
Total Quality Management Practices on Customer Satisfaction at Safaricom Public Limited Company, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed at establishing the influence of total quality management practices on customer satisfaction of Safaricom Public Limited Company (Public Limited Company). The study was guided by the following specific objectives; to establish the influence of process management on customer satisfaction of Safaricom Public Limited Company, to establish the influence of strategic quality planning on customer satisfaction of Safaricom Public Limited Company and to explore the influence of customer focus on customer satisfaction of Safaricom Public Limited Company. The research employed a descriptive study design. The research focused on 70 respondents within the customer experience department. A census was used in this study since the population was small. Primary data was collected by use of structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were self-administered. The reliability and validity of the instrument was then be determined. The quantitative data gathered in the actual study was analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics and multiple linear regressions with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The results were presented in form of tables, frequencies, and percentages. Results show that that Safaricom Public Limited Company had put in place various measures that encouraged process management, the Safaricom Public Limited Company allocates budget to quality management and control, employees attend quality management workshops to become acquainted with the latest strategy. Customer complaints at the company were addressed within stipulated timelines, the company ensures quality communication with its customers, customer satisfaction was always accorded the priority. This study concludes that process management, and quality planning and customer focus had a positive significant effect on customer satisfaction of Safaricom public limited company. Safaricom Public Limited Company should continue aligning business processes to fit organizational strategic goals. This can be actualized through implementation of process and metrics that align with Safaricom Public Limited Company strategic goals, as well as educating all managers. Safaricom should remain committed towards discovering customer needs. It must also embrace customer positioning measures, and try to fill the customer need gap through quality planning. Safaricom Public Limited Company should make the efforts to follow-up on all customers, use clear language while communicating with its customers, appreciate negative critiques from customers, anticipate hidden customer needs and embrace pre-emptive acknowledgement.

Key Words: *Total Quality Management, Process Management, Quality Planning, Customer Focus, Customer Satisfaction*

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1. Introduction

Total quality management is the operational management that is used by a firm for better work and their ultimate aim is customer satisfaction (Giglio, Fogliatto & Sawhney, 2019). Every organization aims for the best and a good company focuses on the customer satisfaction because are the main output. To gain competitive advantage, a firm has to go for quality management. There are three quality assurance tools such as quality planning, quality control and quality improvement (Zadry & Yosuf, 2010). In quality planning, the target market is recognized and started working on their mindset. The whole planning is done in this part of quality assurance. The second one is quality control in which the quality of current process assessed and the last one is quality improvement. These three points are very important in quality assurance process. Total quality management is the continuous improvement in organizational processes that makes an organization different from other (Mallmbrandt & Ahlstrom, 2013). Product or service of a company should be checked and total quality management is used for project and product assurance and control. This will result in organizational improvement, managerial efficiency, and effective management and with that continuous improving productivity (Richard 2009). The company who has implemented total quality management in their firm would be customer focused and they would definitely know the demand of their buyers. Currently, the concept of total quality management (TQM) touches not only on the quality of the products and services by a given organization but also the operations undertaken in the entire organization. The concept has managed to instill the attitude of doing an excellent job from the initial stages of production. For effectiveness in the implementation of TQM, there is need to have an organizational culture that supports the operations and a conducive climate that is often non-existent.

Total quality management has received different definitions through time. Most notably, TQM is defined as a strategic approach that improves organizational performance embraces a set of technical and socio-cultural factors (Iyer, Saranga & Seshandri, 2013). In another definition Jung and Wang (2010) point out that TQM is a strategy of management whose primary aim is to implant the awareness of quality in all the operations taken in a given organization. TQM is a philosophy of management that requires the change of organizational culture. According to Hakes (2011), it is a philosophy of management whose primary purpose is to strive in making the best utilization of opportunities and resources in a given constant environment. In other words, TQM entails all the efforts in the organization in establishing a permanent climate through which the organization can continuously improve its capabilities in ensuring there is the delivery of high-quality services and products to customers. Jung and Wang (2010) noted that the support of leadership management and process of statistical control ensures participation and loyalty of employees. Likewise, Hakes (2011), focuses on planning and product design processes, quality control and involvement of customers and suppliers. Kruger (2011), postulates that the major sphere of interest is organizational factors such as cultural change, leadership for change, employee training and cost of quality. According to Hill (2012), organizations must be customer focused rather than producer focused. Drucker (1999), also lays emphasis on the use of statistical methods, continuous training of workforce and top management commitment to constant improvement in quality.

The sets of practices and principles that are claimed to belong to the portfolio of TQM are also debated in the literature and vary according to the study. However, there is consensus in the identification of TQM as a multi-item construct that goes beyond the utilization of quality standard and measures (Dale, 2015). Regarding TQM dimensions researchers have proposed different operational definitions. Baudin (2007) and Subramanian et al. (2009) coined the term "Jidoka" to denote a quality practices and problem solving skills. Malmbrandt and

Ahlstrom (2013) used the term “Built-in Quality” to reflect a set of practice aimed at supporting quality enhancement. Overall, all the embedded measures presented in the literature encompass the adoption of practices that, through people engagement, seek to solve problems more efficiently with minimal chances of failure (Marodin, Saurin, Tortorella & Denicol, 2015). Due to the varied measures used in the empirical literature, this study will adopt the operational constructs suggested by Wu, Wiebe and Politi (1997), which include process management, strategic planning and customer focus.

Defining customer satisfaction is difficult as it entails efforts to measure human feelings. As a result, there exist varied definitions of customer satisfaction in academic literature. For instance, Berry (2011) defines customer satisfaction as a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectation. Customer satisfaction is defined as the number of customers, or percentage of total customers, whose reported experience with a firm, its products, or its services exceeds specified satisfaction goals (Parker & Wang, 2016). Customer satisfaction is an individual’s sense of pleasure or displeasure that arises from matching the perceived performance or outcome with the expectation, Lovelock (2014). Lovelock and Wirtz (2015), refers to customer satisfaction as a customers after-purchase assessment and affective reaction to the whole product or service experience. Satisfaction levels are influenced by factors that are either subjective or objective. For example, factors such as customer needs and emotions are subjective, whereas product and service features are objective factors.

Customer satisfaction can be perceived as either cumulative or transactional. According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (2011), transactional-specific view, is founded on a single, specific after-purchase evaluative judgement of a service encounter whereas cumulative perspective, is conceptualized as an overall customer evaluation of a product or service based on purchase and consumption experiences over a given period of time (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2015). Cumulative satisfaction is considered to be more useful and reliable analytical tool since it’s based on a chain of purchase and consumption experiences than transaction perspective which is built on a single purchase and consumption experience. Measurement of customer satisfaction may be considered as a post-consumption assessment that the user gains on the products or services rendered (Kongoti, 2015).

Safaricom Public Limited Company is the leader in mobile network operations in Kenya and different reports have indicated that it is the largest in central and east Africa in terms of resources, profits, and resources. Safaricom Kenya Limited started as one of the departments at Kenya Posts & Telecommunications Corporation which was formed to try a new innovation known as ETACS (Extended Total Access Control System) network. However, in 1996, the technology was advanced to GSM and in 1997; Safaricom Public Limited Company was incorporated as a private liability company (Safaricom, 2016). In 2002, Safaricom Public Limited Company began its global systems for mobile communications (GSM). Currently, the Government of Kenya (35%), independent investors (25%) and Vodafone controls own Safaricom Public Limited Company 40% (Safaricom, 2016). Today, Safaricom is the leader in converged communication solutions with the main specialization being audio, video, mobile money and data requirements (Barton, 2015). In 2008, the government of Kenya sold 25% of its stake to make the private liability company a public company with limited liability (www.safaricom.co.ke). However, over the years, the company has progressed continuously with different innovations including network infrastructure capability and hence today the company brags of being one of the most technologically advanced and widespread networks in the country (Toili, 2015).

Safaricom Public Limited Company is a dynamic telecom operator, which started as a department of Kenya Posts & Telecommunications Corporation, launching its operations in 1993 based on an analogue network and was upgraded to GSM in 1996. Safaricom Public Limited Company was incorporated on April 1997 under the Companies Act as a private limited liability company. It was converted into a public company with limited liability in 2002 (Safaricom, 2011). By virtue of the 60% shareholding held by the Government of Kenya, Safaricom was a state corporation within the meaning of the State Corporations Act (Chapter 446) of the Laws of Kenya. Until 2007, Telkom Kenya Limited held the Government of Kenya shares, which was a state corporation under the Act. Following the Offer and sale of 25% of the issued shares in Safaricom held by the Government of Kenya to the public in March 2008, the Government of Kenya ceased to have a controlling interest in Safaricom under the State Corporations Act (Magutu, 2010).

2. Statement of the Problem

Improvement of customer satisfaction should be a continuous process for the sustained survival in an ever-competitive environment. Total Quality Management impacts the creation of systems in an organization that help in learning, cooperation and facilitating the implementation of different management practices to ensure customer satisfaction is enhanced. Adebajo and Kehoe (2009), noted that the performance improvement contributes to customer satisfaction and ultimately to firm survival. The implementation of Total Quality Management in organizations creates improved performance by engaging activities of management leadership, strategic planning, engaging training programs and ensuring knowledge and process management are implemented. Over the years, Safaricom customers have felt exploited by the company exorbitant call and mobile data rates making them to go for cheaper mobile networks like Airtel and Telkom Kenya. This has consistently shown in low Net promoter score surveys done by Safaricom internal surveys where customer's satisfaction has struggled with Safaricom trailing behind other telco's on the survey. (Safaricom NPS surveys, 2017/2019) Safaricom has been affected by day-to-day change in technology and more demand on innovations, pressure from regulation authorities to adhere to the new rules and need to satisfy customers who demand more from innovative products. In this regard, TQM is being used for continuous improvement of process, involvement of suppliers, new training of staff to increase efficiency in satisfying Customer needs and achieve the desired organization performance (Muturi, 2014). TQM tools and procedures may vary but the fundamental philosophy and concepts are equally important to industries from manufacturing as well as service.

Awuor and Kigathi (2012), in their study examined quality process and culture, leadership and employees involvement but did mention the intention of applying TQM in value creation and customer satisfaction. Shekoufeh and Siavash (2013), in their study of telecommunication industry in Iran concluded that TQM methods (leadership, Employee relations, customer relations, and product/ process management) could positively and significantly affect quality, innovation and organizational performance. Kathaari (2014) in her study only examined specific TQM practices effects on operational performance but did not examine the impact of implementing TQM in relation to the training of employees and quality designs. Ngambi's (2015) study shows only employment training and empowerment has a significant impact on financial performance and corporate social responsibility, leadership commitment, quality control and inspection have a significant impact on cost reduction. As demonstrated in the existing literature, there remains unresolved issues along the conceptual, contextual and methodological aspects in the relationship between TQM and customer satisfaction. The current study seeks to examine the relationship between TQM dimensions (process management, strategic quality planning and customer focus) and customer satisfaction

with Safaricom Public Limited Company. This study sought to address this gap on influence of total quality management practices on customer satisfaction of Safaricom Public Limited Company, Kenya.

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective was to establish the influence of total quality management practices on customer satisfaction of Safaricom Public Limited Company, Kenya.

Specific objectives were:

- i. To establish the influence of process management on customer satisfaction of Safaricom Public Limited Company, Kenya
- ii. To establish the influence of strategic quality planning on customer satisfaction of Safaricom Public Limited Company, Kenya
- iii. To explore the influence of customer focus on customer satisfaction of Safaricom Public Limited Company, Kenya

4. Theoretical Review

This section examines the different theories that informed the study on the effects of total quality management on customer satisfaction. There are three theories, which will guide this study. These are Deming's theory of profound knowledge, Kanter model of change management and Disconfirmation theory.

4.1 Deming's Theory of Profound Knowledge

Deming (1993) developed Deming's theory, and its insightful knowledge is based on a management philosophy and it is founded on systems theory. Deming's theory is grounded on the principle that institutions are established under systems made of interrelated processes and people hence making the system one component. Employees' success, according to the theory, is dependent on the capability of the management to develop a delicate balance for different components so that the entire system can be optimized, (Martinez-Costa 2008). According to Deming (1993), the knowledge generally comes from outside the system and is only useful if it is invited and received with an eagerness to learn and improve. According to Deming (1993), the journey from prevailing management, style to one of quality requires an effective understanding of the systems in the organization. A system is made of interrelated components. Quality can be defined as the optimization of components' performance to achieve the goals and objectives of the system. According to Martinez-Costa (2008), lack of clearly defined purpose is experienced in a significant number of organizations, mostly long-range purposes (Carder & Ragan 2009).

The theory is relevant to the study because according to Deming (1993), an organization needs to be managed because it will not manage itself. This means that strategic quality planning at Safaricom Public Limited Company must be managed. To do this, the leaders in Safaricom Public Limited Company must seek to understand the elements of total quality management. Without this understanding, Safaricom Public Limited Company system cannot be well managed and poor performance can be recorded. Based on Deming's theory, as the quality of knowledge improves, more opportunities of better future outcomes are generated. Therefore, this study predicts that there is a positive relationship between TQM and customer satisfaction.

4.2 Kanter Model of Change Management

The model of change management by Kanter (1992), focuses on managing the political context by providing information, resources, and support for the change effort. The main aim is that,

for the organizational change to be successful, it needs to be holistic and systematic, addressing individual, social and organizational factors. The model suggests a number of actions that should be taken during change management. They include building coalitions by seeking support from power sources and stakeholders; articulate a shared vision, mission and desired goal and results. The structure and process that will guide the change including clear reporting relationships, coordination between activities and teams plus accountability for outcomes, ensure communication to keep people informed; education and training to increase their capacities, institution policies and systems are reviewed in order to align the strategy with resource allocation. In this process, exploration is one of the most important processes and it entails knowing there is a need to enact changes, looking for assistance from outside and making sufficient contact with the consultant to ensure the responsibilities of each party are well addressed, Rainey (2009). During this process, the institution is expected to clearly establish whether the specific decision needs to be made and if they find the need to make the changes, they decide on the resources to be committed for the process, Rainey (2009). Planning phase is the stage where the organizations understand their problems, Rainey (2009). Action phase involves the implementation and evaluation of the changes to make adjustments where necessary.

The theory is relevant to the study because, for the achievement of good organizational performance in Safaricom Public Limited Company change is inevitable. To achieve the high performance Safaricom Public Limited Company need to establish strong customer focus. There are four key stages to be followed namely exploration, planning, action, and implementation. The exploration phase involves Safaricom Public Limited Company understanding the main problems facing the organization. This will also involve making major changes on the information collection processes to establish the most effective problem diagnosis technique. The action phase will involve changing the evaluation and implementation of the results to make it possible to adjust where necessary hence achieving higher performance, (Rainey 2009). Therefore, the theory makes enough suggestions that TQM impacts customer satisfaction positively.

4.3 Disconfirmation Theory

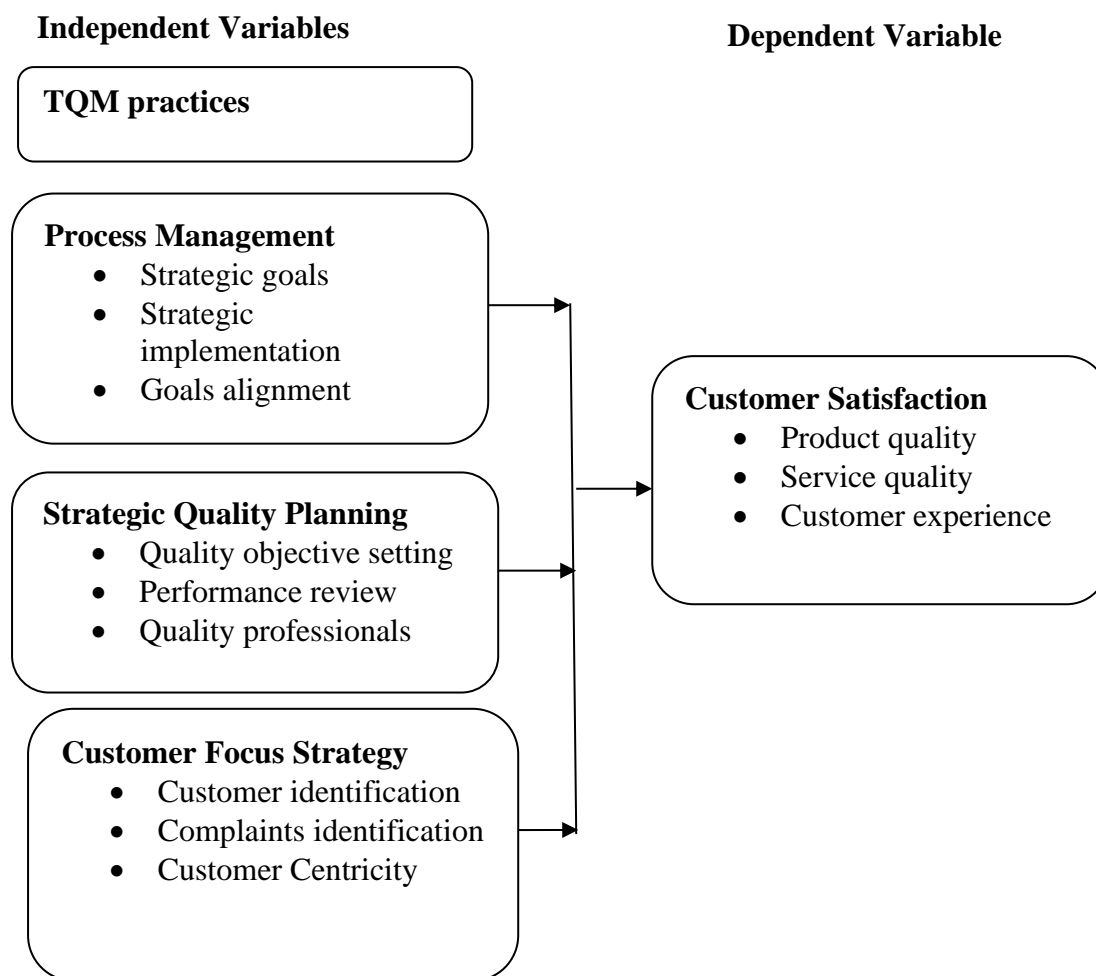
Oliver (1980) conceptualized disconfirmation of expectations paradigm. It came from a subject of study for antecedents of satisfaction (Petrick 2004). The standard approach to study the satisfaction involves comparison of prior expectations with observed performance. Thus, in this theory, the customer's perception of overall satisfaction results from a comparison between expectation and outcome performance. Therefore, expectation and outcome performance are two important variables, which can influence the judgment of satisfaction measure. Because customers' satisfaction is one of the curial factors to predict the customer purchase tendency. To investigate satisfaction toward the products is also a main topic in customer behavior research. Based on expectation disconfirmation theory, firm can increase satisfaction by increasing perceived product performance or decreasing expectation.

Disconfirmation theory argues that 'satisfaction' is related to the size and direction of the disconfirmation experience that occurs as a result of comparing service performance against expectations. Patrick (2004) found in the meta-analysis that the disconfirmation paradigm is the best predictor of customer satisfaction. Ekinçi et al (2004) cites updated definition on the disconfirmation theory, which states "satisfaction" is the customer fulfilment response. Basically, satisfaction is the result of direct experiences with products or services, and it occurs by comparing perceptions against a standard (Petrick 2004). Research also indicates that how the service was delivered is more important than the outcome of the service process, and dissatisfaction towards the service often simply occurs when

customer perceptions do not meet their expectations. The theory is relevant to the study since the customer's perception of overall satisfaction results from a comparison between expectation and outcome performance in Safaricom Public Limited Company. Because customers' satisfaction is one of the crucial factors at Safaricom Public Limited Company the theory, helps to predict customer purchase tendency. To investigate satisfaction toward the products is also a main issue in customer satisfaction research. Based on expectation disconfirmation theory, Safaricom Public Limited Company can increase satisfaction by increasing perceived product performance or decreasing customer expectation.

5. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Literature Review (2019)

The conceptual framework refers to use of a diagram to represent variables in a research. The framework shows the relationship between independent and dependent variables (Barton, 2015). The independent variables include process management, strategic quality planning, and customer focus while the dependent variable is the customer satisfaction. When an organization chooses to make quality a major customer satisfaction it becomes the central issue in strategic planning. This is especially reflected in vision, mission and policy guidelines of an organization. A customer-focused strategy delivers different services to different customers based on how unique the customers are. While product-centric organizations focus on selling

the same products to as many customers as possible. Customer-centric organizations focus on selling more products to the same customers.

6. Research Methodology

The study employed a descriptive study design which is most suited to justify the connection between process management, strategic quality planning, and customer focus and customer satisfaction. Descriptive surveys are beneficial in describing the characteristics of a big population. Moreover, high reliability is easy to get by offering all subjects with a standardized incentive, which makes sure that observer prejudice is really discarded (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2011). The study focused on staff at Safaricom Public Limited Company working in the customer experience department (analyst performance & quality assurance, customer experience executives and customer experience team leaders) within the customer experience department. The study focused on 70 staff in the customer experience department of Safaricom Public Limited Company headquarters and call center in Kenya.

The study applied a census, which focused on all the 65 staff in the customer experience department of Safaricom Public Limited Company. The study utilized primary data. Primary data was gathered by use of structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were self-administered, drop and pick later method. The questionnaires promoted uniformity on the way the questions were asked. A pilot study was carried out with five respondents who were selected purposively as they represented the three groups of the target population. The respondents were not included in the sample. As indicated by Kothari (2014), the pre-test gathering is not required to be chosen statistically. The quantitative data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The results were presented in tables, frequencies and percentages. Multiple linear regressions was used to show the correlation between process management, strategic quality planning and customer focus and customer satisfaction at Safaricom limited.

7. Data Analysis Results

In this study, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the influence among predictor variables. The research used statistical package for social sciences (SPSS V 21.0) to code, enter and compute the measurements of the multiple regressions. The model summary is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.710 ^a	.504	.463	.12909

Source: Research data, (2019)

The coefficient of determination (R-Square) shows how process management, strategic quality planning and customer focus on customer satisfaction at Safaricom Public Limited Company. Table 4.10 shows that the R-square for the model was 0.504. This implies that, process management; strategic quality planning and customer focus account for 50.4% of the variation in on customer satisfaction at Safaricom Public Limited Company. Additionally, the coefficient suggests that other factors account for 49.6% of the variation in customer satisfaction at Safaricom Public Limited Company. The next part of the regression analysis involved computing the ANOVA

The ANOVA was generated to help evaluate whether the model was statistically significant in explaining the link between the study variables (process management, strategic quality

planning and customer focus) and customer satisfaction at Safaricom Public Limited Company. Table 4.11 displays the results of the ANOVA.

Table 2: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.023	3	3.674	9.904	.002 ^b
	Residual	18.178	49	.371		
	Total	29.201	52			

Source: Research data, (2019)

From the ANOVA statics, the study established the regression model had a significance level of 0.002% which is an indication that the data was ideal for making a conclusion on the population parameters as the value of significance (p-value) was less than 5%. The calculated value was greater than the critical value ($9.904 > 4.49$) an indication that process management, strategic quality planning and customer focus all have a significant effects on customer satisfaction at Safaricom Public Limited Company. The significance value was less than 0.05 indicating that the model was significant.

In addition, the study used the coefficient table to determine the study model. The findings are presented in the table 4.12 below.

Table 3: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.728	.736		2.347	.023
Process management	.632	.229	.320	2.762	.008
Strategic quality planning	.546	.210	.300	2.603	.012
Customer focus	.681	.262	.300	2.596	.012

Source: Research data, (2019)

As per the SPSS generated output as presented in table above, the equation ($Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1A_1 + \beta_2A_2 + \epsilon$) becomes: $Y = 1.728 + .632 + 0.546 + 0.681$. The findings imply that holding the (process management, strategic quality planning and customer focus) constant, quality of service delivery at customer satisfaction at Safaricom Public Limited Company would remain at 1.728. Additionally, a unit change in process management while holding other factors constant, customer satisfaction at Safaricom Public Limited Company changes by a factor of 0.632. Bofulo (2016) concluded that process management in the form of capacity management practices influences customer satisfaction. Results show that a unit change in strategic quality planning while holding the other factors constant would change customer satisfaction at Safaricom Public Limited Company by a factor of 0.546. Similar results by Mukwakungu and Mbohwa, (2017) reaffirming that strategic quality planning influenced customer satisfaction. Results show that a unit change in customer focus while holding the other factors constant would change customer satisfaction at Safaricom Public Limited Company by a factor of 0.681. These findings support the conclusion by Mukwakungu and Mbohwa, (2017) reaffirming that strategic quality planning influenced customer satisfaction.

8. Conclusions

The study concluded that process management had a positive significant effect on customer satisfaction of Safaricom public limited company, Kenya. The company had put in place various measures that encouraged process management, for instance, managers at all levels ensures that they closely monitor daily running of operations at the company. On the other hand, the company continually educated its managers in view of achieving strategic objectives. The top management ensures that strategic goals are well formulated, realistic methodology that guided the actualization of the set goals was put in place and that the management ensured that workflow systems are well connected to achieve customer satisfaction.

In line with the second objective, this study concluded that quality planning had a positive significant effect on customer satisfaction of Safaricom public limited company. On measures put in place to enhance planning, the firm allocates budget to quality management and control. On the other hand, employees attend quality management workshops to be acquainted with the latest strategies. Further that study concluded that planning is always guided on ICT generated facts and that the company ensured quality initiatives put in place are the right ones. On customer focus, the study concluded it had a positive significant effect on customer satisfaction of Safaricom public limited company, Kenya. Customer complaints at the company were addressed within stipulated timelines quality communication with customers is key for the company. Customer satisfaction is always accorded the first priority and the company ensures that customer input is integrated in the development of new products and service solutions and that company research each customer thoroughly to serve them better.

9. Recommendations

The study recommended that the management of Safaricom public limited company should continue aligning business processes to fit organizational strategic future goals. This can be actualized through designing and implementation of process architectures and establishment of process measurement metrics. The research recommended that Safaricom public limited company should remain committed towards regulating the service providers to ensure quality services are rendered without extortion of customers. Since customer focus, its self was found to play an instrumental role in promoting customer satisfaction this study therefore recommended that the company must make the efforts to follow-up on all customer needs and embrace pre-emptive acknowledgement for better service delivery.

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