

The Role of Strategic Decision-Making, Organisational Culture, and Managerial Emotional Intelligence on the Long-Term Profitability of Nigerian Manufacturing Firms

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Abstract. The paper will examine how strategic decision-making (SDM), organisational culture (OC), and managerial emotional intelligence (MEI) affect the long-term profitability of Nigerian manufacturing companies. Although the manufacturing sector in Nigeria plays a minor role in the GDP, there is little empirical research on integrating these three constructs into a single explanatory model. The study employed a post-positivist, explanatory mixed-methods design and collected primary data from 300 managers of listed manufacturing companies in Nigeria via a standardised survey. Mediation analysis and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression were used. MEI has a significant positive impact on long-term profitability (ROA, ROE, Net Profit Margin). SDM and OC mediate this relationship, and together they increase profitability. SDM exerts the strongest direct influence on profitability, while OC acts as a contextual mechanism that strengthens this effect. The paper will advance an integrated theoretical framework for a manufacturing context in emerging economies, contributing to the literature on sustainable leadership and strategic management by empirically illustrating the interdependencies among MEI, SDM, and OC.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Strategic Decision-Making; Organisational Culture; Long-term profitability; Nigerian manufacturing; Goleman Model.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian manufacturing industry is in a paradoxical situation in Africa's largest economy. Although Nigeria is endowed with vast demographics and resources, a population of more than 230 million people, vast natural resources, and one of the largest domestic markets, the role of the manufacturing sector in GDP has continued to fluctuate below 10 % over the last ten years, at 9.62 % in Q1-2025 [1]. This institutional flaw has been compounded by a GDP per capita ranking of 146 out of 191 countries and a Human Development Index of 0.548, placing Nigeria 161st in the world [2]. These macroeconomic facts point to systemic managerial and structural failures that extend beyond policy failures into organisational decision-making, leadership behaviour, and organisational culture.

The scholarly and pragmatic aspects of this dilemma converge around one focal question: which internal organisational determinants have

the greatest impact on the long-term ability of Nigerian manufacturing companies to maintain and increase profitability? Although previous studies have investigated such individual constructs as strategic decision-making and performance of a firm [3, 4], organisational culture and profitability [5], and emotional intelligence and leadership performance [6, 7], the simultaneous analysis of these three variables in a complex framework focused on Nigerian manufacturing is an empirical gap of significance.

The author's [8] conceptual framework of managerial Emotional Intelligence (MEI) comprises five fundamental competencies: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Researchers have demonstrated that these competencies primarily influence how managers process information, manage uncertainty, build interpersonal trust, and maintain organisational direction in unstable conditions [9, 10]. Predominantly, when inculcated in a conducive organisa-

tional culture and aligned with stringent strategic decision-making procedures, MEI generates compounding effects on financial performance indicators, including Return on Assets (ROA), Return on Equity (ROE), Net Profit Margin (NPM), and Earnings Per Share (EPS). The human capital aspect of managerial competence is an extremely important factor in achieving sustainable competitive advantage in Nigeria, given the environment of high operational turbulence, weak infrastructure, exchange-rate instability, and intense competition from imports [3, 11].

It is against this background that this study will conduct research to determine the direct relationship between MEI and long-term profitability, and whether strategic decision-making and organisational culture act as mediators in this relationship in the Nigerian manufacturing environment. The inquiry is guided by three research objectives, which are:

- a) The acceptability and immediate effect of MEI on long-term profitability in Nigerian manufacturing companies;
- b) Mediation between MEI and profitability by SDM and OC; and
- c) Integrated strategic recommendations to practitioners and policymakers.

This study extends Goleman's EI model to explain the long-term financial success of a manufacturing industry in an emerging economy, and it demonstrates practical human capital leverage points that organisations can implement to increase profitability.

Literature Review

1) *Emotional intelligence of managers and organisational performance.* The formalisation of emotional intelligence (EI) was achieved through the author's [8] framework, which identified self-awareness, self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, empathy, and social skills as the defining abilities of effective leadership. Though early studies of EI were mainly oriented toward psychology, later work has shifted toward management and organisational research, exploring the role of EI in leaders' influence on team cohesion, strategy quality, and eventual financial performance.

Authors [5] found a direct, significant relationship between top-level managers' emotional intelligence and the quality of their strategic deci-

sions in a quantitative cross-sectional study. The research found that this association is partially moderated by open innovation, suggesting that emotionally intelligent managers can foster a culture of innovation and knowledge exchange, thereby improving decision quality. Similarly, the researchers of authors [6] found that one downstream impact of managerial intelligence leadership and small business performance is a robust positive correlation with employee job satisfaction, making MEI a key driver of performance chains consistent with Goleman's original theoretical architecture.

Authors [9] provided a more refined approach. They showed that, though EI is not an adequate predictor of organisational performance by itself, regulation and comprehension of emotions enhance the achievement of occupational goals and organisational efficacy. Authors [12] determined that emotional intelligence is a substantial factor in talent recruitment and retention in manufacturing organisations in the Nigerian context, where the latter is relevant, and have further found that the higher the EI, the better the team direction and overall retention of operations. Authors [10] also affirmed that leader EI, transformational, and transactional leadership have positive interactions with individual job performance, and the credibility of a supervisor is an important mediating factor in manufacturing settings where a supervisor-relationship is paramount to continuity in operations. Similar results were reported by [13], who showed that leaders' emotional intelligence enhances the association between transformational leadership and employee engagement, which, in turn, is a strong, productive driver (and, consequently, profitability).

2) *Strategy and Decision-Making and Firm Profitability.* Strategic decision-making (SDM) is an organised process by which top management develops, assesses, and commits to action plans that guide the firm toward a competitive direction in the long run. Based on the authors' [14] founding characterisation of strategic decisions as ill-structured, high-stakes, and non-routine, the modern SDM literature has expanded to include rational, incremental, and adaptive decision models applicable in volatile environments [3]. According to Noorderhaven [3], the four critical properties of strategic decisions are complexity, uncertainty, rationality, and control, all of which result from dynamic interactions

among themselves and the emotional and cognitive resources available to decision-makers.

Empirically, authors [4] postulated that strategic foresight and systems thinking are important variables that enhance the performance of manufacturing companies in north-east Nigeria. Authors [15] established that strategy agility, an agile element of SDM, is positively associated with organisational performance in south-south Nigerian manufacturing companies. In a larger emerging-market environment, authors [16] found that the completeness of the decision-making process leads to better production outcomes and increased sales. Authors [3] established, in an OLS regression analysis of 153 respondents working in manufacturing companies in Anambra State that SDM produces a significant positive impact on efficient production processes (Beta = 0.70, R2 = 0.808) and sustained capacity utilisation (Beta = 0.34, R2 = 0.703) which has provided an empirical basis on which this study expands by using MEI and OC as complementary constructs.

Author [16] developed the Satisficing Theory, a behavioural economics building block for explaining SDM within the context of limited rationality. Instead of optimising decisions, complex environment managers engage in satisfying choices that are satisficing solutions that are acceptable and contextually acceptable. This theoretical lens is particularly suitable for turbulent manufacturing settings typical of Nigeria, where limited information, time constraints, and competing resource priorities constrain decision-makers [3]. As MEI capabilities enable managers to cope with emotional biases, control decision-making under stress, and make empathetic decisions that integrate the views of different stakeholders, the quality of these satisficing decisions significantly improves, with direct impacts on profitability.

3) Organisational Culture and Profitability in the long run. Organisational culture (OC) is a set of commonly held values, norms, beliefs, and behavioural patterns that characterise interactions among members of an organisation and its environment. In the strategic management tradition, OC is increasingly accepted less as a variable in situational background and more as a lever of performance that creates competitive advantage [18]. In Nigeria, in the food, beverages, and tobacco manufacturing sub-sector, authors [5] showed that corporate culture was statistically

significant for profitability and suggested systematic cultural education and value-inculcating programmes to sustain the performance increase. This observation is echoed by the report [11], which declares the Food, Beverage, and Tobacco subsector as the most common participant in the Nigerian manufacturing sector, highlighting the relevance of OC interventions at the sector level.

In a broader analytical perspective, the research by authors [19] on OC and quality management in the context of Nigerian SMEs has shown that adhocracy and clan culture structures can amplify the benefits of innovation for competitiveness. In contrast, the culture of excessive hierarchy dilutes the effectiveness of knowledge sharing and, consequently, the profitability. The human capital processes mediate the relationship between OC and financial performance even further: authors [20] demonstrated that leadership behaviour impacts firms' financial performance by influencing employees' willingness to become objects of the cultural transformation. Authors [21] also found that team members' emotional intelligence is most effective in fostering team cohesion, supporting the argument that EI-driven cultures yield quantifiable performance benefits.

Of special relevance to this research is evidence on the performance pathways that moderate and mediate the effects of OC. According to authors [18], the relationships among OC, psychological capital, and employee satisfaction have both direct and indirect effects on performance outcomes. Authors [22] also corroborated that organisational culture-congruent budget contributions and emotional intelligence positively influence work motivation and operational performance, thereby directly validating the theoretical point of the current study: OC is the mediator between MEI and profitability.

4) Theoretical Framework. The current paper is based on three complementary theoretical perspectives. First, the Emotional Intelligence Model (1998) by Goleman provides the structural framework for operationalising MEI across the five dimensions of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Second, SDM is placed in the context of the Bounded Rationality Theory authors [17], which rationalises the relative limitations of managerial information processing to explain managers' superior qualitative decision-making outcomes, enhanced by the use of MEI in situations of un-

certainty and incomplete information. Third, the Resource-Based View [23] views MEI as a unique OC. This non-replicable, socially complex strategic resource produces a long-term competitive edge and long-term profitability. Combined, these frameworks imply that MEI is a human capital resource that, when implemented with an efficient SDM and integrated into an effective OC, can sustain excellent financial performance. Section 4 of Table 1 summarises the relevant literature reviewed.

5) *Conceptual Framework*. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework applied in this study. Drawing on the Goleman EI Model, Bounded Rationality Theory, and the Resource-Based View, the framework positions Managerial Emotional Intelligence (MEI) as the independent variable. It identifies Strategic Decision-Making (SDM) and Organisational Culture (OC) as mediating variables through which EI influences profitability. The framework defines Long-Term Profitability as the dependent variable. It operationalises it using Return on Assets (ROA), Return on Equity (ROE), Net Profit Margin (NPM), and Earnings Per Share (EPS).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK		
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE Managerial Emotional Intelligence (MEI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Awareness • Self-Regulation • Motivation • Empathy • Social Skills 	MEDIATING VARIABLES Strategic Decision-Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision & Objectives • Decision Analysis • Risk Management Organisational Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Values • Norms & Beliefs • Leadership Style 	DEPENDENT VARIABLE Long-Term Profitability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return on Assets (ROA) • Return on Equity (ROE) • Net Profit Margin • Earnings Per Share

Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework Managerial EI, SDM, Organisational Culture, and Long-Term Profitability [8, 17, 23]

The framework advances four hypotheses, namely: (H1) MEI has a direct and positive impact on long-term profitability; (H2) SDM mediates the relationship between MEI and long-term profitability positively; (H3) OC mediates the relationship between MEI and long-term profitability positively; and (H4) the joint mediation of SDM and OC is larger than the mediation effects they have separately. The conceptual argument underpinning this framework is that EI is the gen-

erative human capital resource, SDM is the strategic conduit that transforms the EI-generated insights into actionable resource commitments, and OC is the institutional environment that maintains and enhances these strategic actions in the long term.

METHODS

1) *Research Design and Philosophy*. The research design is a post-positivist philosophical paradigm, based on an explanatory and correlational research design. Post-positivism recognises that objective knowledge may be approximated but never achieved, and adopts a deductive theory-methodology with a moderating element of critical empiricism [24]. It uses a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative survey results with qualitative evidence from structured interviews with top managers in the manufacturing sector. This pluralistic methodology enhances construct validity and provides greater contextual insight into quantitative results [25]. The deductive approach tests the four hypotheses developed in the conceptual framework using primary data from Nigerian manufacturing firms.

2) *Population, Sampling and Respondent Profile*. The target population will include senior and middle managers of the listed manufacturing companies on the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX), including the Food and Beverages, Consumer Goods, Industrial Goods, and Chemicals sub-sectors. Purposive sampling was also used to select respondents with direct strategic decision-making roles and sufficient tenure in organisations (three years minimum) to provide reliable estimates of the cultural and profitability dynamics. The targeted population was 300 respondents, which is sufficiently large to be analysed using structural mediation, as authors [26] suggest that sample size equations for PLS-SEM with several mediating paths require a sample of 300 or more. Table 1 summarises the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 1 – Respondent Demographic Profile

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	68.0
	Female	32.0
Age Range	25–35 years	22.3
	36–45 years	41.7
	46–55 years	28.0
	56 years and	8.0

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
	above	
Educational Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	34.7
	Postgraduate Degree	48.3
	Professional Certification	17.0
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	9.7
	5–10 years	28.3
	11–20 years	43.0
	Above 20 years	19.0

3) *Research Instrument and Measures.* A 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree) was used to collect data. The scale on MEI was a 20-item, adapted version of the Goleman EI framework, which has already been tested and validated in the organisational context by authors [5]. SDM was measured using 16 items covering vision and objectives, decision analysis, risk management, and resource optimisation (based on the proposal framework by [27]). The researchers assessed OC using 18 questions on shared values, norms, beliefs, and leadership orientation, as specified in [5]. Operationalisation: Long-term profitability was calculated from self-reported managerial evaluations of ROA and ROE trends, Net Profit Margin, and EPS growth within a five-year reference window (2019-2024), in line with authors [28]. Content validity was established through expert review by three academic scholars and two industry practitioners. Table 2 shows the reliability statistics.

Table 2 – Reliability Statistics

Construct	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Managerial Emotional Intelligence	20	0.891	Excellent
Strategic Decision-Making	16	0.874	Good
Organisational Culture	18	0.862	Good
Long-Term Profitability	12	0.853	Good
Overall Instrument	66	0.881	Excellent

Notes: Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70 is considered acceptable [26].

4) *Data Analysis Procedures.* SPSS version 26 was used to analyse quantitative data in descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and OLS regression modelling. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used in AMOS 26 to test mediation pathways, following the authors' four-step procedure [29] and bootstrapped indirect-effect estimation [30] with 5,000 iterations. The 4 regression models were defined as follows: (Model 1) MEI regressed on Long-Term Profitability; (Model 2) MEI regressed on SDM; (Model 3) MEI regressed on OC; and (Model 4) SDM and OC together regressed on Long-Term Profitability, controlling for MEI.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the study's key variables.

Table 3 – Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Managerial EI (MEI)	300	3.98	0.61	1.80	5.00
Strategic Decision-Making (SDM)	300	3.82	0.67	1.63	5.00
Organisational Culture (OC)	300	3.75	0.72	1.44	5.00
Long-Term Profitability (LTP)	300	3.44	0.81	1.33	5.00

The average MEI (M = 3.98, SD = 0.61) indicates that respondents assess their firms' managerial emotional intelligence at an average-to-high level, suggesting increasing EI awareness among Nigerian manufacturing executives. SDM (M = 3.82, SD = 0.67) and OC (M = 3.75, SD = 0.72) are associated with similarly moderately positive evaluations. In contrast, Long-Term Profitability (M = 3.44, SD = 0.81) demonstrates higher variability, which can be attributed to the heterogeneity of the financial performance of the surveyed firms in line with the overall macroeconomic variability that has been in place in the manufacturing environment in Nigeria in the period of the survey [1].

Correlation Analysis. The Pearson correlation matrix is shown in Table 4. MEI shows a high positive correlation with SDM (r = 0.682, p < 0.01), OC (r = 0.651, p < 0.01), and Long-Term Profitability (r = 0.604, p < 0.01). SDM and OC have a positive relationship with each other

(SDM: $r = 0.589$, $p < 0.01$, OC: $r = 0.638$, $p < 0.01$) and with Long-Term Profitability (SDM: $r = 0.671$, OC: $r = 0.638$, both $p < 0.01$).

Table 4 – Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	MEI	SDM	OC	LTP
MEI	1.000	—	—	—
SDM	0.682**	1.000	—	—
OC	0.651**	0.589**	1.000	—
LTP	0.604**	0.671**	0.638**	1.000

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed). MEI = Managerial Emotional Intelligence; SDM = Strategic Decision-Making; OC = Organisational Culture; LTP = Long-Term Profitability.

All correlations are less than 0.85, indicating no multicollinearity. These bivariate associations provide preliminary evidence for all four study hypotheses and allow the continuation of regression and mediation analyses.

Hypothesis Testing

1) H1: Direct Effect of MEI on Long-Term Profitability. Regression Model 1 is used to test the direct relationship between MEI and Long-Term Profitability. Table 5 results indicate a positive, significant coefficient (Beta = 0.601, $t = 9.47$, $p < 0.001$), and the model explains 36.5 %of the variance in profitability ($R^2 = 0.365$).

Table 5: Regression Results – MEI on Long-Term Profitability (H1)

Variable	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	t-Statistic	p-value
Constant	0.812	0.194	4.18	0.000
Managerial EI (MEI)	0.601	0.063	9.47	0.000
$R^2 = 0.365$	Adj. $R^2 = 0.363$	$F = 89.68$	$p(F) = 0.000$	$N = 300$

H1 can thus be affirmed: MEI has a positive and direct effect on the long-term profitability of manufacturing companies in Nigeria. This observation aligns with the authors' report [5], which found that emotionally intelligent top managers make higher-quality strategic decisions and achieve better financial performance. With authors [20], who have noted that leadership, largely influenced by EI, is essential in driving the firm's financial performance through employees' willingness to change. The outcome also builds

on the prior study by the authors [3], which used data from Anambra State manufacturing companies and found that the quality of managers' decisions is substantially predicated on operational performance, and that the emotional competencies behind such decisions are also quantitatively related to long-term financial results.

2) H2 and H3: Mediation by SDM and Organisational Culture. The researchers evaluated mediation using the four-step process developed by authors [29] and bootstrapped indirect-effect estimation proposed by authors [30], and they present the results of the mediation analysis in Table 6.

Table 6 – Mediation Analysis Results (Bootstrap, 5,000 Iterations)

Mediation Pathway	Indirect Effect	Std. Error	p-value	95% Bootstrap CI
MEI -> SDM -> LTP	0.248	0.031	< 0.001	[0.189, 0.313]
MEI -> OC -> LTP	0.197	0.030	< 0.001	[0.141, 0.258]
MEI -> SDM + OC -> LTP (Joint)	0.391	0.041	< 0.001	[0.312, 0.474]

Notes: The fact that none of the confidence intervals includes zero ensures significant mediation.

The regression of MEI on Long-Term Profitability using SDM (H2: SDM as a mediator) indicates that SDM has an indirect positive relationship with Long-Term Profitability, with a beta of 0.248 (95% CI [0.189, 0.313]), which is completely statistically significant, as the value is not equal to zero. The Beta of H3 (OC as mediator) is 0.197 (95% CI [0.141, 0.258]). Both H2 and H3 are accepted: SDM and OC have significant mediating effects on the MEI-profitability relationship. The result for H2 is consistent with that of authors [31], who concluded that members of financial teams need analytical capacities and emotional intelligence to make smarter financial decisions, and with authors [16], who demonstrated that well-informed decision-making processes lead to better production and profitability outcomes. The argument in favour of H3 is supported by authors [5, 18], who have already demonstrated that OC is an effective predictor of manufacturing profitability in Sub-Saharan African settings.

3) H4 Joint Mediation and Full Model Results. The joint mediation (MEI using SDM and OC simultaneously) has a Beta = 0.391 (95% CI [0.312, 0.474]), which is larger than the individual mediating effects of SDM (0.248) and OC (0.197). H4 is accepted: when both mediating pathways are activated simultaneously, the MEI-profitability relationship is stronger than when either mediator is used alone. The entire integrated regression model, including all predictor variables simultaneously, is presented in Table 7.

Table 7 – Full Integrated Model Predictors of Long-Term Profitability

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-Statistic	p-value
Constant	0.431	0.181	—	2.38	0.018
MEI	0.261	0.071	0.198	3.67	0.001
SDM	0.412	0.068	0.341	6.06	0.000
OC	0.324	0.064	0.289	5.06	0.000
R2 = 0.617; Adj. R2 = 0.613; F = 158.4; p(F) = 0.000; DW = 1.81; N = 300					

Notes: Dependent Variable: Long-Term Profitability (LTP).

The model has a high level of explanatory power, as R2 = 0.617 indicates that MEI, SDM, and OC explain 61.7% of the variance in Long-Term Profitability. SDM is the most direct predictor (Beta = 0.341, $p < 0.001$), followed by OC (Beta = 0.289, $p < 0.001$) and MEI (Beta = 0.198, $p < 0.01$), which supports the theoretical hypothesis that SDM and OC direct the channel through which EI potential flows to financial results.

The value of Durbin-Watson 1.81 proves that the residuals have no first-order serial autocorrelation. The significance of the overall model is validated by the f-statistic of 158.4 ($p=0.000$). All these findings confirm the integrated theoretical model and indicate that MEI, SDM, and OC are a performance-generating configuration for Nigerian manufacturing firms, in line with the Resource-Based View, which posits that strategically fit, socially complex human capital resources create sustained competitive advantage [23].

The empirical findings substantively support and advance the available scholarship. H1 is confirmed, as the MEI's direct impact on long-term profitability is consistent with the accumulated evidence that emotional competencies are material drivers of organisational financial performance [6, 7, 9]. Within the Nigerian manufacturing environment, where operational turbulence,

resource scarcity, exchange rate fluctuations, and strong competitive pressures are rife in the business environment [3, 11], managers who can manage their emotional reactions, effectively empathise with the various stakeholder communities, and be motivational with limited rationality are better placed to make better managerial decisions with downstream profitability implications.

The fact that H2 is supported also provides a significant theoretical complexity. The fact that SDM mediates the MEI-profitability association shows that emotional intelligence does not directly correlate with financial performance but rather influences it through the quality of strategic decisions management makes. Emotionally intelligent managers are less vulnerable to complex strategic choices, better at decision-making under pressure, and more likely to involve stakeholders in resource allocation [31, 32]. These decision qualities that are enabled by EI directly lead to profitability by efficiently enhancing capacity utilisation, less wastage of production and responsiveness on the market, which is comparable to the result of authors [3], who reported that SDM has a major impact in enhancing efficient production processes as well as sustained capacity utilisation in small manufacturing companies.

The OC (H3) mediation is also of theoretical importance. The current research is a continuation of the work by authors [5]: it proves that MEI significantly influences OC itself, thus managers who possess emotional intelligence can form and maintain cultural conditions that are associated with psychological safety, shared vision, adaptive norms, and trust, all of which are established antecedents of profitability. The joint mediating direction (H4) also supports the idea that firms that strive for congruence between emotionally intelligent leadership, disciplined strategic processes, and productive organisational cultures record the greatest long-term profitability returns, a finding earlier established within the resource-based view, which holds that strategic resource configurations produce sustained competitive advantage [23]. This outcome is especially impactful on Nigeria's manufacturing industry, where strategic management capabilities and a performance-focused culture have traditionally been in short supply, thereby limiting the sector's growth [1, 11].

CONCLUSIONS

The research has yielded empirical results showing that Managerial Emotional Intelligence is a major long-term profitability driver in manufacturing companies in Nigeria, operating directly or indirectly through the mediating links of Strategic Decision-Making and Organisational Culture. The integrated model explains 61.7% of the long-term profitability, making a strong contribution to strategic management and leadership studies in the emerging economy context. The study confirms all four hypotheses, supporting the idea that MEI, SDM, and OC constitute an interdependent configuration for generating performance rather than independent constructs.

The implications of this study are especially critical to the manufacturing business sector in Nigeria, which has a dire need to improve its contribution to the GDP, to attract foreign direct investment and to make globally competitive companies that will not only handle the local demand of the products made in Nigeria, but also that of the continent. The study indicates that the road to sustainable profitability does not necessarily run through capital investment or technology acquisition, which financial constraints limit in many Nigerian companies, but rather through managerial emotional intelligence as a human capital asset, which organisations can develop through targeted training and leadership development programmes at comparatively low cost.

Based on the findings of the empirical research, the study develops the following strategic recommendations:

To begin with, manufacturing corporations in Nigeria need to formally include EI evaluation in executive recruitment, succession planning, and performance management systems. Considering that MEI has both direct and indirect impacts on profitability, organisations that strategically identify and develop emotionally intelligent leaders are most likely to show higher long-term financial performance. The leadership development programmes should be modelled on the five EI dimensions proposed by Goleman, with special attention paid to self-regulation and empathy as sources of decision quality and cultural integration.

Second, boards and top management teams ought to invest in institutionalising structured

strategic decision-making. The results validate that SDM is the best direct predictor of long-term profitability in the model. Organisations that operate without the normalised strategic planning and decision-review procedures miss out on the opportunity for immense profitability. Embracing scenario planning, decision-making tools, and strategy reviews at the board level should be put on the agenda, especially given Nigeria's unstable macroeconomic environment.

Third, organisations must conduct regular cultural audits to prescribe and reinforce the acceptance of congruence between what they are and the cultural behaviours they perform. The most effective cultural transformations are led by emotionally intelligent executives who can exemplify the required cultural qualities, thereby building a virtuous circle in which MEI creates culture, culture enhances SDM quality, and SDM quality creates profitability.

Fourth, executive capacity-building programmes in the manufacturing sector should include an EI-based leadership development curriculum by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Exeed College, and other professional development organisations, based on the Goleman framework as a refined, contextually valid model for application in an emerging economy.

Limitations and Future Research. This study is subject to various limitations, which serve as indicators of future research directions. To begin with, the cross-sectional design does not allow causal inferences; longitudinal studies of profitability changes following deliberate EI-focused interventions would be more convincing of causality. Second, social desirability bias can arise when self-reported profitability proxies are used; future studies should use audited financial statement data from the NGX. Third, the study remains geographically and sectorally narrow. Still, future researchers can generalise the findings by conducting comparative research on other African manufacturing economies, such as Kenya, Ghana, and South Africa. Lastly, future researchers should empirically test the hypothesis that individual EI dimensions selectively mediate SDM relative to OC pathways through dimension-level structural analyses, thereby providing more specific intervention guidance to practitioners.

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