

Factors Affecting Quality Management in Public Institutions: A Case Study of Machakos University, Kenya

Maingi Luke Nthenge

Msc. Student, South Eastern Kenya University, School of Environment and Natural Resources, P.o Box 1168-100 Machakos, Kenya

Nzuki Judith Syombua

Legal Clerk, Machakos County Assembly, P.O Box 1168-100 Machakos, Kenya

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to determine factors affecting Quality Management in public institutions, a case study of Machakos University. The specific objectives of this study were: to establish how top management commitment affect the implementation of Quality Management in public institutions, to investigate the extent to which employee's training affect the implementation of Quality Management in public institutions, to assess the extent to which organizational culture affect implementation of Quality Management in public institutions and to determine the effect of communication on the implementation of Quality Management in public institutions. The study adopted a case study research design targeting 42 individuals. The design allowed for a wide range and generalized study covering a number of related items which is used to generalize for the same business within a given set up. The study sampled all the target population using census. Census method enhances the generalizability of the study findings since it eliminates both the sampling bias and sampling error, which are often associated with sampling. Questionnaires were used to collect data which had both closed and open ended questions. Data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively through descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentage and later presented in tables, pie-charts and pie-graphs. The findings of this study revealed that top management commitment is a critical factor in implementation of Quality Management and that top management commitment positively influences implementation of Quality Management. The study also established that organizational culture is a critical factor in implementation of Quality Management and that appropriate organizational culture positively influences implementation of Quality Management as cited by 60% of the respondents. The study revealed that employee training positively affected implementation of Quality Management according to 70% of the respondents. In addition, the study concluded that Communication is an important factor with positive influence in implementation of Quality Management. The study thus recommends that top managements commit themselves in providing leadership and key resources needed in Quality Management. Secondly, the study recommends that university train its employees on Quality Management initiatives. It is also recommended that these trainings are conducted frequently and at all levels in the university. Thirdly, the study recommends that university develop group, hierarchical, developmental and rational culture so as to enhance total Quality Management. Lastly, the study recommends that quality managers and management develop appropriate, effective and flexible communication systems that allow free flow of quality information at all levels in the university. The study suggests that further research should be carried out on factors influencing the attainment of ISO certification among public institutions.

Keywords: Sort, Systematize, Sweep, Standardize, Self-Discipline, International Organization for Standardization, Quality Management, Statistical Quality Control, Total Quality Management

1. Introduction

Quality authorities like Juran, Deming and Crosby have put forth several approaches to improve company performance. These approaches are embodied in a set of Quality Management practices, known as Total Quality Management. On the account of these policies, different approaches have been adopted for the introduction of Quality Management in secondary schools, such as strategic plans, quality awards, quality teams, self-assessment and external assessment among other models. Quality Management (QM) presents a strategic option and an integrated management philosophy for organizations which allow them reach their objectives effectively and efficiently, and to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Goldenberg and Cole, 2002).

Defining quality in education has proved to be a challenging task. Cheng and Tam (1997) suggests that "Education quality is rather vague and controversial concept" and Pounder (1999) argues that quality is "a notoriously ambiguous term". As a result of difficulty in defining quality, the measurement of quality has also proved to be contentious. According to Cruikshank, (2003) an international tool most frequently drawn upon is that of Total Quality Management) which is defined as a management approach of an organization, centred on quality, based on the participation of all its members and aiming at long run success through customer satisfaction and benefits to members of the organization and to society (Wiklund et al, 2003).

Research has been done with regard to the implementation of Quality Management. Pheng and Jasmine

(2004) pointed out that with the adoption of Total Quality Management there is the benefit of higher customer satisfaction, better quality products and higher market share. Customer satisfaction is one of the prime objectives of Total Quality Management and it is the most widely discussed approach to directing organizational efforts towards the goal of Total Quality Management. According to Ugboro and Obeng (2000), with the full adoption and implementation of Total Quality Management, there should be a turnaround in corporate culture and management approaches as compared to the traditional way of management in which top management gives order and employees merely obey them.

Proper Total Quality Management implementation can be a powerful vehicle by which organizations can achieve excellence in business performance. However, despite the fact that many organizations adopt Total Quality Management framework and its key principles, some of them have not been achieving Total Quality Management potential benefits (Young, 1997).

According to Lewis and Smith (1994) the perception of quality of education by many academics is increasingly becoming a problem for many outside the system. They mention unhappy customers and low employee morale as major challenges. Quality Management is seen by many as having enormous potential to respond to such challenges. Subrata and Anindya (2009) puts it that Quality Management can be applied as a means for improving stakeholders morale, increase productivity and delivering higher quality services to both internal and external customers.

It has even been purported that the practice of Quality Management in higher education is deteriorating into managerialism because of the disparity between QUALITY MANAGEMENT techniques and educational processes, as well as the lack of shared vision within institutions or educational fields (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2003).

Although higher education is able to adopt many of the principles of Quality Management, it is reasonable to expect some problems when applying them to a different organizational structure to that of the commercial environment. The concern is that there will be a direct relationship between the conception of higher education being taken, the definition of quality being used and the performance indicators chosen to measure quality (Tam, 2001).

2. Methodology

The study was carried out in Machakos University. It adopted a case study research design targeting 42 individuals. The study sampled all the target population using census. Census method enhances the generalizability of the study findings since it eliminates both the sampling bias and sampling error, which are often associated with sampling. Questionnaires were used to collect data which had both closed and open ended questions. Data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively through descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentage and later presented in tables, pie-charts and pie-graphs

3. Results

On commitment 60% agreed that Top Management is committed to quality management, 65% agreed that essential resources are provided and 70% also agreed that employees ideas are welcomed in decision making (Table 1). Top management commitment positively influences implementation of Quality Management. The study also established that organizational culture is a critical factor in implementation of Quality Management and that appropriate organizational culture positively influences implementation of Quality Management as cited by 60% of the respondents. The study revealed that employee training positively affected implementation of Quality Management according to 70% of the respondents (Table 2).

4. Discussion

Top management showing high commitment to quality management (60%), providing essential resources (65%) and welcoming employees ideas (70%) (Table 1) imply that the management is committed to quality management. Top Management plays a critical role in any key business decision and it positively influences implementation of Quality management. The results agree well with Zakuan et al., 2012 that the success of any critical decision made in an organization is highly dependent on top management support and commitment. The results show that university has appropriate organizational culture as said by 60% of the respondents (Table 1). This agrees well with Jamali et al. (2010), that organization quality culture affects the employee's beliefs in implementation of Quality Management. Most of respondents did not have any training in any Quality Management program as indicated by 70% of respondents having no formal training and only 30% who had formal training (Table 2). In addition employee training positively affected implementation of Quality Management according to 70% of the respondents (Table 2). This is in line with Jamali et al. (2010) that employee training is one of the most important requirements in a successful Quality Management implementation.

5. Acknowledgement

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6. References

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Table 1: Response on Top Management Commitment

Statement	5		4		3		2		1	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Top management of your institution is committed to quality in the organization	6	15	24	60	10	25	-	-	-	-
Top management of your institution provides a leadership role in Quality Management initiatives.	4	10	24	60	10	25	2	5	-	-
Critical resources required in implementing quality initiatives are made always made available.	6	15	26	65	8	20	-	-	-	-
Employee's ideas on ways to improve quality in the institution are welcomed by the top management.	4	10	28	70	8	20	-	-	-	-
Top management of your institution participates in all Quality Management programs in the organization.	4	10	26	65	10	25	-	-	-	-
Top management of institution organization takes part at all stages and levels in the Quality Management programs	2	5	26	65	12	30	-	-	-	-
Your institution has an organizational quality mission and policies	4	10	24	60	12	30	-	-	-	-
Your institution has a formal Quality Management structure	4	10	26	65	10	25	-	-	-	-
Your institution practices a proper quality planning process	-	-	18	45	22	55	-	-	-	-

Source: Researcher 2016)

Table 2: Employees training on Quality management Programs

Trained on Quality Management Program	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	12	30
No	28	70
Total	40	100

Source: Researcher 2016)