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EFFECT OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS, KENYA

Wilson Kiprotich Chepkech
Phd student, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya
tichrowi@gmail.com

Doreen Chebet Cheluget
Phd student, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

Abstract
The main purpose of this paper was to determine effect of Total Quality Management practices on organizational performance in Kenya. It adopted explanatory research design. The target population comprised head of departments and tutors in the tertiary institutions within Uasin Gishu County whose total population was 421. The sample size of 264 respondents was drawn using stratified random sampling. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to conduct data analysis using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistics such as correlation analysis and multiple regressions to test hypothesis. The study findings of correlation analysis showed that employee involvement and customer focus were positively and significantly affect organizational performance. The findings of the multiple regressions analysis showed that the observed changes in organizational performance attributed to the elements of total quality management practice is 56.9% (r2=.569). This finding of this research supports the hypothesis that total quality management practices significantly affect organizational performance thus any tertiary institution managers aiming to achieve organizational performance should pay close attention to all the elements of total quality management. The study recommends that future studies test the effects of the other elements of total quality management practices on organizational performance that were not part of the current study.

Keywords: Organizational Performance, Total Quality Management, Employee Involvement, Customer Focus

INTRODUCTION

Globally, higher education (HE) environments are frequently described as turbulent and dynamic. Both global and national forces are driving change within and across individual countries and their higher education institutions (HEIs). These changes have served to put the issue of Total Quality Management firmly on the agendas of national governments, institutions, academic departments and individual programme of study (Becket & Brookes, 2006). Despite the progress that has been made through research and debate, there is still no universal consensus on how best to manage quality within HEIs. One of the key reasons for this is the recognition that quality is a complex and multi-faceted construct, particularly in HE environments (Harvey & Knight, 1996; Cheng & Tam, 1997). As a result, the measurement and management of quality has created a number of challenges. This, in turn, has led to the adoption of a variety of quality management practices within different countries and their HEIs, many of which draw upon existing industry models.

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a management philosophy and company practice that aims to harness the human and material resources of an organization in the most effective way to achieve the objectives of the organization (Chin, 2004). Total Quality Management (TQM) implies an organization's obsession with meeting or exceeding customer expectations. It is an approach for continuously improving the quality of goods and services delivered through the participation of individuals at all levels and functions of an organization (Pfau, 1989). Many TIVET institutions in Kenya are embracing TQM practices and have gone further to attain ISO 9001:2008 certification. The objectives of these efforts are to ensure timely delivery of services, customer satisfaction and improved general performance. Whether the TQM practices adopted by these institutions are related to non financial performance of such institutions remains unclear (Standa, 2008).

Higher education plays an important role in the production and distribution of national income. The knowledge produced and skills imparted by the sector contribute to faster growth in national income, an expansion of the system contributes to more equal sharing of the national income. With expansion of the knowledge economy, the knowledge produced by the system and the skills possessed by its graduates are becoming deciding factors in promoting economic progress and social welfare. Improving organizational performance of higher education is thus imperative to national growth and development. The quality of performance of HEIs can be improved by implementing quality management models such as Total Quality Management (Varghese, 2013).

Many global, regional and local studies have underscored the role of TQM practices in enhancing customer satisfaction in an organization (Crosby, 2000; Oakland, 2003; Denning,

2006; and Feigenbaum, 2006). These studies have, however, concentrated on the impact of TQM practices on performance of profit making organizations but not academic institutions. Past studies have also focused on Universities as HEIs but little has been done on tertiary non-University institutions that offer Diploma and Certificate levels of training (Obara *et al.*, 2010). This confirms that there is very limited literature on effect of TQM practices on tertiary non University institutions in Kenya.

The study therefore, seeks to determine the effect of TQM practices on organizational performance in Kenya using tertiary institutions within Uasin Gishu County as case study. The study therefore hypothesized that:

$H_{01:}$ *There is no significant relationship between customer focus (CF) and organizational performance*

$H_{02:}$ *There is no significant relationship between employee involvement (EI) and organizational performance*

THEORETICAL REVIEW

This paper used structural contingency theory proposed by Donaldson (1996). The key element of structural contingency theory is that organizations must fit their structure to the contingency factors in order to maintain and improve performance. Structural contingency theory holds that there is no single, effective structure for all organizations. Instead, organizations must adapt their structures to fit the contingency factors and the environment as they affect the organization.

Contingency factors include: strategy, size, task, uncertainty, parent organization, public accountability, critical assets and technology. In postulating the relevance of the theory to improving organizational performance, Donaldson (2006) uses the 5-stage structural adaptation to regain fit (SARFIT) model. First, organization is in fit as it has acclimatized to its environment. In the second stage there is in contingency change where the organizational environment changes. Consequently in the third stage, the organization is in misfit and performance suffers. The fourth stage is where the organization does structural adaptation to correct the state of misfit and to reinstate its level of performance. In the final stage, the organization achieves a new fit and performance recovers. Strategic choice also plays a role in Kenyan tertiary institutions in that they bow to the imperative of adopting a new structure that fits its new level of the contingency factor in order to avoid loss of performance from misfit". It is thus the onus of this study to examine the relationships between total quality management and organizational performance of tertiary institutions in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effect of Employee involvement on organizational performance

Employees do not decide on how they are to be managed, but when implementing change to management styles one cannot expect that all employees was pick it up and accept it because management sees the need to make the change. It is imperative that management keep employees in the picture at all times when decisions are being made regarding TQM, which should encourage participation and help ease transition. When the identification of the tools for a system to be used is complete it should be ensured that the right training is given to the right people. This is to emphasize the benefits of why their using them and how they are using them. Training given to the right people has been proven to minimize the misuse of the tools and techniques (Otunga, 2007).

On-going education and training of all employees supports the drive for quality. Employees are encouraged to take more responsibility, communicate more effectively, act creatively, and innovate. As people behave the way they are measured and remunerated, TQM links remuneration to customer satisfaction metrics. Employee involvement is a matter of courtesy asking people's opinion before making decisions that affect them. Employee involvement is a very simple process. If a decision is made affecting the employees, it is always better to consult them as they may have some intelligent ideas to offer and this was help in building up the relations and creating a conducive environment for better results. In the study, employees who indicated that their organizations were one of the best performers reported double the level of engagement compared to employees who reported average organizational performance. Fifty-three percent of those who saw their organizations as top performers were highly engaged while only 8 percent of those who reported their organizations as under-performing were engaged (IUCEA , 2010).

It is important that the organization find ways to clearly communicate successes that demonstrate how the organization is performing, and especially to find ways to socialize stories of superior performance. Clear, well-planned, high-impact messages can help employees not only see the connection between their work and these successes, but also understand how they support overall organizational performance, which ties directly to engagement levels. Clearly, engaged employees understand the value of ensuring a positive customer experience and are more likely to demonstrate their commitment by delivering high quality products and services. Customer and employee-driven experiences that highlight great customer satisfaction and loyalty need to be effectively shared throughout the company. Like the connection to organizational performance, the connection to positive customer experiences is vital to healthy engagement levels (Magutu *et al.,* 2010).

In discussing about employee performance improvement through involvement versus fear and insecurity in Kenyan organizations Mutisya (2010) highlights those participatory measures such as team-working and high-involvement work practices demonstrate improvements in performance, but can also have less positive outcomes for employee and social well-being. Performance changes may occur because participation leads to changed attitudes which lead to higher performance. Alternately, changes to behavior and performance may be achieved not through attitude changes but through fear and an insecure or intensified work environment. One explanation for these contradictory results is that participation schemes are sometimes introduced as part of restructuring packages. When employees are faced with an insecure environment, participation may induce compliance and not the attitude changes necessary for employees' commitment to the enterprise. If this is so, behavioral changes may not be of the order anticipated.

The degree of influence accorded to employees is also important. Low levels of participation with little employee autonomy have been identified as a reason for disappointing results. Where employees' expectations have been raised by introducing participation, but there is little real improvement in employee influence, workers may express resentment and dissatisfaction. Where participation is only from the top down, workers may feel that they are being lectured and not listened to. Even where participation is from the bottom up, workers may feel that management is using their ideas, with no return seen by employees (Mutisya, 2010).

Effect of Customer Focus on Organizational Performance

A strong link between the delivery of high quality goods and services and profitability through customer satisfaction was found by Nganga (2010). The study defined Customer satisfaction as the degree to which a firm’s customers continually perceives that their needs are being met by the firm’s products and services. Soltani (2005) espouses that an organization must identify customer relationship to measure customer needs and expectations; involve customers in quality improvement and determine customer satisfaction. The availability of customer complaint information to managers and the degree of the use of customer feedback to improve product quality reveal the level of customer focus in an organization. As customer expectations are dynamic, an organization needs to survey customer expectations regularly and modify its operations accordingly.

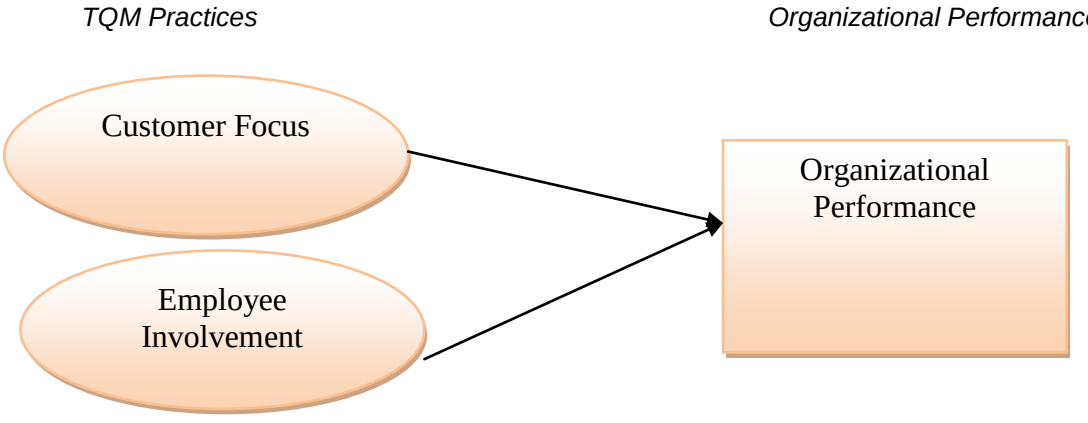
An extensively covered element within the TQM literature is customer focus and (in association herewith) customer satisfaction. Given the increasing focus on the creation of competitive advantages it is argued, that quality ought to be defined from an external perspective of customer expectations, rather than from predetermined internal specifications

(Murata, 2006). Throughout the empirical literature, there is a general agreement that quality does not solely rely on the organization's ability to produce products with correct technical specifications. In order to stay competitive, the organization must be able to respond and adapt to changing customer preferences and needs Brah*et al*., (2001). It is thus important that every employee in the organization is involved and committed towards establishing and sustaining a high level of customer satisfaction. The supportance of having a high degree of customer focus in SMEs is likewise addressed in the study conducted by Ahire and Golhar (1996), who furthermore argue that the focus on customers may be stronger in SMEs due to their proximity to and close relationship with the customers.

It is a necessity that both current as well as future needs of the customers are understood and met, when creating and sustaining a customer oriented organization. This implies that the organization actively must establish a variety of mechanisms, enabling efficient ways of letting customers contact the organization with product inquiries and related questions, as well as establishing channels from which the organization can obtain knowledge about customer preferences. In order to gain full advantage of this knowledge, it is important that incoming information and changes in customer preferences are analyzed and understood (Nganga, 2010).

Figure 1 conceptualizes the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. The independent variable is conceptualized as TQM practices and was measured by constructs such as top management commitment, customer focus and employee involvement. The dependent variable on the other hand was operationalized as organizational performance which constructs are employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, quality training and academic excellence. The adoption of TQM practices by tertiary institutions may affect organizational performance of the institutions.

Figure 1. Relationship between TQM practices and Organization Performance



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an explanatory research design. An explanatory research design is an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. The ultimate goal is to learn about a large population by surveying a sample of that population that was used to explain what is in existence in respect to conditions or variables that are found in a given situation without influencing the variables. The study was to establish the correlation and causal relationship between total quality management practices and performance of an organization.

The population of the study comprised of tutors and head of departments of Eldoret Polytechnic and Rift Valley Technical Training Institute, which are the only tertiary institutions that are ISO 9001:2008 certified and operates under the Ministry of Education in Uasin Gishu County. The target population was 421 (216 from Eldoret Polytechnic and 205 from Rift Valley Technical Training Institute.

Table 1. Target Population

Tertiary institution	Position	Population
Eldoret Polytechnic	Tutors	206
	Heads of department	10
Subtotal		216
R.V.T.T.I.	Tutors	197
	Heads of department	8
Subtotal		205
Total		421

Source: Eldoret Polytechnic and R.V.T.T.I Academic Offices (2014)

The sample size comprised of 264 tutors and heads of department of which 134 were selected from Eldoret Polytechnic and 130 from R.V.T.T.I as recommended by Fisher *et al.,* (2000). The census method was used to select ISO 9001: 2008 tertiary institutions in Uasin Gishu County that was participate in the study.

Staff members were stratified as heads of departments and tutors. All heads of departments (10 for Eldoret polytechnic and 8 for R.V.T.T.I.) participated in the study. After stratification of the population, simple random sampling was used to draw staff samples for tutors from the subgroups using a table of random numbers. The sample size calculation formula by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) was used in this study.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected using a questionnaire in a form of a Likert scale ranging from 1 - Strongly Agree, 2 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Disagree and 5 - Strongly Disagree. The questionnaires were self-administered to tutors and head of departments in the institutions under study. Primary and secondary data collected were used in this study. Primary data was collected through the questionnaires while secondary data was collected from text, journals and magazines. To established reliability of the instruments, the researcher carried out a pilot study in Kenya Medical Training College, Eldoret branch.

Reliability of data was checked by applying Cronbach's Alpha which measures internal consistency or average correlation of items in a survey instrument to gauge its reliability. The Cronbach Alpha formula was used since reduces the time required to compute a reliability coefficient in other methods. Its coefficient is also a conservative estimate of reliability hence avoids overestimation (Kerlinger, 1993). The Cronbach Alpha coefficient obtained was 0.817 which indicate that the instruments were reliable.

Measurement of Variables and Data Analysis Procedures

Total Quality Management practices were measured using scalar developed by Tarus (2012). A measurement method for organization performance developed by the researcher and internal consistency reliability should be above 0.6 (Heire *et al,*2006). Multiple regression analysis was then applied to test association of variables with each other and the extent of variance in the dependent variable as a result of unit change in the independent variable as indicated by the coefficient of determination factor (R^2).

This study was to establish the correlation and causal relationship between TQM practices and organization performance. To achieve this, multiple regression models was used to assess the contributions of independent variables in predicting organizational performance of tertiary institutions.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Profile

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were as follows; 166 (63%) of respondents were males and 98 (37%) of respondents were females. On the length of service, 24 (9%) of respondents had served for less than six months. The data showed that majority of respondents had served between 2 and 4 years which is considerably long period enough to provide significant information concerning institutional operations and management.

Employee Involvement

From table 2, it can be observed that majority agreed that employees participated in overall decision making (autonomy) in their respective institutions (M=3.9, SD=0.93). The same observation can be made for the statement that employees are provided with adequate training and education to perform their tasks (M=3.8, SD=0.87). On presence of clear communication channel between employee and senior managers agreed (M=3.9, SD=0.86). Larger proportion of respondents agreed that managers listened to employee's opinions, (M=3.9, SD=0.78). Inquiry into whether top management encouraged team work among employees agreed (M=3.5, SD=0.75). The Likert scale was rated 1 to 5, hence the mean was 2.5, from the results, all the means were above 2.5, hence it indicate that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements presented to them, as indicated in table 2.

Table 2 Response on Employee involvement in the institution

Statements	Mean	SD	Skewness
Employees are given chance to participate in decision making	3.9	.93	-.837
Employees are provided with enough training and education to adequately perform their tasks	3.8	.87	-1.152
There is a clear communication channel between employee and senior managers	3.9	.86	-.815
Employee's opinions are listened to by senior managers	3.9	.78	-.333
Employees are encouraged to work in teams by senior managers	3.5	.75	-.188

Customer Focus

The analysis of employee perspectives concerning customer focus was also carried out. Majority of the respondents agreed that employees are trained on customer focus practices (M=3.5, SD=0.75). On whether attention to customer needs is key to organizational success respondent agreed (M=3.9, SD=0.72). Findings indicated that organization always meets customers need and expectations (M=3.9, SD=0.84), give priority to Customer complaints (M=3.9, SD=0.830 and performs market research to find out customer needs. The results indicated that customers have clear channels of communication with the organization (M=3.6, SD=0.81) and customer succeeds the organization succeeds (M=3.9, SD=0.82). Organization employees in the study derive satisfaction from fulfilling customer expectation (M=3.9, SD=0.79). The Likert scale was rated 1 to 5, hence the mean was 2.5, from the results, all the means were above 2.5, hence the results indicate that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements presented to them, as shown in table 3

Table 3. Response on Customer focus

Statements	Mean	SD	Skewness
Employees are trained on customer focus practices	3.5	.75	-.966
Attention to customer needs is key to organizational success	3.9	.72	-.403
The organization always meets customers need and expectations	3.9	.84	-.414
Customer complaints are given priority by the organization	3.9	.83	-.317
The organization performs market research to find out customer needs	3.8	.98	-.592
Customers have clear channels of communication with the organization	3.6	.81	-.634
When the customer succeeds the organization succeeds	3.9	.82	-.468
Employees derive satisfaction from fulfilling customer expectation	3.9	.79	-.687

The level of Organizational Performance

The dependent variable for this study was organizational performance. The respondents were presented with statements on; customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction quality training and academic excellence as a measure of organizational performance. Majority of the respondents agreed to the four aspects under consideration; customer satisfaction, employee's satisfaction and academic excellence. The results indicate that the organizations are fairly well as indicated in table 4.

Table 4. Level of organizational performance

Statements	M	SD	Skewness
Customer satisfaction	4.2	.60	-.223
Employee satisfaction	3.9	.82	-.884
Quality training	4.1	.92	-1.157
Academic excellence	4.1	.78	-.85

Correlation Analysis

This study sought to investigate the relationship between total quality management practices and organizational performance using Pearson Correlation. Correlation results indicated that the three practices under consideration were statistically significant; employee involvement had the highest positive correlation of 0.715, p=0.01, followed by customer focus, 0.575, p=0.01as indicated in table 5.

Table 5. Summary of Correlation Analysis

	Organizational Performance	Employee Involvement	Customer Focus
Organizational performance	1		
Employee involvement	.715**	1	
Customers focus	.575**	.617**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression results on effects of Total Quality management practices on Organizational performance

This study further carried out regression analysis to determine the extent in which the Total Quality Management practices, employee involvement and customer focus affects organizational performance. From the model, (R^2 = .569) shows that all the predictors account for 56.9 % variation of organizational performance. The value of adjusted R^2 was .564, showing that the prediction of Total Quality Management practices on organizational performance account for approximately 56.4 % less variance. The F- ratio was 114.528 and was significant (P<.05). The model significantly improved the ability to predict the effects of Total Quality Management practices on organizational performance. The model was modified to reflect the variables of this study:

$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + e$

$Y = \alpha + .204\ x_1 + .720\ x_2 + .207\ x_3 + e$

From this study findings the model shows that the top management commitment indicates (t= 4.149, p=.05); employees' involvement (t= 9.950, p =.05) and customer focus (t = 4.064, p=.05). This study finding showed that Total Quality Management practices had significant relationship with organizational performance.

Table 6. Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	5.855	0.824		7.108	0.00	4.233	7.477
Employee Involvement	0.72	0.072	0.53	9.95	0.00	0.577	0.862
Customer Focus	0.207	0.051	0.21	4.064	0.00	0.107	0.308
R Square	0.569						

Table 6...

Adjusted R Square	0.564
Durbin-Watson	1.52
F	114.52
Sig.	.000a

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 (H_{o1}): There is no significant relationship between employee involvement (EI) and organizational performance. Findings showed that employee involvement had coefficient of estimate which was significant β=0.530, p=000) where p< 0.05 therefore we reject null hypothesis and accept alternative hypothesis, which states there is significant relationship between employee involvement and organizational performance. This study finding concur with Mutisya (2010), who conducted a study in Kenyan organizations, the study highlighted that those participatory measures such as team-working and high-involvement work practices demonstrate improvements in performance. Performance changes may occur because participation leads to changed attitudes which lead to high employee performance. Similarly (Otunga, 2007) found out that it is imperative that management keep employees in the picture at all times when decisions are being made regarding TQM, which should encourage participation and help ease transition. When the identification of the tools for a system to be used is complete it should be ensured that the right training is given to the right people. This is to emphasize the benefits of why their using them and how they are using them. Training given to the right people has been proven to minimize the misuse of the tools and techniques.

Hypothesis 2 (H_{o2}): There is no significant relationship between customer focus and organizational performance. Findings showed that customer focus had coefficient of estimate which was significant β=0.210, p=000) where p < 0.05 therefore we reject null hypothesis and accept alternative hypothesis, which states there is significant relationship between customer focus and organizational performance. The results concur with Nganga (2010) who found a strong link between the delivery of high quality goods and services and profitability through customer satisfaction. Similarly, (Murata, 2006) posited that given the increasing focus on the creation of competitive advantages, quality ought to be defined from an external perspective of customer expectations, rather than from predetermined internal specifications. Brah*et al*., (2001) also concluded that quality does not solely rely on the organization's ability to produce products with correct technical specifications. In order to stay competitive, the organization must be able to respond and adapt to changing customer preferences and needs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Concerning employees' involvement, this study concluded that employee involvement had a direct relationship with organizational performance. Employees were involved in decision making within their respective organizations, employees are provided with adequate training and education to perform their tasks, and there were clear communication channel between employees and senior managers listened to employee's opinions and encouraged team work among employees.

The study also concluded that customer focus was critical for organizational performance. The results indicated that the organization always attempted to meet its customer needs, address customers complaints as a priority for the organization, the organization actively performed market research to identify customer needs and that the organization provided clear channels of communication to its customers.

This study also recommends that tertiary institutions managers be enlightened on the importance of total quality management practices on organizational performance to enhance the level of top management commitment to the practice and consequently achieve better organizational performance.

This study also recommends that managers should also increase the level of employee involvement in their tertiary institutions decision making and autonomy of procedures to improve their levels of productivity in the organization.

This study also recommended that since customer focus has an effect on organizational performance, it is necessary for managers of tertiary institutions to initiate market research to find out customer needs, provide clear channels of communication and address customer complaints in time.

The study was limited only to two dimension of TQM (employee involvement and customer focus). In addition, the study sample size limited to tertiary institutions within Uasin Gishu County. Thus, this study recommends that future studies test the effects of the other elements of total quality management practices (process-centeredness, integrated system, continual improvement, strategic and systematic approach, fact-based decision-making and communication) on organizational performance that were not part of this study.

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