

ABSTRACT

Total Quality Management (TQM) describes a management approach to long term success through organisational performance. It is a widely implemented strategic tool for ensuring business performance and transforming organisations. In Kenya, empirical evidence indicates that many organizations in manufacturing, service industry and educational sector have successfully implemented TQM. This evidence is however lacking for international research organizations. TQM is central to quality service delivery, cost effectiveness, people management and resource mobilization all of which are critical for international research organizations. The main objective was to assess the effect of TQM practices on international research organizational performance. Specific objectives were to: establish effect of top management commitment on organizational performance; determine effect of strategic and systematic approach to organizational performance; establish the effect of integrated system; and assess the effect of continuous improvement on organizational performance. This study was guided by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model which was implemented using a cross-sectional research design. This study was carried out to assess the existing systems of TQM that ensured high organizational performance. This study was purposed to bring in new knowledge in quality management systems. The study sought to explore the effects of TQM practices in an IRO in relation to enhancing the performance in the IROs in Kenya. The study adopted cross-sectional research design. The target population comprised research scientists, technical staff and scholars, heads of business units and officers working under the units whose total number was 71. Five respondents of the total sample were used to measure reliability of the data. The sample size of 71 respondents was drawn using stratified random sampling. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data. The study findings of correlation analysis showed that top management commitment had 0.061 R^2 with p-value of 0.411, strategic and systematic approach 0.145 R^2 with p-value of 0.107, integrated systems had 0.217 with p-value of 0.022 and continuous improvement had 0.231 R^2 with p-value of 0.012. The results indicated that the overall performance of TQM practices was positively significant to integrated system and continual improvement hence positively affected the organisational performance. This study concludes that although, top management commitment was not significant to organisational performance; strategic and systematic approach was also not significant to organisational performance, in general the two elements of TQM accounted for the total R^2 of 48%. Integrated systems were positively significant to organisational performance; and continuous improvement was positively significant to organisational performance. It also indicates that TQM elements cannot work in isolation but as a group. This study recommends a further study to establish the reason why there is no significance on top management commitment and strategic and systematic approaches since they positively contributed to the overall performance. It is evident that integrated systems within organisation is an integral part of the organisational performance. The continual improvement keeps an organisation on toes with the new technology, creativity and innovativeness. The management of the organization should consider fully empowering and training employees in order to motivate them to continue performing to achieve the goals of the organization.