

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF RUSINGA GROUP OF SCHOOLS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The Education sector has consistently been characterized by persistent operational inefficiencies and poor customer services and in order to address the problems of inefficiency in service delivery these organizations are fast adopting TQM in order to make them effective in meeting public demands. This study seeks to establish the total quality management practices employed by private schools in Kenya and the effect this has on their performance. The specific objectives of the study were to establish the influence of customer focus, continuous improvement, employee involvement and leadership commitment on organizational performance of Rusinga Group of schools. The study was anchored on three theories which include resource-based view theory, Deming's theory and Crosby's theory. Empirical literature was based on the continuous improvement, customer focus, employee involvement and leadership. This research study applied the descriptive research design. Descriptive research design was chosen because it enabled the researcher to generalize the findings to a larger population. The target population composed of the 124 respondents employed at the Rusinga Group Schools. The structure at Rusinga Group of Schools had put staff in three categories; Senior Management Team, Heads of department and Teachers. Stratified random sampling technique was used since population of interest is not homogeneous and could be subdivided into groups or strata to obtain a representative sample. The study found out that customer focus significantly influenced overall performance. Leadership commitment

to programmes, Employee involvement and continuous improvement also had significant influence on performance. The study concludes that the group of schools had the capacity to satisfy customer needs and wants. Rusinga Group of school valued both the internal and external customers and the school services met the customers' specific needs which were identified from time to time. Rusinga Group of school leadership had provided a healthy and conducive working environment to its staff of all cadres. Rusinga Group of school gave feedback of performance appraisal to employees annually. The schools had significantly invested in technological infrastructure. The school had proper mechanism of system automation and improvement and acted on feedback on M&E. The study recommends that the stakeholders of Rusinga Group of schools ought to ensure that the school has the capacity to satisfy customer needs and wants. Rusinga Group of school leadership ought to provide a healthy and conducive working environment to all staff. Rusinga Group of school ought to regularly give feedback of performance appraisal to employees to promote performance and morale. The group of schools' human resource policy ought to encourage employee involvement in decision making. The group of schools ought to continually improve technology infrastructure in line with the needs of the school which change from time to time as well as the changes in the environment as well as its various customers.

Key Words: *total quality management practices, performance, Rusinga group of schools, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

Total quality management theory has gained use since the 1980s when most organisations offered services of varying quality. When an entity is structured with a culture of offering quality goods or services to its customers which satisfy their expectations, then such an entity is observing Total Quality. The practice demands quality in all dimensions of the company's undertakings with things done as desired from end to end and any wastage and spoilages being kept to the very minimum during routine business (Stock and Mulki, 2009). For almost all organizations, rapid developments in the business environment such as globalization have made them to adopt a spirit of innovation so as to be able to meet the equally changing customer needs and expectations. In order to compete effectively, it has become essential for businesses to constantly improve on the quality of their products and services by marketing, product differentiation and cost reduction (Chang and Huang, 2005).

Increased globalization and liberalization with tough business conditions have brought challenges and opportunities for the education sector and made them to promote quality in their products and teaching and learning. With the increasing competition, business survival pressure and the dynamic, changing customer-oriented environment, operational performance has been identified as one of the important issues and generated a substantial amount of interest among managers, governors and researchers. Quality performance has been considered as one of efficient approaches for business organizations to improve their competitive advantage (Kairu, 2011).

Operational performances of organizations play an increasingly significant role in the economy of many countries. In today's global competitive environment, delivering quality service is considered an essential strategy for success and survival and in turn leads to good operational performance, Parasuraman, A, Zeithaml, Valerie A and Berry, L (1985). Organizations strive to achieve excellent operational performance so as to serve the needs of the society in which they exist, through continuous improvement of their products and services. According to Terrein, (2012) as world markets are becoming increasingly integrated, the service industry is coming under strong pressures to ensure that their quality performance is up to date. Market demands are shifting rapidly and constantly converging in taste, trends, and prices.

Increased globalization and liberalization with tough business conditions have brought challenges and opportunities for the education sector and made them to promote quality in their products and teaching and learning services. With the increasing competition, business survival pressure and the dynamic, changing customer-oriented environment, operational performance has been identified as one of the important issues and Governors, Managers and School Owners are constantly seeking solutions to counter competitors.

A study in Iran concluded that managers and other leaders in an organization attain energy through customers' satisfaction and organizational survival. All these are embedded in philosophy of total quality management. A study conducted in Indonesia revealed that Total quality management (TQM) principles and techniques were adopted almost by every manager in their management (Musran, 2013). Competitive advantage can be defined as the extent to which an organization creates a defensible position over its competitors. It is the ability of a firm to differentiate itself from its competitors as an outcome of its critical decisions. It comprises of identifying Price, Quality, Cost of Production and other elements and finding the areas to gain leverage over other players.

Total quality management (TQM) is considered a very important factor for the long-term growth of an organization. TQM implementation has been an integral aspect for improving organizational efficiency and performance. The links between TQM and performance have been investigated by numerous scholars. While examining the relationship between TQM and performance scholars have used different performance types such as financial, innovative, operational and quality performance. Recent research on total quality management has examined the relationships between the Total Quality Management and organizational performance (Esin, 2008).

Achieving better organizational performance requires successful, efficient and effective use of various organisation resources and competencies with the aim of creating and sustaining competitive advantage. Competitive advantage can be defined as a status that a business entity achieves when it outperforms its competitors in a market environment. Anoop et.al (2012) asserted that there are two types or models of competitive advantage which are installed in the in economic theory. The first one is the market-based model which involves the cost and differentiation and argues that market uncovers inefficient organizations particularly those that do not offer products for which consumers are prepared to pay premium price. And it's driven by factors that are external to the organization such as threats and opportunities. The second one is the resource-based model which focuses on the organizations resources and is driven by factors internal to the organization and over which an organization has a lot of control. Tracey et al (1999) have investigated competitive advantage from the aspect of, price, cost, delivery, flexibility and quality.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Education sector has consistently been characterized by persistent operational inefficiency and poor customer services and in order to address the problems of inefficiency in service delivery these organizations are fast adopting TQM in order to make them effective in meeting public demands (Maxwell, 2011). Despite the fact that quality management practices have been recognized by many organizations as capable of transforming the quality culture and producing

substantial financial results for large size companies, some concerns have been raised about validity of quality management practices to generate real economic gains and or improve financial performance of firms. A number of empirical studies have been conducted since the 1980's in order to explore the variance between quality management practices and performance. Ugboro, (2011) investigated the application of TQM and found out that despite the fact that quality management has been addressed within a firm, Total Quality Management and its underlying assumptions could also be applicable to strategy management. However, the study shows application of TQM in a telecommunication set up, results of which may not be applicable in the Education sector. Mwangi, (2013) in his study found that stakeholders including non-governmental organizations continue to focus their attention on education but he does not mention what other areas of focused for performance improvement. A survey was carried out by Moghimi and Anvari (2014) to evaluate the relationship between TQM and financial performance of 40 Iranian cement companies, a descriptive survey was carried out on the effects of TQM on financial performance of cement firms. A sample of 25 cement companies was conducted; qualitative and quantitative data was used. A descriptive statistics method of data analysis was applied. The findings of the study revealed a positive relationship between TQM and financial performance of cement manufacturing firms in Iran. In Kenya, there have been efforts to improve outcomes in schools; this is aimed at achieving quality goods and services to meet the ever-growing needs of customers. Despite the measures put in place to ensure implementation of quality management practices, some schools have faced various challenges making it difficult for them to reap the benefits of quality management practices. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by establishing the relationship between total quality management practices with a case study of performance of Rusinga Group Schools in Kenya.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The general objective of the study was to establish the influence of total quality management practices on the performance of private schools in Kenya; case of Rusinga Group of Schools.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To establish how continual improvement influences performance at Rusinga Group of Schools in Kenya
2. To investigate the relationship between customer focus and performance at Rusinga Group Schools in Kenya
3. To find out the effect of employee involvement on performance at Rusinga Group Schools in Kenya
4. To establish the effect of leadership influence on performance at Rusinga Group Schools in Kenya

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Resource-Based View Theory

Resource Based View was first advanced by Penrose (1959) who argued that a firm's superior performance is achieved when the resources are controlled by the firm. How a firm controls its key resources would determine its performance (Wernerfelt, 1984). The focus of the RBV is on attributes of resources and capability from the source they are gained to clarify a firm's heterogeneity, performance and sustainability (Morheney and Pandian, 1992).

According to Collini and Montgomery (1998), resources are substances of approach in that gaining dominance in an aggressive marketplace is dependent on firm capability to recognize, build up, position and safe guard meticulously resources that differentiate it from its competitors. Barney, Wright and Ketchen (2001) noted that every firm owns a diverse outline of tangible and intangible resources. Barney is one of the late contributors of RBV who studied and established the existence of key firm resources for superior performance.

The theory of RBV assumes that individuals are inspired to make maximum use of economic resources available and rational choices that a firm makes which are shaped by economic framework (Barney, 2007). Resource Based View theory in this study played a role of evaluating and explaining resources and capability of a firm that have the capability to create and maintain a firm's advantage and thus higher performance (Sheehan & Toss, 2007).

Barney and Hesterly (2010) advanced that resources in general include the following key constructs: resources, capabilities and competences. In strategic management literature, resources are defined as stocks of accessible things that are possessed by the firm. Competencies are the firm's strengths that enable it to better differentiate its products or service quality by building technological system to respond to customers' needs, hence allowing the firm to compete more efficiently and successfully than other firms (Defillippi, 1990; Arend & Levesque, 2010, &Anderson, 2011).

Resource Based View has contributed in strategic management through its emphasis on firm-specific resources as bona fide source of CA and high performance (Mckelvie & Davidsson, 2009). Complex packages of skills, obtained knowledge, ability and experience that facilitate the company to manage activities of the firm and make use of resources to create performance through coordinating and putting resources into proper production use is what defines capability (Mckelvie & Davidsson, 2009).

Resource-Based View Theory postulates that internal organizational resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable and without a substitute are a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Penrose, 1959), and therefore enhance performance. The Resource-Based View Theory suggests

that performance is driven by the resource profile of the firm, whereas the source of superior performance is embedded in the possession and deployment of distinctive resources that are difficult to imitate (Wernerfelt, 1984).

Deming's Theory

Deming's theory was postulated by William Edwards Deming in 1970. Deming's theory of total quality management was built on fourteen points of management. It was based on philosophy plan-do-check-act. He argued that ratio-quality is equivalent to output of workforce over total costs. According to Deming, if an organization focuses on reduction of costs then its quality of output reduces as well. In order for a company to maintain a competitive advantage, it has to offer quality products into the market. Poor quality is an expense to a company because it has to put more resources in marketing and promotion. In his theory, Deming adopted four key concepts which are system appreciation, variation knowledge, knowledge theory, and psychology knowledge. In TQM, it is important to understand company's processes, and how they work, causes of variation, what can be known and human nature in that organization. This would help the organization to facilitate continual improvement process through training.

Further, he argued that there should be constant purpose in TQM and adoption of new philosophies. There should be continual improvement in terms of staff knowledge, product quality and management style. TQM should not be based on mass inspection or awarding businesses based upon prices. For TQM to be achievable there should be continuous production and service, training and responsive leadership. Any organization striving to attain TQM should make sure there is seamless co-operation between units. Effective flow of information should be evident in the organisation.

Deming demonstrated the Plan-Do-Check-Act in a cycle created for continuous improvement. In planning phase, objectives and actions are set first. Implementation process begins thereafter by taking actions to ensure process improvement. Periodical checks are ensured in order to maintain the set quality. Deliveries made by suppliers should be highly inspected to ensure standards are maintained. Lastly, acting is necessary to ascertain that intended changes are achieved. Management should ensure that right and exact things are done timely and customers are satisfied.

Crosby's Theory

Crosby's theory was developed by Philip Bayard Crosby in 1964. Philip Crosby is also credited with the initiation of the TQM movement. He argued similarly to Deming but pointed out that money spent on quality is money well spent. Good management is commitment to quality. Crosby defines quality as adherence to requirements and prevention is the best way to ascertain quality. Also, he posed challenge that zero mistakes is the performance standards of quality.

Furthermore, Crosby's theory stated that quality is measured by the price of nonconformity. More precisely consistency in producing conforming products and services at optimum price should be the ideal target.

Continuous quality improvements can be achieved through total commitment from management. This is realistic where quality leadership in an organization is manifested. Significantly, an organization should form quality improvement teams to champion for quality improvements in the management, product and service. Specifically, each department should nominate a person to the team for quality in the organization to create equal opportunity for participation. Also, each quality improvement activity should have metrics for measurement.

Every organization that strives at achieving TQM, then, should be able to determine the cost of quality and gains attributed to improvements. Effective management should be in a position to encourage its employees to fix their mistakes and create zero-defects committee. Also, every member of staff in that organization should comprehend steps to quality. In order to maintain quality, root causes of errors need to be established and eliminated from the system or process. Communication on both current and anticipated nonconformance issues should be done to permit timely corrections. Hackman (1995) pointed out that an organization is a combination of several departments which involve different sectors in the economy hence there is need to address collectively by representation from all functions. Life span of an organization is determined by the commitment to continuous improvement.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Harrington (2001) described quality as doing the job right every time. Quality management practices are used by most manufacturing firms as a competitive strategy to achieve increased return on investment and sales growth as a result of reduced costs and enhanced customer satisfaction. According to Eldridge et al. (2006) quality is crucial for business competition that could be applied by any company and its implementation results in substantial cost reduction and increment of revenue. Bricknell (2006) also explains the relationship between quality management practices and business improvement as a whole through making awareness in each and every part of an organization in order to remove errors and minimize waste.

Continual Improvement and Performance

Continual improvement is a management strategy which is an integral part of TQM. Fauzi, Arsono & Bambang (2016) asserted that CI is a gradual, planned and organized systematic approach for an organization to ensure continuity in incorporating different phases on implementation. CI sustains organization's ability. There are several approaches of measuring continual improvement which include customer service, complaints, requests for replacements and returns.

Damjan, Maletic and Gomiscek (2012) noted that challenges posed by contemporary competitive environment calls for quality and performance improvement initiatives to improve competitiveness. IAEA (2006) observed that continuous improvement (CI) as a set of routines that helps an organization improve its performance. A good predictor of performance improvement in an organization is continuous improvement.

CI is a process which requires clear comprehension of organization goals and process of measuring effectiveness and efficiency. Critical elements such as good leadership and objectives of company are critical in the process. Success of this process is more or less influenced by commitment of leadership (Jiri, 2000). According to IAEA (2016) strategy adopted in continual process should be flexible enough to allow the selection of the most appropriate approach for each improvement. Rigid strategies hinder effective use of suitable tools and methodologies hence should be avoided.

Jiri (2000) defines CI as a result or product achieved in an organization after certain changes are made. It cuts across all levels in an organization such as leadership, people and processes. Consequently, according to Kaynak (2002) it should direct an organization to better prices, cost and productivity. This process can be effectively conducted through the use of the quality policy, quality objectives, audit results, analysis of data, corrective and preventive actions and management review. Since it is always an ongoing process, management device how to improve effectiveness in organization operations instead of waiting for challenges to emerge. These improvements vary from small step ongoing continual improvement to strategic breakthrough improvement projects.

Several items are involved in the cycle of CI: Establishing customer requirements, meeting the requirements, measuring success and continuing to check customer expectations to find areas in which improvements can be made (Esin, 2008). Customers can be either internal or external depending on their location inside or outside the organization. Internal customers usually work towards external customer satisfaction. Measures like service flow, ROI, profits and material flow fail when continual improvement process is not duly implemented (Chang, 2005).

Chang (2009) revealed that CI is one of the critical areas of focus in an organization. It entails modern quality research and development practice. An organization should be in a position to improve its quality of products and services hence minimizing cost burden to the customers. Due to increased competition in the market, continual improvement is necessary.

According to Jiri (2000), performance management and continuous performance improvement are significant in every organization, especially when intending to achieve international competitiveness and sustained growth. CI is all about activities that facilitate products, services and processes to be produced effectively at reduced cost and improve quality. The improvements are either breakthrough or incremental. CI demands for effective project management because it

is related to vision, mission, core values and goals of the organization. Lack of CI in leadership of an organization leads to market share loss to competitors. In order to maintain organizational culture, CI is undertaken (Fauzin, Arsono & Bambang, 2016).

Continuous improvement (CI) is a method for improving every sector of a company's operations and increasing competitiveness by developing a company's resources (Porter and Anne, 2007). The improvement can involve many goals of producing products with zero defects or achieving 100 percent customer satisfaction but continuous improvement has the same basic principles irrespective of the set goals (Murphy and Elana, 2006). These principles include: involvement of the company at all levels, find savings by improving existing processes, not by investing more money, gathering data on company operations and quantify that data, which becomes the baseline against which improvements would be measured for continuous improvement (Morgan, 2006).

Continuous improvement most often involves creating a team that includes representatives from all areas of the company. The team first spends time on internal review and then on benchmarking. The necessary quantitative data is created (McManus, 2009). The team then proposes solutions to management and begins to implement those solutions. When that is achieved, follow-up mechanisms must be put in place that seek additional improvements as time goes by. The team might change members with the passage of time, but hopefully become an established and accepted part of the company even as its schedule changes. If the plans are executed as planned, the team would achieve improved quality as a result of its initial efforts (Kinni & Theodore, 2005). This can attract more employees into this concept which in turn leads to the continued search for more improvements and thus continuous improvements (Joiner & Brian, 2007).

Customer Focus and Performance

According to Deming (2006), customers see quality as the capacity to satisfy their needs, expectations and wants. This also agrees with the concept by Gilmore (2011) who considers quality to mean the degree to which a specific product satisfies the wants of a specific consumer. Historically, the philosophy of Total Quality Management (TQM) and customer can be traced back to the period just after the 2nd world war. The key personality behind the philosophy was one American called Edward Deming. According to historical records, Americans did not take the concept seriously until the Japanese who adopted it in 1950 to resurrect their post-war business and industry used it to dominate world markets by 1980. It's a philosophy that focuses relentlessly on the needs of the customer, both internal and external, realigns the organization activities from detection to prevention and aims to improve continuously through use of statistical monitoring.

Quality is defined as meeting or exceeding customer expectations. The goal is to first identify and then meet customer needs. TQM recognizes that a perfectly produced product has little value if it is not what the customer wants. Therefore, we can say that quality is customer driven. However, it is not always easy to determine what the customer wants, because tastes and preferences change continuously (Zulnaidi, 2014). Also, customer expectations often vary from one customer to the next. For example, in the auto industry, trends change relatively quickly, from small cars to sports utility vehicles and back to small cars. The same is true in the retail industry, where styles and fashion are short lived. Companies need to continually gather information by means of focus groups, market surveys, and customer interviews in order to stay in tune with what customers want. They must always remember that they would not be in business if it were not for their customers.

Yu-yeon et.al (2012) concluded that customer satisfaction is one of key drivers of firms' performance. Study by Zulnaidi (2014) ascertained that integral TQM practices based on customer focus compel employees to deliver quality service intending to meet customers' satisfaction. A firm that is customer centric has to continuously improve its products and service delivery. Other practices such as supplier relationship considerations are factored in. Qualified suppliers are to be engaged to maintain customer confidence and satisfaction. Mohamad, et.al (2014) indicated that knowledge management is critical for customer relationship management. A well-defined example of knowledge management is the information management on corporate database. Relationship marketing enhances customer-firm relationship hence improved performance of a firm.

A study conducted in Ghana by Elvis, Andrew & Bonye (2014) noted that customer focus is one the key principles of TQM. Success of an organization is determined by how well customer needs are understood. Internal customers who are employees form crucial component of TQM implementation team. TQM is a system which ensures quality in an organization. Globally, much attention has been given to customer focus in hospitality, construction and health care. Product focus goes hand in hand with customer focus.

Customer satisfaction increases when effective implementation of TQM practices is conducted. Quality service offered enhances customer loyalty through satisfaction, hence good reputation of business leading logically to attraction of more customers. Customer satisfaction and good reputation turns to be a cost-effective means of marketing the business, therefore profitability and market share of the organization most likely increases. (Bhah & Tee, 2002). Kanorio (2014) states that TQM is a management philosophy which applies devolution of authority from the front-line staff. It is a practice that encompasses every employee in decision-making activities, through activities such as quality cycles and strong team-work.

A study on effects of TQM implementation on performance of microfinance institutions in Kenya by Faith (2014) stated that organizational strategy should be based on customer needs.

Faith noted that a study by Samson & Rerziowski (1999) pointed out customer focus as an underpinning ideology for an organization to implement TQM programmes.

It is generally agreed that quality has become a powerful strategic weapon in meeting customer satisfaction both locally and globally. Improved quality is pivotal to meeting customer expectations and increases productivity of the organization with increased returns. Many authors agree that the quality of products and services is the key to competitiveness in the open market. Kondo (2009) notes that improving quality in creative ways reduces costs and raises productivity. Since global trade in service sector is growing, it is essential that a viable customer base is developed and maintained by implementing proper quality practices which lead to operational performance.

According to Garvin (2007) quality is not only a strategic weapon for competing in the current marketplace, but it also a means of pleasing consumers, not just protecting them from annoyances. Therefore, a company's specific advantage is to identify and then compete on one or more of the dimensions of quality. According to Noori (2004), who stresses in his book that competitiveness cannot be achieved but through quality, the needs for quality are fourfold: cost, competitive advantage, reputation and staying alive. Numerous empirical studies confirm that firms that have adopted a quality-oriented strategy have achieved improved productivity, greater customer satisfaction, increased employee morale, improved management-labor relations and higher overall operational performance.

Employee Involvement and Performance

Mohanty and Lakhe (2002) argue those who know the most about what is right and wrong with processes are those who do it. If trained well and given the responsibility to inspect quality of their work it would eliminate inspection. Chandler and Mc Evoy (2002) pointed out that employees are the prime source of human resources, their education, skills and experience need to be assessed and matched with the job requirements for maximum outcomes. Employee involvement was conceived to mean a feeling of psychological ownership among organizational members Koopman (2006). Unlike total quality management ideology, the traditional employee involvement is narrow-minded; it is job centered rather than process-centered. The total quality management approach involves achieving broad employee interest, participation and contribution to the process of quality management.

Training helps in preparing employees towards managing the total quality management ideology in the process of production. Training equips people with the necessary skills and techniques of quality improvement. It is argued to be a powerful building block of business in the achievement of its aims and objectives by Zhang, (2000). Through training, employees are able to identify improvement opportunities as it is directed at providing necessary skills and knowledge for all employees to be able to contribute to ongoing quality improvement process of production.

Training and development programmes should not be seen as an event or end in itself but a lifelong process Dale et al,(2000).

Employees do not decide on how they are to be managed, but when implementing change to management styles one cannot expect that all employees will 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 and thereafter, outcomes. 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.

Training given to the right people has been proven to minimize the misuse of the tools and techniques (Otunga, 2007). Continuous 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 relations, ownership and creating a conducive environment for success. 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 finds 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 output, 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-work and high-involvement practices demonstrate improvements in performance, but

can also have fewer 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 or directed but 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).

Leadership Commitment and Performance

Top management and leadership commitment is very important for the successful implementation of TQM in organizations. Pheny and Teo (2003) observed that top management must communicate TQM to the entire organisation to create awareness, interest, desire and action. They should provide the quality vision and create a cultural change within the organisation. They should organize for trainings, empower others by allowing them to grow, delegate authority and recognize the lower cadres for quality achievements. Top management must allocate resources and partner with suppliers for sharing of information in terms of new innovations and technology in the market for quality materials.

Top management commitment and leadership requires effective change in organizational culture and this can only be made possible with the deep involvement of top management to the organization's strategy of continuous improvement, open communication and cooperation throughout the organization. Leadership commitment improves the organizational performance by influencing other total quality management dimensions.

According to Garvin (2004) most problems associated with quality are attributed to management. This indicated that successful quality management is highly dependent on the level of top management commitment. It requires that top management commitment to quality must convey the philosophy that quality would receive a higher priority over cost and that on long run would achieve operational performance as well as reduced operational cost. A number of studies have been done on the concepts of quality improvement practices and organization performance. For

example, Miller and Hartwick (2002) found that training and top management commitment play a great part in TQM implementation in public listed manufacturing companies.

Without clear and consistent quality leadership, quality cannot hope to succeed according to Everett (2012). This requires that quality leadership be made a strategic objective and this means that the leader provides the suitable environment to provide the most comfort to the group members to improve performance and productivity, Rao et al., (2006). Top management commitment has been identified as one of the major ingredients for successful TQM implementation.

According to Gary (2008) performance in organizations is widely influenced by leadership behavior, management programs, structural forms and external initiatives. Effective management requires a concert of efforts by leaders in an organization. There is need to have flexibility and adaptability culture in an organization. According to (Kanorio, 2014), management focuses on integrating all individual efforts towards improving performance of an organization. Tangible improvements are measured by reduced costs, human resource development, new products development and customer satisfaction.

According to a study conducted in Chicago by Stanley & James (2003), leadership was viewed as a product of organizational environmental constraints and its leadership variance. Leadership influence is determined by leadership qualities, policy direction and social environment. Influence made by one person in leadership may be insignificant, considering the ability of influence though the person may have leadership qualities. According to George (2016) effectiveness of employees is usually affected by leadership of an organization. Leadership affects morale of employees directly. Democratic leaders allow employees to participate in success of the company and appreciate their efforts (Morris, Thomas, & Sherry, 2012).

Total Quality Management practices are determined by people who lead or are led. Effective leadership leads to effective TQM. Therefore, model leadership has to be demonstrated for effective TQM practices to be adopted effectively. Brian & Nicholas (1989) noted that TQM leadership is essential in every department or all organization levels. Effective TQM leadership is determined by each worker's enthusiasm and individual visible commitment to the process of continuous improvement rather than on your place in the organization.

Commitment by top management and leaders in an organization determine the leadership culture. Effective leadership is influenced by deep involvement of leaders to the organizational strategy, open communication and cooperation. TQM implementation improves the organizational performance. Issues related to quality are related to effectiveness of management. The more the issues arise from suppliers, stakeholders and customers depicts poor management and leadership of an organization. Successful quality management is highly linked top management commitment (Kanorio, 2014). It requires that top management commitment to

quality must convey the philosophy that quality would receive a higher priority over cost and that on long run would achieve operational performance as well as reduced operational cost.

In every organization management is responsible for mentoring product design and evaluating market demands and consumer needs. Management focus is critical for organizations to produce goods or render service that meet needs of the consumers (Gary, 2008). The management level plays a noteworthy responsibility in conducting organizational operations as well as in decision-making and resource allocation and management. Therefore, it is evident that the management team of any organization has positive effects on human resource, supplies management and design management.

Faith (214) pointed out that management leadership is a significant driver of TQM and greatly influences implementation of TQM practices. Management leadership refers to the way management leads or guides personnel in the firm in an appropriate manner. Eman (2001) noted that top management has a major role in guiding organizational activities towards improved performance. Leadership in any organization has upper hand in directing the organization to accept and implement TQM. Competitive advantage comes through people and quality products or services and management through quality. Efficient leadership enables high competitive advantage to any organization.

Success of any project in an organization is determined by employee-employer relationship. Managers who are leaders spearheading projects in an organization have the responsibility of ensuring full implementation of the projects. Coordination among the work force determines whether a project would succeed or not. Human resource involves employee training and employee relations which positively relate to improvement of quality. According to Flynn, Schroeder & Sakakibara (1995), quality improvement is achieved through utilizing quality data and timely reporting. Application of the principle of employee involvement results to open discussion of problems at the work place, free sharing of knowledge and experience, performance evaluation against targets, people owning their problems and people knowing the need to participate and their role in the organization (Chang, 2009). Additionally, the effective quality management is determined by the effectiveness of leadership due to quality efforts inserted and support of the leadership. Leadership establishes the development strategy and operation targets which affect actual competence. Every management team in an organization should be able to set holistic goals, and inspire teams to strive to achieve the goals jointly.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Cooper and Schindler (2008) describe the research design as a plan and structure of investigation formed to provide answers to research questions. This study adopted a descriptive survey design.

This ensured ease in understanding ideas about the problem. According to Creswell (2003), descriptive survey designs were used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow gathering of information, summarize and present data, and interpret it for the purpose of clarity. The study sought to establish the effect of total quality management on performance of private schools in Kenya, a case of Rusinga Group of Schools.

Population

Cooper and Schindler (2008) observed that a population is the total collection of elements about which one wants to make inferences. The target population of this study consisted of the 124 employees at the Rusinga Group of Schools. Categories in the population were managers, heads of departments and teachers who were involved in the formulation of total quality of management practices and implementing them to ensure improved performance.

Sample Design and Technique

The sample was culled from the population using stratified sampling. According to Kerry and Bland (1998) the technique produces estimates of overall population parameters with greater precision and ensures a more representative sample is derived from a relatively homogenous population. Stratification aimed to reduce standard error by providing some control over variance. The sample was developed using proportionate sampling strategy. With proportionate stratification, the sample size of each stratum was proportionate to the population size of the stratum. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a sample size of at least 30% is significant and representative. A sample size of 50% therefore was taken from each stratum to form a sample of 62 respondents for the study.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

This study required the collection of primary data and utilized both Qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data was necessary for comparison. The study used primary data obtained through questionnaires with a selected team of stakeholders involved in formulation and implementation of the total quality management practices within Rusinga Group of Schools. After editing, the questionnaires were then submitted to the selected respondents in Rusinga Group of Schools after the pilot test in order to get the data and information required for the study. This was done with the help of research assistants who administered the questionnaires to respondents in the stratified manner described above within Rusinga Group of Schools where the study was conducted.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Before processing the responses, the completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. Quantitative data collected was analyzed by descriptive statistics, and presented through tables, charts and in prose. This was attained through frequency distributions, means, modes, percentages, standard deviations and simple and cross tabulations. Qualitative data was coded into the different factors and sectors, and analysed through Content Analysis. Leyla (2001) observes that SPSS offers extensive data handling capabilities and numerous statistical analysis routines that can analyse small to very large amounts of data. Descriptive analyses of the study were done and expressed through frequency tables, percentages, charts, mean and standard deviations. The study also used a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 for analyzing items that are in nominal scale.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of total quality management practices on the performance of private schools in Kenya; case of Rusinga Group of Schools. The study was guided by the following research questions: How does continual improvement influence performance of Rusinga Group of schools in Kenya? What is the relationship between customer focus and performance of Rusinga Group of schools in Kenya? What is the effect of employee involvement on performance of Rusinga Group of schools in Kenya? To what extent does leadership influence performance in Rusinga Group of schools in Kenya?

The study adopted descriptive research design to establish the influence of total quality management practices on the performance. The target population of the study was 124 managers, heads of departments and teachers who were involved in formulation of total quality of management practices and implementation of the same to ensure improved performance. The study relied on primary data that was collected by use of structured questionnaires. A pilot study was carried to establish the reliability of the research instruments. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were carried and the findings were presented inform of tables and figures.

Customer Focus and Performance

The study found out that majority of the respondents agreed that the group of schools had the capacity to satisfy customer needs and wants. Majority of the respondents agreed that the school valued both its internal and external customers. Majority of the respondents agreed that the school services met the customers' specific needs. Majority of the respondents agreed that the school had embarked on a continuous improvement process to meet customer needs. Majority of the respondents agreed that the school has retained most of its previous customers.

Leadership Commitment

The study showed that a majority of the respondents agreed that the school had developed clear mission and vision statements. Majority of the respondents agreed that the school leadership had provided a healthy and conducive working environment for staff. Majority of the respondents agreed that the school had a clear corporate beliefs and objectives. Majority of the respondents agreed that the school leadership had developed clear and effective strategies for achieving the stated mission and objectives. Majority of the respondents moderately agreed that the school leadership was committed to allocate the necessary resources for successful implementation. Majority of the respondents moderately agreed that the school leadership encouraged effective employee empowerment and participation in decision making.

Employee Involvement and Performance

The study established that majority of the respondents agreed that the group of schools' human resource policy empowered employees to make key decisions affecting their tasks. Majority of the respondents agreed that the school gave feedback of performance appraisal to employees. Majority of the respondents agreed that the group of schools' human resource policy encouraged employee involvement in decision making. Majority of the respondents agreed that the school encouraged employee career development through training and education. Majority of the respondents agreed that the school motivated, rewarded and looked after the employee well-being. Majority of the respondents agreed that the School encouraged employees to judge their performance and take full responsibility for their actions. Majority of the respondents moderately agreed that the School encouraged employees to set their own goals to take full responsibility for their actions.

Continuous Improvement and Performance

The study established that majority of the respondents agreed that school had in place monitoring mechanism to ensure constant improvement of quality. Majority of the respondents agreed that the group of schools had workable technological facilities. Majority of the respondents agreed that the school had proper mechanism of system automation and improvement. Majority of the respondents agreed that institution acted on feedback on M&E. Majority of the respondents agreed that the school had automated its critical success factors and critical processes. Majority of the respondents moderately agreed that school had automated TQM improvement initiatives.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The study carried out regression analysis to establish the influence of total quality management practices on the performance of private schools in Kenya. The findings of coefficient of correlation R and coefficient of adjusted determination R² is as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.826 ^a	.682	.663	.51754
a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Focus, Leadership Commitment, Employee Involvement, Continuous Improvement				

Table 1 show that coefficient of correlation R was 0.826 an indication of strong positive correlation between study variables. Coefficient of adjusted determination R² is 0.663, this translates to 66.3%, an indication that change in performance can be attributed to the independent variables; customer focus, leadership commitment, employee involvement and continuous improvement. Therefore, the residual of 33.7% can be explained by other factors beyond the scope of the current study.

The ANOVA was carried out at 5% level of significance. A comparison of F Calculated and F Critical is indicated the Table 2.

Table 2: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2819.6	4	704.900	22.568	.000 ^b
Residual	1312.5	42	31.25		
Total	4132.1	46			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Focus, Leadership Commitment, Employee Involvement, Continuous Improvement

Table 2 shows that F_{Calculated} was 22.568 and F_{Critical} was 2.59426, an indication that F_{Calculated} > F_{Critical} (22.568 > 2.59426) this indicates that the overall regression model was significant in establishing influence of total quality management practices on the performance of private schools in Kenya. The p value p=0.00 < 0.05, indicating that at least one variable significantly influenced performance of Rusinga Group of Schools.

The researcher sought to establish the individual factor influencing total quality management practices on the performance of private schools in Kenya. The following coefficients of regressions were generated.

Table 3: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	23.574	1.219		19.343	.000
Customer Focus	.098	.020	.646	4.960	.000
Leadership Commitment	.433	.124	.284	3.489	.001
Employee Involvement	.442	.103	.169	4.297	.000
Continuous Improvement	1.465	.245	.352	5.978	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The resultant equation from Table 3 becomes:

$$Y = 23.574 + 0.098 X_1 + 0.433 X_2 + 0.442X_3 + 1.465 X_4$$

Where: Y= Performance; X₁= Customer Focus; X₂= Leadership Commitment; X₃= Employee Involvement; X₄= Continuous Improvement

The findings show that by holding all the variables constant, performance of Rusinga Group of Schools would be at 23.574. A unit increase in customer focus when holding all variables constant, performance would be at 0.098. A unit increase in leadership commitment when holding all the variables constant, performance would be at 0.433. A unit increase in employee involvement when holding all the other variables constant, financial performance would be at 0.442. A unit increases in continuous improvement when holding other variables constant, financial performance would be at 1.465.

The findings pointed out that customer focus had (p=0.000<0.05, B=4.960 and t=4.960>1.96) an indication that the variable significantly influenced performance. This agrees with Jiri (2000) who states that performance management and continuous performance improvement are significant in every organization especially when intending to achieve international competitiveness and sustained growth.

The findings pointed out that leadership commitment had (p=0.001<0.05, B=.284 and t=3.489>1.96) an indication that the variable significantly influenced performance. This is supported by Rao *et al.*, (2006) who states that top management commitment has been identified as one of the major determinants of successful TQM implementation. Similarly, Gary (2008) states that performance in organizations is widely influenced by leadership behaviors, management programs, structural forms and external initiatives.

The study shows that employee involvement had a (p=0.000<0.05, B=0.169 and t=4.297>1.96) an indication that the variable significantly influenced performance. This supported by Chandler and Mc Evoy (2002) who pointed out that employees were the prime source of human resources,

their education, skills and experience need to be assessed and matched with the job requirements for maximum performance.

The findings further show that continuous improvement had a ($p=0.000<0.05$, $B=0.352$ and $t=5.978>1.96$) an indication that the variable significantly influenced performance. This agrees with Chang (2009) who established that an organization should be in capacity to improve its quality of product and service henceforth minimizing cost burden to the customers.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the group of schools had the capacity to satisfy customer needs and wants. Rusinga Group of school valued both the internal and external customers and the school services met the customers' specific needs. Rusinga Group of school had embarked on a continuous improvement process to meet customer's needs. Rusinga Group of school had retained its previous customers and accessed new customers. The study concludes that the school had developed a clear mission statement and the school had a clear corporate beliefs and objectives. Rusinga Group of schools leadership had provided a healthy and conducive working environment to its staff. The school leadership had developed clear and effective strategies for achieving the mission and objectives. The school leadership was committed to allocate the necessary resources for successful implementation. The school leadership encouraged effective employee empowerment and participation in decision making. The study concludes that the group of schools' human resource policy empowered employees to make key decision affecting their tasks. Rusinga Group of school gave feedback of performance appraisal to employees. The group of schools' human resource policy encouraged employee involvement in decision making. The school encouraged employee career development through training and education. The school motivated rewarded and looked after the employees. The School encouraged employees to judge their performance and take full responsibility for their actions. The School encouraged employees to set their own goals to take full responsibility for their actions. The study further concludes that the school had in place monitoring mechanism that ensured constant improvement of quality. The group of schools had workable technological facilities. The school had proper mechanism of system automation and improvement and acted on feedback on M&E. Rusinga Group schools had automated its critical success factors and critical processes and automated TQM improvement initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the stakeholders of Rusinga Group of schools ought to ensure that the school has the capacity to satisfy its customers' needs and wants. The school ought to value both the internal and external customers. Rusinga Group of schools ought to meet services to customers' specific needs. The school ought to promote continuous improvement process to

meet customers' needs. Rusinga Group of schools ought to retain its previous customers as it finds new ones.

The study recommends that the school ought to develop clear mission and vision statements and have clear corporate values, beliefs and objectives. Rusinga Group of school leadership ought to provide a healthy and conducive working environment to its staff. The school leadership ought to develop clear and effective strategies for achieving the mission and objectives. The school leadership ought to be committed to allocate the necessary resources for successful implementation. The school leadership ought to encourage effective employee empowerment and participation in decision making.

The study recommends that the group of schools' human resource policy ought to empower employees to make key decisions affecting them and the organisation. Rusinga Group of schools ought to give feedback of performance appraisal to employees. The group of schools' human resource policy ought to encourage employee involvement in decision making. The school ought to encourage employee career development through training and education. The school ought to motivate, reward and look after the employee well-being. The School ought to encourage employees to judge their performance and take full responsibility for their actions. The School ought to encourage employees to set their own goals to take full responsibility for their actions.

The study further recommends that the school ought to have in place monitoring mechanisms that ensure constant improvement of quality. The group of schools ought to have workable technological facilities. The school ought to have proper mechanisms of system automation and improvement and ought to act on feedback on M&E. Rusinga Group of schools ought to automate its critical success factors and critical processes and ought to automate TQM improvement initiatives.

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