lovers, touchers
3	French	(c) Inscrutable, intelligent, xenophobic, golfers, group -oriented, polite, soft spoke.
4	Italian	(d) Conservative, reserved, polite, proper, formal
5	Latin American	(e) Arrogant, Loud, friendly, impatient, generous, hardworking, monolingual.
6	Japanese	(f) Arrogant, rude, chauvinistic, romantics, gourmels, cultural, artistic.

Mullins (1996) emphasized that common stereotyping may be based on;

- (a) Nationality — e.g., all Germans are orderly and industries
- (b) Occupation — e.g., all accountants are boring
- (c) Age — e.g., all young people are unreliable, no old person wants to consider new ideas.
- (d) Physical — e.g., all people with red hair have fiery temperament.
- (e) Education — e.g., all graduates are clever
- (f) Social — e.g., all unemployed people are lazy.

(g) Politics — e.g., all labour voters are in favour of strong trade unions, all conservatives voters support privatization.

**(2) Halo Effect Error:** This is a judgment of personality based on single, striking characteristic, such as an aspect of speech, dress, posture, nationality, their hairstyle, sociability, appearance, intelligence, etc. A Single prominent trait will lead to contaminate our evaluation of other traits.

**(3) Selective Perception:** This is the tendency to single out these aspects of a situation, person, or object that are consistent with one's needs, values, or attitudes. Its strongest impact occurs in the attention stage of perception process.

**(4) Primacy Error:** This error relates to a saying that first impressions are lasting impressions. It is our tendency to quickly form an opinion of people based on the first impression we receive about them. This rapid perceptual organization fulfills our need to make sense of others and provides convenient anchor to integrate subsequent information, for example organizations take extra care to ensure that customers have a good first impression when they join the firm

**(5) Recency Effect Error:** This occurs when the most recent information dominates our perception of others. In other words, the most recent information has greater influence on our perception of someone when the first impression has worn off with the passage of time (Steiner & Rain, 1989).

**(6) Projection Error:** We are projecting when a trait in the perceiver is generalized to other people, i.e., the tendency is to attribute one's own characteristics to other people. Too much projections leads to ineffective management.

**(7) Fundamental Attribution Error:** This refers to the tendency to underestimate the influence of External factors and over estimate the influence of internal factors when making judgments about the behaviour of others. In other words, it refers to tendency to attribute the behavior of other people to the internal factors more than External factors (Green & Mitchell, 1979).

Example, if an employee is late for work, observer are more likely to conclude that the persons is lazy than to think that external factors may have caused this behavior.

According to Fred Luthans (2001), Mullins (1996), Daft (2008) in their respective empirical researches, fundamental attribution Error mainly occurs because we typically have limited information about the situational contingencies affecting other people. Meanwhile, the person performing the behavior is naturally, more sensitive to situational contingencies affecting that behavior. This can led to disagreement over the degree to which employees should be held responsible for their poor performance and absenteeism.

The observer blames the employee's lack of motivation or ability, whereas the employee does not feel responsible because behavior seems to be due to factors beyond his or her control.

**(8) Self-serving Bias:** This is the tendency to attribute our favourable outcomes to internal factors and our failures to external factors. Simply put, we take credit for our successes and blame others or the situation for our mistakes for example, in a unique study of corporate Annual Reports, researchers discovered that organization successes were typically explained by internal attribution such as management strategy, workforce qualities, and research/Development Efforts. But when explaining corporate problems, the Annual reports, relied more on External Attributions such as Bad weather, strong competition and inflationary pressures (Sherwood, 1981; Jones & George, 2006).

**(9) Self-fulfilling Prophecies:** According to Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2005), it is the tendency to create or find in another situation or individual that which one has expected to find.

Self fulfilling prophecy occurs when our expectations about another person cause that person to act in a way that is consistent with those expectations. In other words, our perceptions influence reality (Field & Van Seter's, 1988).

Self fulfilling prophecy is sometimes referred to as a "Pygmalion effect" named for a mythical Greek Sculptor who created a statue of ideal mate and then made her come to life. His prophecy can have both positive and negative results for you as a manager.

Supposing you assume that your subordinates prefer to satisfy most of their needs outside the work setting and want only minimal involvement with their jobs. Consequently, you are likely to provide simple, highly structured jobs designed to require little involvement. Subordinates response in this regard will be to show lack of commitment you assumed they would have in the first place. This is negative side of self fulfilling prophecy.

To creating positive self-fulfilling prophecies for employee:

(a) You create a warmer interpersonal climate between you and your subordinates.

(b) Give more performance feedback to subordinates — make it as positive as possible, given their actual performance.

(c) Spend more time helping subordinates to learn job skills.

(d) Provide more opportunities for subordinates to ask questions (Eden, 1984).

**(10) Contrast Effects:** This occurs when an individual's characteristics are contrasted with those of others recently encountered, who rank higher or lower on the same characteristics.

## 6. Attribution Theory in the Context of Perceptual Interpretations

Attribution is the process by which people interpret the perceived causes of behavior. Attribution theory is the attempt to understand the cause of an event, assess responsibility for outcomes of the events, and assess the personal qualities of the people involved.

The initiator of attribution theory is generally recognized as Heider (1958) who suggest that behavior is determined by a combination of perceived Internal forces and External forces.

- Internal forces relates to personal attributes such as abilities, skills, amount of effort or fatigue.
- External forces relates to environmental factors such as organizational rules and policies, the manner of superiors, or the weather.

Behavior at work may be explained by the locus of control, that is whether the individual perceives outcomes are controlled by themselves, or by External factors.

Judgments made about other people will also be influenced strongly by whether the cause is seen as internal or external.

In making attribution and determining whether an internal or External attribution is chosen, Kelly (1973) suggests three (3) basics criterias or dimensions of behavior. *Distinctiveness*, *Consensus* and *consistency*. These are factors that determine whether it is external or internally caused.

**(a) Distinctiveness** is determined by comparing a person's behaviours on one task with his behavior on other tasks.

High Distinctiveness implies that, the individual has performed the task in question significantly different in a manner that he has performed other task, i.e., if this performance level is not unusual it will be probably adjudged as internal.

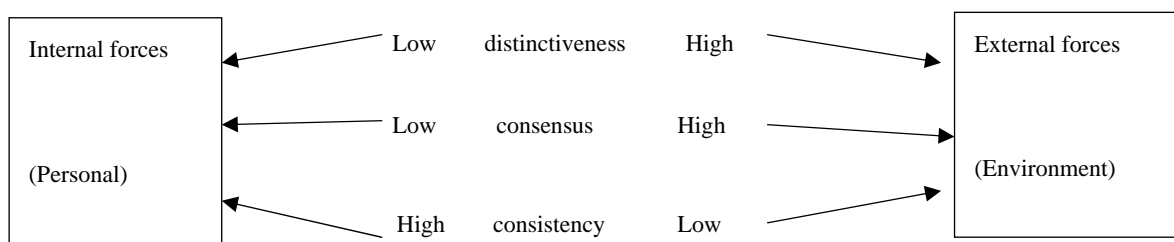
(b) **Consensus** involves a comparison of an individual's behavior with that of his/her peers, i.e., if everyone who is faced with a similar situation responds in the same way. When consensus is high you will be expected to make external attribution and internal, if it is low.

(c) **Consistency** implies responding the same way over time. High consistency implies that a person perform a certain tasks the same way overtime.

Unstable performance for a given time would mean low consistency.

It is instructive to remember that consensus relates to other people, distinctiveness relates to other tasks and consistency relates to time.

In summary, Kelly hypothesized that people attribute behavior to external causes (environmental factors) outside their own control when they perceive high Distinctiveness, High Consensus and low consistency, and internal attribution is made when observed behavior is characterized by low distinctiveness, low consensus and high consistency.



**Figure 1 Representation of Attribution Theory**

Source: Mullins L. J. (1996), *Management and Organizational Behaviour* (4th ed.); Washington, D. C.: Pitman Publishing.

## 7. Managing Perceptions in Organizations

As observed by Schermerhorn, Ihunt and Osborn (2005) to be successful, managers needs to understand the perceptual process, the stages involved, and the input the perceptual process can have on their own and either responses. They must also be aware of what roles the perceiver, the setting and the perceived have in the perceptual process. The following strategies needed to be given proper attention by organization in facilitating effective management of perception. They include:

(a) **Impression Management:** This is a person's systematic attempt to behave in ways that will create and maintain desired impression in the eyes of others. First impressions are especially important and influence how people respond to one another. Impression management is influenced by such activities as associating with the right people" doing favour to gain approval, flattering others to favorably impress them, taking credit for a favorable event, apologizing for a negative event while seeking a pardon, agreeing with the opinion of others, downplaying the severity of a negative event and doing favours for others.

According to Armstrong (2009) successful managers learn how to use these activities to enhance their own images, and they are sensitive to their use by their subordinates and others in their organizations.

(b) **Distortion Management:** This demands that, throughout the entire perception process, managers should be sensitive to the information distortions caused by halo effects, selective perceptions, projections, contrast effects and self fulfilling prophecies in addition to distortions caused by stereotypes and prototypes.

In the attention and selection stage of perceptual process, managers should be alert to balancing automatic and controlled information processing. Most of the responsibilities such as performance assessment and clear



communication, will involve controlled processing, which will take time away from other job responsibilities.

Along with other controlled processing, managers need to be concerned about increasing the frequency of observations and about getting representative information rather than simply responding to the most recent information about a subordinate or a production order.

For instances, same organizations have responded to the need for representative and more accurate information by utilizing current technology. In addition, managers should not fail to seek out disconfirming information that will help provide a balance to their typical perception of information.

The various kinds of schemes and prototypes and stereotypes are particularly important at the information organizing stage. Managers should strive to broaden their schemas (i.e., the cognitive framework that represents organized knowledge about a given concept or stimulus developed through experience) or should even replace them with more accurate or complete ones.

At the interpretation stage, managers need to be especially attuned to the impact of attribution on information. At the retrieval stage, managers should be sensitive to the fallibility of memory. They should reorganize the tendency to overly on schemes especially prototypes or stereotypes that may bias information storage and retrieval.

**(c) Diversity Management:** Companies acquire a more diverse workforce as they extend operations globally. The challenge for corporate leaders is to leverage the benefits of this diversity while minimizing the perceptual and behavioral problems that tend to accompany heterogeneity.

We see language differences, religious differences, the graying of the workplace. It is a business imperative to get people to work together. To get people to work together more effectively requires the introduction of diversity management programs. Typically, these training programs serve two purposes. First, they communicate the value of diversity, for example participants learn how a multicultural workforce potentially improves corporate decision making and customer service.

Second, diversity management programs helps participants become aware of their perceptual biases and gives them more accurate information about people with different backgrounds. Diversity management sessions are not intended to correct deep rooted prejudice or intolerance. In fact, they could make matters worse because highly prejudiced employees are likely to view these sessions as a form of coercion if they are required to attend them. Rather, they help employee learn, and eventually overcome, the more subtle forms of bias that emerge from distorted stereotypes.

In most organizations, diversity management programs mainly increase employee awareness of differences. More awareness can be helpful, but some experts are calling on companies to introduce the “next level”, that is, moving beyond awareness to a deeper level of understanding and sensitivity.

Again, encouragement of dialogue among employees from different cultural backgrounds in organization is pertinent. These groups meet regularly to discuss and learn to appreciate their differences (Robinson & Dechant, 1997; Keid, 1998.)

**(d) Empathize with Others:** According to Mcshane and Glinow (2007) diversity management programs should also involved learning how to empathize with people from different background.

Empathy refers to a person’s ability to understand and be sensitive to the feelings of others. This is particularly useful for reducing attribution errors because empathy makes us more sensitive to external causes of another person’s performance and behaviours.

Empathy comes naturally to some people. However, the rest of us can develop empathy skills by receiving

feedback on how well we seem to empathize.

Another approach is to work closely with others and spend time participating in their environment.

**(e) Compare perceptions with Others:** Another useful way to reduce perceptual bias is to compare our perceptions with the perceptions other people have about the same target. By sharing perceptions, we learn different points of views and potentially gain a better understanding of the situation.

If our Colleagues have different backgrounds but similar perceptions of the situation then there is reason to be more confident in our interpretations. Of course, there is no way to know for sure that our perceptions are correct, but they are less likely to be wrong if people with different backgrounds have the same general interpretation of the situation.

It could also be rewarding to emphasize that in effective perception management process, managers in organizations should practice transparency, be consistent in their dealings, be honest, practice fairness/equity, give training and orientations to employees, give adequate counselling, facilities top down communication as much as possible, and ensure that they monitor operations as much as possible and above all practice empathy.

## 8. Research Methodology

The research design adopted in this investigation was largely Quasi Experimental in the sense that it placed the premium on simple survey. The population of the study consisted of seven (7) companies namely Nigeria Bottling company Plc (NBC) with management population of 900, Guinness Nigeria Plc with management population of 436, Seven Up Bottling company with management population of 380, Flour Mills Nigeria Plc with management population of 237. Nigerian Breweries Nigeria plc Iganmu, Lagos with management population of 144, consolidated Breweries with a management population of 184 and Friesland foods (WAMCO) Nigeria Plc Lagos, with management population of 186 staff as at December, 2014. These all together make a total management staff population size of 2467.

The selection of the companies is from Breweries and Food /others Beverage sector. This selection is bordered on factors such as size, (Bigger, moderate and smaller in size), age and assets base /scope of operations. The choice of the companies employed the use of *disproportionate stratified sampling technique* in which the companies are classed into two (2) strata. The first category of organizations are bigger in size in terms of employees, scope of operations and assets base. They have population of management staff above 200.

The second category of organizations are moderately bigger in size in terms of employees, scope of operations and assets base. They have a management staff population of between 100-199.

Primary source of data collection especially questionnaire, i.e., 5 point likert rating scale questionnaire Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), strongly disagree (SD) and disagree (D) is administered to obtain viable information on the subject matter of perception management as a strategy for productive managerial performance enhancement in the 7 companies.

To scientifically generate a sample size, the Taro Yamane's (1964) formula was applied. According to Baridaim (2001) this formula can be used for a homogenous population like the one in this research. The formula is stated below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where,

n = Sample Size

e = Level of Significance

N = Population size

I = Constant value

A total population size of 2467 was used to obtain the sample size of seven (7) companies in the study at 0.05 level of significance as shown below:

$$n = \frac{2467}{1 + 2467(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2467}{1 + 2467(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{2467}{1 + 6.1675}$$

$$n = \frac{2467}{7.1675}$$

$$n = 344.1925358$$

$$n = 344$$

From the total sample size, the individual company's sample size is calculated. The formulae applied was Bowley's population allocation formulae (1964) in Nzealibe (1999, p. 201) as shown below;

$$nh = \frac{nNh}{N}$$

Where nh = The number of units allocated to each company

n = The total sample size

Nh = The number of employees in each company

N = The population size.

Following the Bowleys allocation formulae, the individual company sample size is derived as follows:

**Table 1 Number of Organizations/Firms based on Classification**

S/No	Name of Manufacturing Company	Population of Management Staff	Selected Sample Size
First Category of Organization (Management Staff above 200 bigger in size in term of Employee, Scope of Operation and Assets Base)			
1	Nigeria Bottling Company (NBC) Plc Lagos	900	125
2	Guinness Nigeria Plc Lagos	436	61
3	Seven Up Bottling Company Plc Lagos	380	53
4	Flour Mills Nigeria Plc Lagos	237	33
	Total		282
Second category of Organization (management Staff between 100-199 or less than 200, moderately Bigger in size in term of employee, scope of operations and Assets Base)			
5	Nigeria Breweries Plc Lagos	144	20
6	Consolidated breweries Plc Lagos	184	26
7	Friesland Foods (WAMCO) Nigeria Plc Lagos	186	26
	Total	2467	344

Source: Company's Records and Field Survey, 2014)

$$\text{For Nigeria Bottling Company Plc} = \frac{344 \times 900}{2467} = 125.4965 = 125$$

$$\text{For Guinness Nigeria Plc Lagos } N_2 = \frac{344 \times 436}{2467} = 60.79610 = 61$$

$$\text{For Seven Up Bottling Company Plc Lagos } N_3 = \frac{344 \times 380}{2467} = 52.98743 = 53$$

$$\text{For Flour Mills Nigeria Plc Lagos } N_4 = \frac{344 \times 237}{2467} = 33.04742 = 33$$

$$\text{For Nigeria Breweries Plc Lagos } n_5 = \frac{344 \times 144}{2467} = 20.07944 = 20$$

$$\text{For Consolidated Breweries Plc Lagos } n_6 = \frac{344 \times 184}{2467} = 25.65707 = 26$$

$$\text{For Friesland Foods (WAMCO) Plc Lagos } n_7 = \frac{344 \times 186}{2467} = 25.93595 = 26$$

Based on the researchers classification on strata, the companies with management population above 200, larger scope of operations and assets base and quality includes; Nigeria Bottling Company Plc, Guinness Nigeria Plc, Seven Up Bottling Company Plc, Flour Mills Nigeria Plc Lagos.

The companies with management population between 100-199 includes Nigeria Breweries Plc, Consolidated Breweries Plc and Friesland Foods (WAMCO) Plc Lagos. They are moderately bigger in size in term of employee, scope of operation and assets base.

The researcher also adapted the use of ANOVA (Analysis of Variance for the test of the 3 formulated hypotheses.

## 9. Data Presentation and Analysis

**Table 2 Respondent Opinion on Troublesome Errors, Biases and Distortions in Perception Are Responsible for Poor Quality Decision Making and Judgments in Organizations**

Statement	Category of Organization	Degree of Respondents by Management Staff					
		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Troublesome errors, Biases and distortions in perception are responsible for poor quality decision making and judgments in organizations (i.e., stereotyping, halo effect error, selective perceptions, self serving bias, attribution errors primary effect, effect error etc)	Nigeria Bottling Company Plc Lagos	62	54	0	5	4	125
	Guinness Plc Lagos	34	22	0	0	5	61
	Seven Up Bottling Company Plc Lagos	26	23	0	4	0	53
	Flour Mills Nigeria Plc Apapa Lagos	15	14	2	0	2	33
	Nigeria Breweries Plc, Lagos	10	8	0	2	0	20
	Consolidated Breweries Plc Lagos	12	11	0	0	3	26
	Friesland Foods (WAMCO) Plc Lagos	12	12	0	2	0	26

Source: Field Survey 2015.

As data shown in Table 2 above, it is clearly shown that troublesome errors biases and distortions in perception such as stereotyping, Italo effects errors, selective perception, fundamental attribution errors, self serving biases, primary effect error, recency effect error amongst, others are responsible for poor quality decision making and judgment in organization

For Nigeria Bottling company (NBC) Plc Lagos 116 out of 125 respondents (92.8%) felt strongly that the above mentioned errors are responsible for distortions in perceptions and bad judgments in organizations. Only 9 out of 125 respondents (7.2%) felt otherwise.

As for Guinness Nigeria Plc Lagos 56 out 61 respondents (91.8%) consensually upheld the notion that troublesome errors, biases and distortion in perception affects quality decision making and judgments. Only 5 out

of 61 respondents disagreed on this position.

For Seven Up Bottling Company Plc Lagos, the consensus view among the majority of respondents is that perception is distorted by troublesome errors and biasness of mind. Out of a total of 53 respondents, 49 (92.45%) subject felt so. Only 4 (7.55%) which constitute a negligible proportion or percentage felt otherwise.

In Flour Mills of Nigeria Plc Apapa, Lagos for most of the respondents, perception is highly distorted by errors such as stereotyping, self serving biases, attribution errors, contrast effect amongst others. As shown in the Table 2, 29 out of 33 respondents (or 87.88%) were of this notion. Only 4 (12.12%) respondents were undecided and strongly disagreed.

As for the Nigeria Breweries Plc Lagos, for most of the respondents, poor quality decision making and judgments which is a vital element of management is as a result of troublesome errors, biases and distortions in Perception. As shown in the Table 2, 18 out of 20 respondents (90%) upheld this notion. Only 2 (10%) felt the opposite.

For consolidated Breweries Plc Iddo- Lagos 23 out of 26 respondents (or 88.46%) exhibit agreement. Only 3 respondents (or 11.54%) revealed strongly disagreed.

For respondents in Friesland Foods (WAMCO) Plc Lagos, the Information indicated as per data obtained is Table 2 above imply that errors distorts perception of reality and affects quality sound decision making process. 24 (92.31%) of respondents agree to other notion while 2 (or 7.69%) felt otherwise.

**Table 3 Respondents View on the Main Sources of Errors in Person's Perception**

Statement	Category of Organizations	Degree of Response by Management Staff					
		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
The main sources of errors in Managers/Person's Perceptions may include not collecting enough information basing our judgments on irrelevant information, seeing what we expect to see and not investigating further amongst others in Organizations	Nigeria Bottling Company Plc Lagos	54	52	3	7	9	125
	Guinness Nigeria Plc Lagos	26	24	0	6	5	61
	Seven – Up Bottling Company Plc- Lagos	23	22	2	4	2	53
	Flour Mills Nigeria Plc Apapa Lagos	14	15	0	0	4	33
	Nigeria Breweries Nigeria Plc, Lagos	9	9	0	2	0	20
	Consolidated Breweries Plc Lagos	12	10	3	3	0	26
	Friesland Foods (WAMCO) Plc Lagos	12	12	0	0	2	26

Source: Field Survey (2015).

For most of the respondents in Nigeria Bottling Company (NBC) Plc, Lagos the main sources of Errors in Managers/Employees perceptions may be as a result of not collecting enough information, basing our judgment on irrelevant information, seeing what we want to see and not investigating further amongst others in organizations. In fact, 106 out of 125 respondents (or 84.8%) exhibit agreement. 16 subject out of 125 (or 12.8%) showed disagreement. Only 3 out of 125 respondents (or 2.4%) reveals undecided.

There has been unanimous views among the respondents as indicated in Table 3. 50 out of 61 respondents (or 81.97%) felt that the reasons for sources of perceptions agree with the stated positions. Only 11 out of 61 (18.03%) exhibit disagreement on this opinion in Guinness Nigeria Plc Ikeja-Lagos.

For the Seven Up Bottling Company Plc Lagos 45 out of 53 subjects (or 84.91%) either agree or strongly agree with the stated notion. Only 6 out of 53 respondents (that is 11.32%) either disagree or strongly disagree. In fact 2 out of 53 (or 3.77%) were undecided on this subject matter.

For Flour Mills Nigeria Plc, Apapa Lagos, 29 out of 33 respondents (or 87.91%) favourably exhibit agreement on the position. 4 out of 33 respondents (or 12.12%) showed disagreement on this notion.

For Nigeria Breweries Plc Iganmu – Lagos – 18 out of 20 subjects (90%) either agree and strongly agreed. 2 out of 20 respondents (10%) disagree on this notion.

For Consolidated Breweries Plc Iddo-Lagos majority of the respondents opted for agree and strongly agree. 22 out of 26 respondents (or 84.61%) exhibited agreement. 3 out of 26 (or 11.54%) were undecided on this position while 3 out of 26 (or 11.54%) Disagreed out rightly.

For Friesland Foods (WAMCO) Ikeja-Lagos, 24 out of 26 respondents (or 93.31%) revealed agreement while 2 out of 26 respondents (7.69%) revealed strongly disagree.

**Table 4 Respondents Opinion on Factors Influencing Perception of Reality**

Statement	Category of Organizations	Degree of Response by Management Staff					
		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Several factors are influencing perception of reality. Such as perceiver (i.e attitudes, motives, interest, past experience and expectations), Target (i.e motion, size, sound( and situation (i.e timing, background)	Nigeria Bottling Company Plc Lagos	60	60	0	5	0	125
	Guinness Nigeria Plc Lagos-Ikeja	28	27	0	0	6	61
	Seven – Up Bottling Company Plc-Lagos	27	22	0	4	0	53
	Flour Mills Nigeria Plc Apapa Lagos	17	13	0	0	3	33
	Nigeria Breweries Nigeria Plc Iganmu- Lagos	10	7	3	0	0	20
	Consolidated Breweries Plc Iddo- Lagos	11	11	0	4	0	26
	Friesland Foods (WAMCO) Plc Ikeja-Lagos	12	12	0	0	2	26

Source: Field Survey (2015).

As for the data shown in Table 4 above, the overwhelming majority, revealed agreement on the subject matter. 120 out of 125 respondents (or 96%) confirmed that several factors from the perceivers (i.e., attitudes, motives, interest, past experiences and expectations), from the target (i.e., sound, Size and motion) and from the situation (i.e., the timing, the background are influencing perception of reality only 5 out of 125 respondents (or 4%) had opposite opinion.

For the Guinness Nigeria Plc, Lagos, 55 out of 61 respondents (or 90.16%) either agree and strongly agree on the notion, 6 out of 61 respondents (or 9.84%) strongly disagrees.

In the Seven Up Bottling Company Plc Lagos, 49 out of 53 subject (or 92.45%) exhibit agreement. Only 4 out of 53 respondents (or 7.55%) had a contrary opinion of disagreement.

For Flour Mills Nigeria Plc Lagos, 30 out of 33 respondents (or 90.91%) either agree or strongly agree. Only 3 out of 33 respondents (or 9.09%) showed strongly disagree,

For the Nigeria Breweries Plc, Lagos, 17 out of 20 respondents (or 85%) either agree or strongly agree. Only 3 out of 20 respondents (or 15%) were undecided on this notion.

For consolidated Breweries Plc, Lagos, 22 out of 26 respondents (or 84.62%) exhibit agreement. 4 out of 26 respondents (15.38%) revealed disagreement.

In the Friesland Foods Plc, Lagos, 24 out of 26 respondents (or 92.31%) either agree or strongly agree. Only 2 out of 26 respondents (7.69%) strongly disagreed.

As for the data shown in Table 5, it is revealing that there exist strategies that are adapted by managers in managing perception in organizations. These strategies include managing of impression, managing of distortions perceptual/errors in organizations, managing diversity, empathizing with other employees in organization.

**Table 5 Respondents Views on the Strategies for Managing Perception**

Statement	Category of Organizations	Degree of Response by Management Staff					
		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Strategies for Managing perception in organization ranges from managing impression, Distortions, diversity, empathizing with others and comparing perception with others	Nigeria Bottling Company Plc Lagos	65	55	0	0	5	125
	Guinness Nigeria Plc Lagos – Ikeja	27	24	0	8	0	61
	Seven – Up Bottling Company Plc-Lagos	25	26	2	0	0	53
	Flour Mills Nigeria Plc Apapa Lagos	16	4	0	0	3	33
	Nigeria Breweries Nigeria Plc Iganmu-Lagos	6	10	0	2	2	20
	Consolidated Breweries Plc Iddo-Lagos	11	12	3	0	0	26
	Friesland Foods (WAMCO) Plc Ikeja-Lagos	11	11	0	2	2	26

Source: Field Survey, (2015).

For the Nigeria Bottling Company Plc (NBC) Lagos, 120 out of 125 respondents (or 96%) either agree or strongly agree. Only 5 out of 125 respondents (4%) strongly disagree with the notion.

For the Guinness Nigeria Plc, Lagos, 53 out of 61 respondents (86.89%) either agree or strongly agree on the position. Only 8 out of 61 respondents (or 13.11%) Disagree on the matter.

In Seven Up Bottling Company Plc Lagos, 51 out of 53 respondents (96.23%) either agree or strongly agree on this position. 2 out of 53 respondents (3.77%) had a contrary opinion and opted for undecided.

For the Flour Mills Plc Lagos, 30 out of 33 respondents (90.91%) either agree or strongly agree on this notion. 3 out of 33 respondents (or 9.09%) strongly Disagree.

For Nigeria Breweries Plc Lagos, 16 out of 20 respondents (80%) either agree or strongly agree.. 4 out of 20 respondents (or 20%) reveals either disagree or strongly disagree.

For Consolidated Breweries Plc, Lagos, 23 out of 26 respondents (or 88.46%) exhibits overwhelming agreement. Only 3 out of 26 respondents (or 11.54%) were undecided on the subject matters.

For Friesland Foods (WAMCO) Plc, Lagos, 22 out of 26 respondents (or 84.62%) either agree or strongly agree. Only 4 out of 26 respondents (or 15.38%) either disagree and strongly disagree.

## 10. Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There are no significant troublesome errors, biases and distortion in perception responsible for poor quality decision making process and judgment in manufacturing organization in Nigeria.

ANOVA					
Decision Making					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.887	4	4.722	4.579	.001
Within Groups	349.552	339	1.031		
Total	368.439	343			

If the significant value is less than ( $<$ ) 0.05 then the null hypothesis should be rejected. And in this case, the significance value is 0.001 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This is implying that there are troublesome error, biases, distortions in perceptions responsible for poor quality decision making processed judgment in manufacturing organization in Nigeria affecting productivity and quality performance resulting to low profit attainment.

Hypothesis 2: There are no significant factors, influencing perception of reality such as attitude, motives,

**Perception Management: A Strategy for Effective Decision Making and Productive Managerial Performance in Business Organizations: A Survey of Selected Manufacturing Firms in Nigeria**

interest, expectations amongst others affecting performance in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria.

ANOVA					
Performance of organizations					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28.334	4	7.084	5.817	0.000
Within Groups	412.779	339	1.218		
Total	441.113	343			

An ANOVA was used to test if there are significant factors, influencing perception of reality such as attitude, motives, interest, expectations amongst others affecting performance in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria. A significant value of 0.000 was obtained which is less than 0.05 alpha value. The null hypothesis is hereby rejected signifying that there are numerous factors affecting perception of reality in organization.

Hypothesis 3: There are no significant strategies for effective management of perception in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria that have enhanced performance.

ANOVA					
Performance of organizations					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	66.649	4	16.662	14.988	0.000
Within Groups	376.860	339	1.112		
Total	443.509	343			

An ANOVA was used to test if there were significant strategies for effective management of perception in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria that have enhanced performance. A significant value of 0.000 was obtained and this is less than the alpha value of 0.05. the null hypothesis is hereby rejected signifying that there a significant strategies for effective management of perception in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria that have enhanced performance. These strategies for managing perception include impression management, distortion management, diversity management, sympathizing with others and comparing perception with others.

## **11. Discussion of Findings**

Interestingly, the study has produced startling discoveries as evident from the data presentation and analysis above.

First and foremost, the study found that the troublesome errors, perceptual distortions, biases in perception namely fundamental attribution error, self serving biases, primacy effect error, recency effect error, stereotyping error, Halo effect error, projection, contrast effect error, self fulfilling prophecy amongst others are responsible for poor quality decision making process and judgment in Nigeria manufacturing organizations. This has affected quality performance leading to decline in profit attainment.

The implication of the above scenario is that executive management of manufacturing organizations needs to adopt the following remedies in bailing their firms from the biases. These remedies include

- (1) Collecting and consciously using more information about other people to facilitate sound judgment and decision making process.
- (2) Taking more time and avoiding instant and “Snap” judgment about others.
- (3) Developing self-awareness and an understanding of how our personal biases and preferences affects our



perceptions and judgments of other people.

(4) Checking our attributions – the assumptions we make about the causes of behavior, particularly the links we make between aspects of personality and appearance on the one hand and behavior on the other hand.

The above views agrees with those of Buchanan and Huczynski (2004), Mullins (1996), Sev (2006), Robis (1998) who hold the same opinion that, adopting the above will help the troublesome errors, biases and perceptual distortions that confronts managers in decision making process and judgment in organizations.

Secondly, the study found that several factors influence perception of reality from the perceivers view point such as; attitudes, motives, interest, experiences and expectations from the target view point such as; novelty, motion, sounds, size, background and proximity and finally from the situation point of view such as time, work setting and social settings, this views is supported by Robbins (1998), Wright and Noe (1995), Mcshene and Glinad (2000) in their respective findings.

Thirdly, the study also reveals that several strategies are adopted by manufacturing organizations in Nigeria for effectively managing the perception of managers in order to enhance performance. This agrees with the views of Mcshane and Glinow (2000), Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2005), Mullins (1996), who confirms that strategies for managing perception includes; impression management of the self and others, being sensitive to effects of the common perceptual distortions, diversity management programs, empathize with others, postpone impression formation, compare perception with others amongst others.

The implication of this is that Executive Management should ensure that reasonable awareness and campaigns are carried out to ensure the success of perception management in organizations.

More so, the Executive Management should endeavour to know the main sources of the errors of the person perception to facilitate its effective management in the organization. This will aid effective decision making process and sound judgment by the organizational members and eventually lead to productivity.

## **12. Recommendations**

(1) Managers of manufacturing firms in Nigeria needs a constant training, mentoring and orientations on how to be transparent in their transactions and dealings with clients, subordinates, colleagues supervisor and necessary stakeholders to the organizations in order to attain high performance trends. This will aid perception management.

(2) Application of equitable procedures, and fairness in workplace in order to uphold honesty, integrity, social norms and values of the society by organizational members is pertinent. This will accelerate productivity if judiciously adopted.

(3) Managers of manufacturing organizations needs to rethink their attitudes, motives, interest, past experiences and expectations to ensure that there is no disharmony with organizational objectives and goals of quality production, services and high profit attainments.

This is in agreement with one of Henri Fayol principle of Management — Father of Administrative Management which states that “subordination of individual interest to the common good” this is implying that interests of individuals should not be placed before the goals of the overall organization. Judicious application of this will aid perception Management of organization.

(4) Empathizing with fellow colleagues, subordinates managers should be a pivotal principle to catalyzed management of perception if goals of the organization such as high productivity, and high performance are to be attained.

(5) Careful Management of Diversity of employees cultures, Nationality, Race, Religious affiliations, ethnic and tribal differences is pertinent. Harmonization of these elements in organizations will facilitate the repositioning of the perception, giving rise to productive work setting/environment that will result to high profit attainment.

(6) Proper Brainstorming and thinking before embarking on any action and managerial decision to avoid haphazard judgments, errors, and biases in perceptions, such as stereotyping, Halo effect error, selective perception, fundamental attribution error, self serving biases, contrast effect error, projection error, primacy error and Regency effect error is necessary.

(7) Carefully learning how to use impression management strategies such as;

(a) First Impression

(b) Association with right people

(c) Apologizing for a negative event while seeking a pardon.

(d) Agreeing with right opinion of others

(e) Downplaying the severity of a negative event and doing favours to others,

Should be used by managers of Business organizations in order to enhance their images in the organizations.

(8) Adequate counseling by Executive Management to the employees/subordinates on to how to enhance smooth cordial working relationships within organizations and to facilitate relationships with the pertinent stakeholders within and outside the organizations should be encouraged.

Executive management of organizations should ensure that there are consistent adoption of rules and regulations that facilitates top down communication as much as possible to all employees without discrimination to all departments of the organization at all times.

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**Perception Management: A Strategy for Effective Decision Making and Productive Managerial Performance in Business Organizations: A Survey of Selected Manufacturing Firms in Nigeria**

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**Appendix  
Questionnaires**

Here is a questionnaire on perception management: A Strategy for effective Decision making and Productive Managerial Performance in Business Organizations. A survey of Selected Manufacturing firms.

You have been chosen as one of the respondents in this study. You are therefore humbly requested to supply honest and sincere answers and responses to questions by tick (as appropriately as you can in the boxes/spaces provided).

S/No	Statement	SA	A	U	SD	D
1	There are troublesome errors, biases and distortions in perception responsible for poor quality decision making and judgment in organizations (i.e., stereotyping, Halo Error, Self serving biases, primacy errors, attribution errors, selective perception amongst others.					
2	The main sources of errors in persons perceptions may include not collecting enough information, basing our judgment on irrelevant information, seeing what we expect to see and what we want to see and not investigating further amongst others.					
3	There exist several factors influencing perception of reality such as attitude, motives, interest, past experience, expectations, background, motion, sound amongst others.					
4	Strategies for managing perception ranges from managing impression, distortion management, diversity management, empathizing with others and comparing our perception with others amongst others.					