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THE ROLE OF PROJECT QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON COMPANY'S COMPETITIVENESS: A CASE STUDY OF SAFARICOM LIMITED PROJECTS

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to establish the role of project quality management practices on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects. The study specific objectives were to establish the role of process management as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness, assess the effect of customer focus as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness, examine the influence of organization cultures as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness and determine how quality policies as a project quality management practice impacts company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects. The study was informed by total quality management theory, institutional theory, the resource based theory and stakeholder theory. Target population involved 140 employees categorized as top management, programme managers, project managers, project team leaders, project end user stakeholders and project finance. Yamane simplified formula was used to calculate sample size of 103 staff as sample. The study employed questionnaire to collect primary data. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire. Data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings showed that process management ($\beta_1 = 0.207, p<0.05$) customer focus ($\beta 2 = 0.195, p<0.05$), organization cultures ($\beta_3 = 0.348, p<0.05$) and policies ($\beta_4 = 0.230, p<0.05$) have a positive and significant effect on company competitiveness. Thus, the study concluded that increasing the degree to which process management, organization cultures, customer focus, policies as a project quality management practice is implemented in the firm had an incremental effect on company's competitiveness. Based on the findings, the study recommended further enhancement through strategic investments, inclusivity in the decision making process, enhancing the monitoring mechanisms and specific or targeted investment in the training of the members to ensure that they are well equipped to drive the objectives of the firm. The firm needs to further involve all the stakeholders within the decision making process, mutually engage with all the stakeholders especially in terms of communication and invest heavily in customer experience management.

Key Words: *Process Management, Customer Focus, Organization Cultures, Quality Policies*

INTRODUCTION

Project Quality Management has been strongly emphasized all over the world especially due to its importance in enhancing performance and increasing customer satisfaction. Quality being a universal phenomenon has seen a universal shift in the mindset of many builders and makers of products. They seriously focus towards ensuring that their products do meet their customer's expectations. The emphasis on quality management has increased especially with the current high competition in the market and globalization (Rumane, 2011).

International quality standards organization (ISO), defines quality as the “"The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs". or the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfill requirements. Successful organizations create projects that produce desired results within established time frames with assigned resources thus the purpose of project quality, management is to ensure that project will satisfy the needs to which it was undertaken. (International Standards Organization, 2017)

Quality management is a continuous process that starts and ends with the project. It is more about preventing and avoiding than measuring and fixing poor quality outputs. It is part of every project management processes from the moment the project initiates to the final steps in the project closure phase. Project quality management involves three main processes: Quality planning Management is the process of identifying quality requirements and/or standards for the project and its deliverables, and documenting how the project will demonstrate compliance with relevant quality requirements. It involves identifying which quality standards are relevant to a project and how to satisfy them and ensures correct communication of quality in a format that is understandable and completes (Schwalbe, 2006).

Quality Assurance involves periodic evaluation of project activities and performance to ensure that project satisfies relevant quality standards and provides a way to get an independent review of the Quality process. (Schwalbe, 2006). Quality control is the use of techniques and activities to monitor Specific project results to ensure they comply with relevant quality standards. It compares actual quality performance with goals and defines appropriate action in response.

The competitiveness means the choice of the working method used in strategy for achieving exceptional goals and surpassing the competitors. The term "competitive advantage" is characterized by phrases such as multi-level structure, a unique position. The specific character of the strategy and competitive advantage imposes the necessity to be flexible and to cope with the uncertainty. The competitive advantage concerns a factor or several factors that make the organization successful, but the sources of the success are difficult to be reproduced by competitors. The existing studies indicate different sources of competitive advantage, such as: resources and capabilities of the organization, innovativeness and creativity, quality, time and speed of acting, success in implementing the strategy, ability to learn and manage the knowledge, unique technology, organizational culture, organizational freedom, reputation, brand, know-how, the role of human capital, networking.(Sołoducho-Pelc, L. (2014).

Accompany strategy must be matched by not only its external competencies, but also internal resources and competitive capabilities as competitive forces are never the same in every industry. The challenge for every manage is to craft competitive advantage that allows accompany to hold on its own against rivals and that can produce competitive edge.(Thompson, Strickland, Gamble 2010).

Rajesh, Garg and Deshmukh 2007) Organizations should make the necessary investment to develop new competencies, and should address cost reduction and quality improvement.. The main factors include: customer values, shareholder values and ability to act and react within a competitive environment.

A sound quality management programme with processes in place to monitor the work on a project is good investment. Not only does it contribute to client satisfaction, it helps organization use their resources more effectively and efficiently by reducing waste and revisions. (Wysockcki, 2009). The cost of producing faulty products in the United Kingdom has been estimated as 10% of the gross national product: several thousand million pounds. Improving quality aims to reduce this cost which cannot be achieved overnight but requires an investment to be made in activities which are designed to avoid defective production, not activities designed to detect defects after they have been made (Dahlgaard, Kristensen and Kanji, 2012).

Many large organizations are now trying to emulate Japanese achievement in their commitment to quality. Each is developing its own approach and may give a different title to its efforts but each has similar elements to Total Quality Management' (TQM) (Atieno, Patrick, Ogweno, 2014). The development of Total Quality Management in America started at the beginning of the 1980s when American companies realized that not only Japan but also Korea and Taiwan were coming forward with quality products and services to capture the American market. With short time-to-market, fierce competition in an already crowded marketplace, and ever-more demanding consumers, organizations must continually make trade-offs in identifying project priorities and allocating resources (Jancikova & Brychta, 2016). Cooper (2010) estimated that 46 percent of the resources that companies devote to the design, development, and launch of new products go into projects that don't succeed in the marketplace or perhaps never even make it to market.

Organizations are applying process approaches in their operations, in other words, they are using quality management in their project management. Organizations are increasingly standardizing their project management practices across all or most of their enterprise (PMI, 2012).One aspect of this synergy is the way organizations implement quality management in their operations. World-wide quality awareness has increased as a result of global competition, release of ISO standards, ISO certification requirements by customers, local, regional and national quality awards, and educational efforts by institutions, quality societies and governments (Kull, & Wacker, 2010)).

According to the Kenya communications regulations act, 2001 section 39(1) and (2) "Interconnection agreements shall provide for adequate capacity, service levels and reasonable remedies for any failure to meet those service levels. Parties to an interconnection agreement shall comply with all relevant service standards of the International Telecommunications Union and such other technical standards as the Commission may from time to time determine (Marangu, 2012).

The 2004 inauguration of the East Africa Community (EAC), a politico-economic block to harness development in the East African countries of, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (www.eac.int), further generated pressure on Kenya to provide the requisite quality management leadership desperately needed in this union. Moreover, the status of Kenya as a leading member of the Common Markets for East and South Africa (COMESA), which brings together 13 countries of the East, South and Central Africa (www.comesa.int), further created a conducive competitive environment that fosters quality development in Kenya (Zairi and Marwa, 2008).

In 1974 the Kenyan government established the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS), with the aim of preparing standards relating to products, measurements, materials, processes etc., and their promotion at national, regional and international level; certification of industrial products, assistance in production of quality goods, quality inspection of goods at ports of entrance; improvement of measurement accuracies, and dissemination of information relating to standards KEBS has since developed Kenya Standards (i.e. precise and authoritative statements of the criteria necessary to ensure that a material, product, or procedure is fit for the purpose for which it is intended). To ensure product standardization, KEBS also operates a certification-marking scheme. (Kenya Bureau of Standards, 2017).

Safaricom was started in the year 2000 and is one of a small group of about 400 companies across Africa whose annual revenues are more than $1 billion. The telecommunications in Kenya sub-sector continues to be a significant contributor of this growth with Safaricom and other players supporting economic growth. (Safaricom, 2016). The regulatory environment that Safaricom operates is dynamic and increasingly becoming complex and thus remains a key area of focus with aspect to maintaining quality of its products and services. Safaricom offers mobile and financial services which attract regulatory oversight from different major regulators.

The nature of products and services it provide requires that we continuously comply with a wide range of rules and laws from major regulators namely Communications Authority of Kenya (CA), Competition Authority of Kenya (CAK) and Central Bank of Kenya (CBK). (Safaricom, 2016). According to its annual report, Safaricom has 4,602 employees comprising 50% Male and 50% Female spread across six regions. In the year 2016, Safaricom implemented a regional operations structure with six market regions rolled out that have brought us closer to the market and enhanced Localization of the company strategy with tailor-made regional promotions and offers. According to the CEO, "our strategy continues to be guided by the three strategic pillars of putting our customer's first, providing relevant products and enhancing excellence in our operations.

Statement of the Problem

With Growing competition and customer focus, recent research has shown that firms are currently looking at ways of gaining competitive advantage through project quality management in dealing with cost reduction and product differentiating. (Porter, 2008) says the focus of management has been to create unique competitive position for organizations. The costs of doing a quality job, conducting quality improvements, and achieving goals must be carefully managed so that the long-term effect of quality on the organization is a desirable one. These costs must be a true measure of the quality effort, and they are best determined from an analysis of the costs of quality which provides a method of assessing the effectiveness of the management of quality and a means of determining problem areas, opportunities, savings, and action priorities. Many organizations will have true quality-related costs as high as 15 to 20 % of sales revenue, some going as high as 40 % of total operations. A general rule of thumb is that costs of poor quality in a thriving company will be about 10 to 15 % of operations. Effective quality improvement programs can reduce this substantially, thus making a direct contribution to profits (Cost of Quality, 2018).

Safaricom Limited recorded a decline on the voice minutes used by customers from 8.7 billion minutes to 8.5 billion minutes during the quarter under review showing the need to improve its voice products and services. With the requirement from Communication Authority (CA) that every operator in Kenya is must attain a service level of 99.99% failure to which the Telecommunication will be fined between 500,000 to 0.2% of its gross revenues, all telecom companies must thus put in mechanisms to improve its network and create products and services that meets quality standards (Safaricom, 2016).

Project quality management is a key competitive advantage that companies can leverage on to ensure faster go to market with reduced costs resulting from poor quality both globally and within the Kenyan context. However, despite the growing popularity and increasing numbers of PQM organizations across many sectors in the global economy, whether this brings about better performance is still an open question. Previous studies (Omega, 2012; Onyambu, 2013 & Owino & Kibera, 2015) have been done on Project Quality Management and its impact in different organizations; however, little research has been done to determine how the Project Quality Management affects competitive advantage. The focus of this study was to identify the Project Quality Management dimensions and competitive advantage in Safaricom Limited Kenya.This research analyzes challenges faced by Telecommunication's in adoption of quality management as a key differentiator and how they can use it a competitive advantage to drive profitability and customer loyalty.

Research Objectives

To establish the role of project quality management practices on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects. The specific objectives were:-

- To establish the role of process management as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects
- To assess the impact of customer focus as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects
- To examine the influence of organization cultures as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects
- To determine how quality policies as a project quality management practice impacts company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Total Quality Management Theory

Total quality management was founded on the principles advocated by Edward Deming, Joseph, Juran and Philip (1983). Total quality management processes are based on Deming simple Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle`. The emphasis of TQM is on addressing quality issues in total systems which run continuously and concurrently in every area a company does business (Kerzner, 2010).

Total Quality Management is a management approach that originated in the 1950's and has steadily become more popular since the early 1980's. Total Quality is a description of the culture, attitude and organization of a company that strives to provide customers with products and services that satisfy their needs. The culture requires quality in all aspects of the company's operations, with processes being done right the first time and defects and waste eradicated from operations. One of the keys to implementing TQM can be found in this definition. In describing TQM as a structured system, means that it is a strategy derived from internal and external customer and supplier wants and needs that have been determined through Daily Management and Cross-Functional Management. (Luburić, 2013)

Process Management as an element of organization basically deals with the procedure that how organization design and produce product/service through improvement of delivery requirements. TQM as a theory therefore is introduces processes with objective of improving the quality of product and services. Many organizations have started implementing TQM and producing quality goods to strengthen their competitive position consumers. This study found that TQM practices are contributing towards operational performance with positive association between TQM elements namely, leadership, customer satisfaction, Management of People, Strategic Management, and process management. (Pentland, 2012)

An integration of the Total Quality Management principles into the development cycle of software applications is founded on the underlying need to enhance product quality, accelerate schedules, and minimize the involved costs of development and maintenance. Therefore, TQM will have a far-reaching significance to the design and development of the application in that it will improve understandability, reliability, visibility, application robustness, supportability, and maintainability (Rai, and Mukherjee, 2015).

The theory is relevant to the study by tevealing that TQM concentration is among the vital requirements in a telecommunication industry that is experiencing stiff competition. The outcomes of the initiative included heightened productivity, more satisfaction of customers, and greater quality products.

Institutional Theory

The proponents of this theory Engwall (2003) and Söderlund, (2004) argue that Project management has had a tendency to treat projects in isolation), although they also found out that recent research has begun addressing this. The importance of context for example is in particular by institutional factors such as experiences from past activities, politics, and institutional norms, values and routines, an argument also developed by Hodgson and Cicmil (2007). There is benefit in focusing management attention to the development of an appropriate institutional context for projects, rather than being about the activity of managing projects.

This theory therefore provides a context for creating project quality policies at Institutional level by developing an appropriate institutional context for projects and programs in order to enable them to succeed and enhance their effectiveness within organizational and institutions environment. The key concern is with how to deliver projects efficiently: ‘on time, in budget, to scope’. (Geraldi and Morris 2011).

Institutional theory also explains the role of professional and semi-professional bodies which provides policies and guidance on key project knowledge and aspects. The attributes of professionals is evidence of the mastery of a distinct body of knowledge leading to a 'license to practice' - Certification. This can be seen through existence of guides such as Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK®) leading to its certification program and the ISO standards which provide guidelines on policies on project management among others. (Hodgson and Muzio, 2011).

The theory recognizes the embedment of institutional actors in an environment of formal and informal rules such as in creating legislation and policies governing project quality. Institutional theorists suggest that organizational actions and processes are driven by their actors in order to justify and plausibly explain their actions. According to this perspective, strategy implementation are rationally accounted for by organizational actors and rooted in the normative and social context that motivates actors to seek legitimacy (Dacin, Oliver and Roy, 2007). Through various cognitive, normative and regulative forces organizations adopt a standardized set of practices (Scott, 2001).

Organizations try to fit in with the norm by adopting strategy implementation that validates them as part of the organizational field. Institutional theorists argue that organizational processes and routines are institutionalized through a series of adaptive processes that are less influenced by individual members. This adaptive process leads to organizational isomorphism that is the result of imitating the norms, practices and processes of dominant organizations in the environment (Staw and Epstein, 2000). This theory provides impact to the study in discussing how organization culture affects competitive advantage

The Resource Based Theory

The study was also informed by Resources Based View Theory (RBV) by Wernerfelt (1984). The essence of the RBV lies in the emphasis of resources and capabilities as the genesis of competitive advantage: Resources are heterogeneously distributed across competing firms, and are imperfectly mobile which, in turn, makes this heterogeneity persist over time. Dynamic capabilities, encapsulating the evolutionary nature of resources and capabilities, emerged to enhance the RBV (Eisenhardt and Martin 2000; Zahra and George 2002). Two key assumptions of RBV are that the resource bundles and capabilities underlying production are heterogeneous across firms and that these differences may be long lasting and imperfectly mobile. Therefore, the embeddedness of culture types in a firm's processes and routines provides a potential source of competitive advantage. (Janine, 2013)

The supporters of this view argue that organizations should look inside the company to find the sources of competitive advantage instead of looking at competitive environment for it. According to Zubac, Hubbard and Johnson (2010) The Resource-Based View (RBV) is currently the dominant theory to explain the performance of the organization and the internal attributes that create a competitive edge. This theory is important because it emphasizes the dynamics at work within an organization to create such a competitive advantage and to deliver excellence in a world increasingly characterized by innovation and change. The RBV theory can explain and can be used to determine which internal organizational components and/or attributes lead to a competitive advantage. This entry is made possible by several constructs that enable a comparative analysis across functions and departments. These constructs are respectively the "resource', the "capability", the "core capability", and the "dynamic capability". A "resource" is defined as an asset used by the organization in its production process (considered in its broad sense); this asset is controlled or owned by the organization and can be accumulated, as a stock.

Right organizational culture and working environment ensures success of the organization and competitiveness focusing on areas such as leadership, customer focus, and processes adherence among others. Different RBV schools of thought emphasize various concepts such as the resource, the capability, knowledge as the ultimate capability, and dynamic capabilities as second order capabilities. The most common conception is that organizational capabilities are built upon a combination of resources and related to time and "excellence", in comparison to the organization rivals. An organizational capability is a firm's ability to perform a coordinated set of tasks utilizing organizational resources (Helfat & Peteraf, 2003, Sirmon et al, 2007).

To become a high-performance organization, key members need to understand their business strategy and create an adaptive, flexible, constructive culture that will facilitate the implementation of the business strategy. The resource based view (RBV) can be used to harness organizational culture of performance thus its proponents suggests that competitive advantage and performance results are a consequence of firm-specific resources and capabilities that are costly to copy by other competitors these resources and capabilities can be important factors of sustainable competitive advantage and superior firm performance if they possess certain special characteristics. They should be valuable, increasing efficiency and effectiveness, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable (Barney, Ketchen and wright, 2011).

Using the theory of resource-based view (RBV) emphasizes the firm's resources as the fundamental determinants of competitive advantage and performance. It adopts two assumptions in analyzing sources of competitive advantage (Barney, 2003). First, this model assumes that firms within an industry (or within a strategic group) may be heterogeneous with respect to the bundle of resources that they control. Second, it assumes that resource heterogeneity may persist over time because the resources used to implement firms' strategies are not perfectly mobile across firms (i.e., some of the resources cannot be traded in factor markets and are difficult to accumulate and imitate). Resource uniqueness is considered a necessary condition for a resource bundle to contribute to a competitive advantage.

The argument goes "If all firms in a market have the same stock of resources, no strategy is available to one firm that would not also be available to all other firms in the market". Unlike traditional industrial organization economics, which relies heavily on the analysis of the competitive environment, the resource-based view focuses on the analysis of various resources possessed by the firm. Because many resources are firm-specific and not perfectly mobile or imitable, firms are continuously heterogeneous in terms of their resource base. Sustained firm resource heterogeneity, thus, becomes a possible source of competitive advantage (Das, 2000). The theory was relevant on discussing the affect of process management and customer focus on competitive advantage

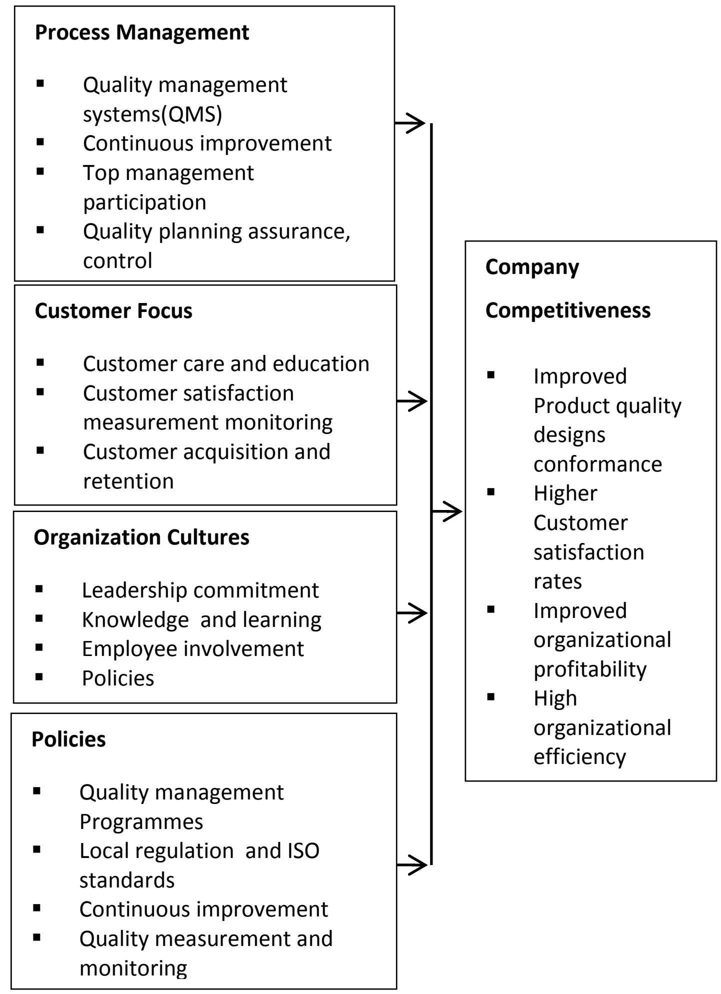
Stakeholder theory

The origins of project stakeholder management are found in the theories of strategic management led by R. Edward Freeman in the 1980s who encouraged a Stakeholder View of the Firm. Dealing with individuals or groups who may affect or be affected by the project processes, contents, or outcomes (i.e., the project stakeholders) has been acknowledged as a core task within project management for a long time. (Project Management Institute 2015). In this study, this theory is used to analyze how project stakeholders including customer's behavior can affect an organization. Stakeholder management in a project must also involve an understanding of the behavior of the stakeholders during the life cycle of the project, with the aim of performing actions that meet their expectations (Beringer, Jonas and Kock, 2013). This research looks at customer management form stakeholder view in project quality management by looking at processes enquired to attain customer satisfaction.

According to PMI (2013), stakeholder management in projects includes all the processes required in identifying the people, groups or organizations that may have an impact on or be impacted by the project, analyzing their expectations and their impact on the design, and developing appropriate management strategies for their engagement. Stakeholder theory can be utilized to describe how stakeholders can influence implementing new practices. Stakeholder theory discusses how different stakeholders can influence and shape the firm's behavior. This research defines a stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm's objectives" Despite different interpretations and definitions of stakeholders, stakeholder theory acknowledges that firms are required to address the needs, expectations, and interests of stakeholders. (Freeman, Harrison & Wicks, 2009).

According to stakeholder theory, stakeholders' pressure leads to implementation of new management practices by firms (It is argued that new practices are institutionalized by organizations in order to address the needs of their stakeholders: employees, consumers, suppliers/partners, and the community. Organizational survival and legitimacy are contingent upon the degree to which the firm satisfying the needs of its stakeholders, and how the firm actively deals with the external forces and changes in the environment (Mellat-Parast, 2015).

Conceptual Framework



Independent variable **Dependent variable**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Process Management

According to Gartner (2011) "Improving business processes" has been a business strategy of major priority in recent years and will be pursued by CIOs in the years to come. In that context, process-oriented quality management has gained considerable attention, providing the process manager with a multitude of methods such as Six Sigma, Total Quality Management (TQM).A Quality Management Process is a method by which the quality of deliverables and processes is assured and controlled during the project. This process entails completing a variety of review techniques and implementing a set of corrective actions to address any deficiencies and raise the quality levels within the project. The Quality Management Process involves: Listing the quality targets to achieve (from the Quality Review Form) Identifying the types of quality measurement techniques to be undertaken Measuring deliverable and process quality (via Quality Assurance and Quality Control).

Taking action to enhance the level of deliverable and process; According to (PMI, 2016), three are re three Processes used to manage quality, Plan Quality Management, Perform Quality Assurance and Control. Quality assurance (QA) is the implementation of processes which aim to ensure that concern for quality is designed and built into product/services. Quality control (QC) refers to those processes of verification and will include systematic monitoring, including statistical and other management information, recurring and one off audits and inspection activity designed to establish whether standards are being achieved. Quality control is one aspect of quality assurance. It should provide objective feedback to line managers who have continuing responsibility for quality, about what is actually being achieved (PMI 2014).

A Quality Management System (QMS) is a management system to direct and control an organization with regard to quality" (International Organization for Standardization, 2005) Implementing a QMS under ISO reference means the accomplishment of the Requirements included in ISO 9001 Standard. The overall requirement consist of a process approach application(which requires the company to identify the processes, understand its sequence and interaction, elaborate the necessary procedures, assure resource availability, control performance and take the necessary actions to achieve continuous improvement (Fons, 2011).

Customer Focus

Loyal customers often will, over time bring substantial revenues and demand less attention from the firms they patronize (Yang and Peterson, 2004). Indeed, it is common to find loyal customers sympathizing with poor service, displaying less sensitivity to price and disseminating positive word of mouth about the service to others (Yang and Peterson, 2004). On the other hand, loyalty is important to customers because loyal customers incur less time and costs in searching for information and evaluating purchase decisions, and also incur less or no switching costs. Consequently, customer loyalty is beneficial to both the customer and the service provider and so is a major source of sustained competitive edge. Intensive competitiveness in terms of both quantity and quality makes it extremely difficult for a firm to differentiate itself from its competitors. Moreover, dynamic business environments and increasing customer power have pushed firms toward a customer-focused strategy, especially using new technology to build relationships with the customer (Ryding, 2010).

Generally, customer loyalty has been referred to as the link between customer attitude, repeat purchasing, and financial performance. In terms of the antecedents of customer loyalty, a number of constructs have been proposed by previous studies. (Yee, Yeung, and Cheng 2010) found that employee loyalty, service quality, and customer satisfaction have a positive influence on customer loyalty in a high-contact service industry. In addition, loyalty can be developed through different phases, which are cognitive sense, affective sense, conative manner, and finally behavioral manner.

Organization Culture

Watson, (2006) emphasizes that an important trend in managerial thinking in recent decades has been one of encouraging managers to try to create strong organizational cultures. Schein, (2004) suggests that culture and leadership are conceptually intertwined. An understanding of organizational culture is essential for effective leadership. Leaders and managers will be better placed to implement strategy and achieve their goals if they understand the culture of their organization. Strategies that are inconsistent with organizational culture are likely to meet with resistance and will be more difficult or even impossible to implement, while strategies that are in line with it will be easier to put into effect and more likely to succeed. It is also important to understand the existing culture of an organization when thinking of introducing changes.

According to Zalami, (2005) notes that culture can either facilitate or inhibit institutional transformation depending on whether or not the existing culture is aligned with the goals of the proposed change In today's highly competitive and rapidly changing world, providing quality products and services that delight customers is crucial for ensuring long-term organizational success. In this regard, creating and sustaining a "quality culture" is a prerequisite for ensuring a continuous flow of quality products and services. This is primarily due to two main factors: first, organizational culture is significantly correlated with employee behavior and attitude and second, the ultimate creators of quality products and services are people, not technology or formal quality procedures.

Quality begins and ends with the individual; quality people do quality work. People manage processes and make the systems work; processes don't do work, people do. It is people who make poor systems work and good systems fail. In short, quality is the expression of human excellence. Armstrong, (2008) defines organization culture as the pattern of values, norms, beliefs and attitudes Organizational Culture is defined as the shared beliefs, values, attitudes, and behavior patterns that characterize the members of an organization. In a healthy business culture, what's good for the company and for customers comes together and becomes the driving force behind what everyone does. Quality culture starts with leadership that understands and believes the implications of the systems view and knows the necessity of serving customers in order to succeed.

Policies and Regulations

The turn of the century was marked by a number of incidents that lacked corporate accountability, responsibility, fairness, or transparency, and that gave rise to negative developments in corporate governance such as corporate scandals (Bekker & Steyn, 2009). This resulted in the acceleration of country-specific laws and guidelines for corporate governance Apart from non-governmental institutes like the United Nations, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, various countries initiated task teams to develop their own, in-country, corporate governance guidelines. The end-result was a range of corporate governance models that reflected those aspects that each country believed, was important to their internal challenges so as to enhance the extent to which the legal system protects shareholders, reliability of accounting standards, enforcement of regulations. This also led to the quest to define and apply project governance fuelled by the growing frustration of especially large capital project and the realization that project management at a technical and operational level should be complemented and supported at strategic and institutional management levels (Klakegg & Artto, 2008).

Some studies have pointed to the limitations of ISO 9000 in that on its own it does not contribute to quality improvement. ISO certified companies performed better in the reduction of bad products and customer complaints, profitability and productivity. However, it has little influence on market position and competitiveness, and no influence on employee satisfaction and environmental protection, stating that “a causal relationship [between ISO and TQM] is not clear”. He believes that TQM and ISO standards must be completely and systematically implemented and integrated. A systematic way of guaranteeing that organized activities happen the way they are planned. It is a management discipline concerned with preventing problems from occurring by creating the attitudes and controls that prevent defects from happening in the company’s performance cycle (Sun, 2000).

Empirical Review

In today’s increasingly competitive environment, studies done, including by Kimando (2012) found out that quality service and customer satisfaction are critical to corporate organizations. Delivering high quality service is linked to increased profits, cost savings and corporate image. Customer satisfaction is the route to sustained high performance. Organizations should be aware of the fact that customer dissatisfaction leads to defection and long term losses. Ensuring quality customer service is everybody’s business in the organization. Quality customer service leads to customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction plays a vital role for any organization in today’s competitive environment. Customers’ satisfaction leads to customer loyalty and retention.

To achieve quality as competitive advantage, Berawi (2004) found out and concludes that all parties including the clients, company consultants, contractors, entrepreneurs, suppliers, and governing bodies (i.e. all involved stakeholders) must encourage collaboration and commitment to quality. Project organizations have to be quality driven to support healthy growth in today's competitive market in order to promote the march towards globalization (i.e. the one world community) as well as local industries comprising many companies, their design-based organizations need to have superior quality management and knowledge management capabilities to anticipate changes. To attain competitive advantage, and anticipate the needs of the marketplace, companies can use a new system that is called quality value model (QVM) which combines communication and information technologies (ICT) and creative and innovative capabilities of human beings to meet challenges and to develop high-quality products. Quality is a reflection of the properties in a product that customers use to value and evaluate its economic worth.

Price & Ochieng (2009) found out that project teams comprising members from culturally diverse backgrounds bring fresh ideas and new approaches to problem solving. The challenge, however, is that they also introduce different understandings and expectations regarding team dynamics and integration. The question becomes how a project manager can effectively work and influence a multicultural project team, at the same time being attentive to the diversity and creating the structure required for success. The study highlighted that cultural differences among project teams can cause conflict, misunderstanding and poor project performance.

The findings of Nelson (2014) found out that quality audits and firm performance are the main factors influencing the quality of corporate governance in Kenya and South Africa where quality management is now being increasingly accepted as an inclusive concept integrated into general organizational endeavor to provide better quality to customers through effective intra organizational integration and optimal utilization of scarce resources. Consequently, as a complex managerial process, it positions itself among other organizational processes such as TQM, organizational learning or kaizen that ensure an optimal balance between internal organizational design of the firm and its emerging strategies. Studies done by Ibrahim and Marcjanna (2016) in their review of on direct effects of quality management on competitive advantage indicates that quality management programs have to be implemented comprehensively to generate competitive advantage because only some quality management practices are positively associated with competitive advantage and organizations may not need to focus on all practices to achieve competitive advantage. The results indicate that quality management may be a source of competitive advantage. Top management leadership and supplier management differentiate organizations with above average financial performance from its competitors.

METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive survey research design because it allows for systematic collection and analysis of data in order to test hypothesis (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Descriptive surveys are normally intended to describe the characteristics of particular individuals or a group and report things as they are and to provide numerical data of some parts of the population, (Orodho, 2008) and (Cooper and Schindler,2016). Population of this study involved employees and end users at Safaricom categorized as top management, programme managers, project managers, project team leaders, project end user stakeholders and project finance engaged in day to today running of projects. The following multiple linear regressions was used:

$$Y= \beta o + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2+ \beta_3X_3+ \beta_4X_4 + e_0$$

Where:

Bo = Y intercept (constant) whose influence on the model is insignificant

X_1 = Process Management

X_2 = Customer Focus

X_3 = Quality Organization Culture

X_4 = Quality Policies

β_1, β_2, β_3, β_4 = Model coefficients which are significantly large to have significant influence on the model. e is the error term.

FINDINGS

Process Management

As part of the study, the study sought to examine role of project process management as a project quality management practice on a company's competitive in Safaricom limited.

Table 1: Process Management

		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.D
Quality plans are set within organization processes to improve efficiency.	%	3.3	9.9	5.5	42.9	38.5	4.03	1.069
Ethical behaviors and stakeholders rights are included in the processes.	%	4.4	4.4	9.9	45.1	36.3	4.04	1.021
Effective processes enhances Organization competiveness.	%	3.3	9.9	19.8	33	34.1	3.85	1.105
Organization quality processes are complied with proper laws and regulations	%	4.4	5.5	18.7	25.3	46.2	4.03	1.13
leadership adhere to set processes to enhance project performance and in whole organizations	%	3.3	9.9	5.5	63.7	17.6	3.82	0.95
Organization processes are properly monitored to ensure continuous improvement.	%	1.1	5.5	15.4	38.5	39.6	4.1	0.932
Organization members are well trained on quality processes best practices to improve organization performance.	%	1.1	11	8.8	59.3	19.8	3.86	0.905
Process management							**3.96**	**1.007**

*KEY: Strongly Disagree (**SD**), Disagree (**D**), Neutral (**N**), Agree (**A**), Strongly Agree (**SA**)*

The study established process management in Safaricom projects, On the statements directed in pursuit of the objective, the study found that; on the respondents perceptions on; The above results shows that setting quality plans within organization processes improves organization efficiency with (42.9%) of respondents agreeing to this. The respondents also felt that including Ethical behaviors and stakeholders in the processes, with 45.1% agreeing also improved organizational competiveness. Respondents strongly agreed that Effective processes enhances Organization competiveness, 34.1% Organization quality processes are complied with proper laws and regulations (46.2%),Leadership adhere to set processes to enhance project performance and in whole organizations (63.1%) . Organization processes are properly monitored to ensure continuous improvement with 39.6% of respondents strongly agreeing to this while 59.3% agreed that training Organization members on quality processes improve organization performance.

Customer Focus

The second objective of the study was to determine the influence of customer focus as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects.

Table 2: Customer Focus

		Sd	D	N	A	Sa	Mean	Std. Deviation
Organization employees are well trained in customer's relationship management.	%	2.2	5.5	20.9	29.7	41.8	4.03	1.027
Improving customers experience is a key goal of the organization.	%	2.2	0	8.8	46.2	42.9	4.27	0.804
Good communication is key in improving organization interaction with customers	%	1.1	4.4	13.2	58.2	23.1	3.98	0.802
The organization gets and responds timely to customer information with regards on quality	%	0	0	24.2	54.9	20.9	3.97	0.674
Safaricom measures quality of customer service through their feedbacks	%	0	0	4.4	48.4	47.3	4.43	0.58
Customers are involved as project stakeholders in projects.	%	0	4.4	8.8	57.1	29.7	4.12	0.743
Organization customers are very loyal and satisfied due to services provided	%	0	4.4	29.7	50.5	15.4	3.77	0.761
Customer focus							**4.081**	**0.7701**

*KEY: Strongly Disagree (**SD**), Disagree (**D**), Neutral (**N**), Agree (**A**), Strongly Agree (**SA)***

On the statements unearthing the study specific objective (Assessing the impacts of customer focus as a project quality management practice on company's competiveness) the statements on customer focus and their scores, were as follows: The respondents strongly agreed 41.8% that when organization employees are well trained in customer management, the organization is likely to be more competitive. Such organizations they agreed focus on the customer (46%). Further the respondents agreed (58.2%) that customers concerns are addressed by the organization.57.1% of the respondents agreed that measuring quality of customer service through feedback enhances a company's competitiveness as it drives customer focus ensuring customers retention and loyalty. In addition, (50.5%) of felt that the organizations customers are loyal and satisfied meaning, they are likely to continue providing business to the company.

Organization Culture

The third objective of the study was to examine the influence of organization culture **as** a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects.

Table 3: Organization Culture

		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
Organization culture promotes organization competiveness through learning.	%	0	4.4	15.4	54.9	25.3	4.01	0.767

Project roles are well defined to promote conflict resolution.	%	0	5.5	11	45.1	38.5	4.6	0.834
Clear and consistent set of values governs the running of projects organization improves performance.	%	0	4.4	19.8	50.5	25.3	3.97	0.795
Formal mechanisms and systems that ensure transfer of best practices among various areas of work have been put in place by the organization.	%	0	0	39.6	35.2	25.3	3.86	0.797
All projects staff are committed and accountable project performance.	%	0	0	24.2	40.7	35.2	4.11	0.767
The organization rewards project team members who are innovative in their work to promote excellence in performance.	%	0	4.4	29.7	19.8	46.2	4.08	0.969
Employees are committed to the organization values and beliefs.	%	0	0	34.1	45.1	20.9	3.87	0.733
Organization Culture							**4.09**	**0.602**

*KEY: Strongly Disagree (**SD**), Disagree (**D**), Neutral (**N**), Agree (**A**), Strongly Agree (**SA)***

From the results, shows that 54.9% of Respondents agreed that organization culture enhances learning among its members improving competitiveness of a company due to high number of productive staff. They further felt that Employees attitudes and beliefs affect performance of organizations (45.1 %.). Companies with clear set of consistent values that governs projects are likely to be more competitive at 50.5%. However, 39.6% of employees neither agreed nor disagreed that formal practices that transfer best practices among areas of work. 40.7% of projects staff are committed and accountable project performance whereas 46.2% strongly agreed that the organization rewards project team members who are innovative in their work to promote excellence in performance. Lastly, 45.1% agreed that Employees are committed to the organization values and beliefs.

Quality Policies

The fourth objective of the study was to determine how quality policies as a project quality management practice impacts company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects.

Table 4: Quality policies

		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership and management supports project quality policies and practices.	%	0	5.5	4.4	50.5	39.6	4.24	0.779
Organization adheres to set quality Standards by the regulator and ISO standards implementation of project	%	0	0	8.8	40.7	50.5	4.42	0.651

quality management?								
There is Evidence based decision making policy in implementation of project quality management in the organization.	%	0	4.4	9.9	60.4	25.3	4.07	0.727
Organization members take part in formulation of organization policies.	%	0	20.9	13.2	45.1	20.9	3.66	1.035
Well defined policies and regulations improve project quality performance in the organization.	%	0	0	25.3	44	30.8	4.05	0.751
Safaricom limited has a formal quality policy guiding quality, in project product development.	%	1.1	0	8.8	57.1	33	4.21	0.691
There is regular audit of internal quality policies and procedures.	%	1.1	0	14.3	46.2	38.5	4.21	0.768
Quality policies							**4.1228**	**0.7717**

*KEY: Strongly Disagree (**SD**), Disagree (**D**), Neutral (**N**), Agree (**A**), Strongly Agree (**SA**)*

Leadership and management supports project quality policies and practices 50.5% with another 50.5% strongly agreed that Organization adhere to set quality Standards by the regulator and ISO standards implementation of project quality management, 60.4 % felt there is Evidence based decision making policy in implementation of project quality management in the organization. 45.1% of respondents agreed that Organization members takes part in formulation of organization policy with father 44% agreeing that Well defined policies and regulations improves project quality performance in the organization. And 57.1% of sampled Safaricom limited staff agreed that the organization has a formal quality policy guiding quality, in project product development. 46.2% agreed that there is regular audit of internal quality policies and procedures.

Company's Competitiveness

The study also reviewed the level company's competitiveness within Safaricom limited projects. Table 4.6 highlights the level of organizational effectiveness.

Table 5: Organization competitiveness

		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
Projects quality management ensures organization effectiveness and improved performance.	%	1.1	4.4	4.4	69.2	20.9	4.04	0.729
There is proper utilization of organizational resources to achieve performance.	%	1.1	24.2	0	44	30.8	4.03	0.809
Projects are implemented and completed within expected quality and timeframe.	%	6.6	0	34.1	36.3	23.1	3.69	1.04
Concluded projects normally are completed	%	1.1	5.5	33	50.5	9.9	3.63	0.784

within defined budget.								
Quality facilitates transparency and accountability of the of performance	%	1.1	0	15.4	50.5	33	4.14	0.754
The organization gives regular quality project progress reports on its performance	%	1.1	4.4	15.4	49.5	29.7	4.02	0.856
Seeking quality project feedbacks from stakeholders improves performance	%	1.1	0	15.4	35.2	48.4	4.3	0.81
Company's Competitiveness							**3.978**	**0.826**

*KEY: Strongly Disagree (**SD**), Disagree (**D**), Neutral (**N**), Agree (**A**), Strongly Agree (**SA**)*

From the above results, respondents agreed that Projects quality management ensures organization effectiveness and improved performance (69.2%) and that when there is proper utilization of organizational resources, organization is likely to improve its performance (44%). They further agreed that implementing projects within quality and timeframe improved organizational performance (36.3%). Other factors that improves organization performance includes completing projects within defined budget (50.5%)Transparency and accountability of the of performance (50.5%), regular quality project progress reports on its performance 49.5% and the respondents strongly agreed that Seeking quality project feedbacks from stakeholders improves performance (48.4%)

Inferential Statistics

Table 6: Correlation

		Company Competitiveness	Process management	Customer focus	Quality org. cultures
Process management	ρ (rho)	0.765**	1		
	p	0.000			
Customer focus	ρ (rho)	0.668**	0.652**	1	
	p	0.000	0.000		
Quality org. cultures	ρ (rho)	0.800**	0.780**	0.616**	1
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000	
Policies	ρ (rho)	0.736**	0.695**	0.538**	0.740**
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

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

Regression analysis

Table 7: Model summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.858a	0.736	0.724	0.44097

a Predictors: (Constant), Policies, Customer focus, Process management, Quality org. cultures

Table 8: Analysis of variance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	46.64	4	11.66	59.963	.000b
Residual	16.723	86	0.194		
Total	63.364	90			

a Dependent Variable: Company Competitiveness

b Predictors: (Constant), Policies, Customer focus, Process management, Qualityorg cultures

Table 9: Regression model

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.441	0.227		1.944	0.055
Process management	0.183	0.086	0.207	2.123	0.037
Customer focus	0.188	0.073	0.195	2.596	0.011
Quality org. cultures	0.33	0.095	0.348	3.474	0.001
Policies	0.22	0.082	0.23	2.672	0.009

a Dependent Variable: Company Competitiveness

The first specific objective of this study was to establish the role of process management as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects. The study sought to achieve this specific objective answering the research question stating that: What is the role of process management as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects? The findings showed that process management as a project quality management practice has a positive and significant effect on company competitiveness, $\beta_1 = 0.207$, $p = 0.037$. This suggested that there was up to 0.207-unit increase in company competitiveness for each unit increase in process management as a project quality management practice.

The effect of process management was more than 2 times the effect attributed to the error, $t = 2.123$. Thus, in line with these findings, Gartner (2011) notes that improving business processes has been a business strategy of major priority in recent years and will be pursued by CIOs in the years to come. In that context and given that it falls under TQM, the Quality Management Process involves: Listing the quality targets to achieve (from the Quality Review Form) Identifying the types of quality measurement techniques to be undertaken Measuring deliverable and process quality (via Quality Assurance and Quality Control). This also involves other strategies such as Quality assurance (QA), Quality control (QC), Quality Management System (QMS) and project management information systems (PMIS).

The second specific objective of this study was to assess the impact of customer focus as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects and this was by answering the research question that: How does customer focus as a project quality management practice impact company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects? The findings in Table 4.12

reveal that customer focus as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness, $\beta_2 = 0.195$, $p = 0.011$ and this can be evidenced by the amount of effect accounted for by customer focus which is more than that accounted for by the residuals, $t = 2.596$ associated with the parameter. In this case, this means that for every unit increase in customer focus as a project quality management practice, company competitiveness increases by 0.195 units. Loyal customers often will, over time bring substantial revenues and demand less attention from the firms they patronize (Yang and Peterson, 2004).

Dynamic business environments and increasing customer power have pushed firms toward a customer-focused strategy, especially using new technology to build relationships with the customer (Ryding, 2010). Generally, customer loyalty has been referred to as the link between customer attitude, repeat purchasing, and financial performance. In terms of the antecedents of customer loyalty, a number of constructs have been proposed by previous studies. Yee, Yeung, and Cheng (2010) found that employee loyalty, service quality, and customer satisfaction have a positive influence on customer loyalty in a high-contact service industry. Higher customer satisfaction leads to greater customer loyalty which in turn leads to higher future revenue thus many market leaders are found to be highly superior-customer-service orientated which has led to high revenue and customer retention as well (Sarunya, 2001).

The third specific objective of this study was to examine the influence of organization cultures as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects. This was by answering the research question stating that: What is the role of organization culture as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects? The findings showed that organization cultures have a positive and significant effect on company competitiveness, $\beta_3 = 0.348$, $p = 0.001$. This indicated that for each unit increase in the quality of organization cultures, there would be 0.348 units increase in company competitiveness and this effect is over 3 times compared to that attributed to the error associated to it, $t = 3.474$. Schein (2004) suggests that culture and leadership are conceptually intertwined. An understanding of organizational culture is essential for effective leadership. Leaders and managers will be better placed to implement strategy and achieve their goals if they understand the culture of their organization. Zalami (2005) notes that culture can either facilitate or inhibit institutional transformation depending on whether or not the existing culture is aligned with the goals of the proposed change. It is the pattern of values, norms, beliefs and attitudes (Armstrong, 2008). A strong culture can either be an asset or a liability to a company (Huczynski & Buchaman, 2001). Asset in the sense that if core values are intensely and widely shared and it will influence the behavior of the members. In the case of strong culture being a liability, then it becomes dysfunctional.

The fourth specific objective of this study was to determine how quality policies as a project quality management practice impacts company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects. This was through answering the research question that How does a quality policy as a project quality management practice impact on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects? The findings showed that policies as a project quality management practice has a positive and significant effect on company competitiveness, $\beta_4 = 0.230$, $p = 0.009$. This indicated that for each unit increase in use of policies and regulations, there is 0.230 units increase in company competitiveness. This is effect of policies and regulation which is more compared to that attributed to the error associated with it, t = 2.672. All organizations have customers – internal and external. To follow a quality approach, a company must identify customer requirements and set about meeting them. Attention must always be focused on the customer supplier interface. It is argued that new practices are institutionalized by organizations in order to address the needs of their stakeholders: employees, consumers, suppliers/partners, and the community (Doh and Guay, 2006) Organizational survival and legitimacy are contingent upon the degree to which the firm is satisfying the needs of its stakeholders, and how the firm actively deals with the external forces and changes in the environment (Parast, 2015).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings showed that process management as a project quality management practice has a positive and significant effect on company competitiveness, β_1 = 0.207. This is especially because the firm has quality plans set within organization processes to improve efficiency. The company also has ethical behaviors and stakeholders' rights included in the processes, quality processes are complied with proper laws and regulations, leadership adhere to set processes to enhance project performance and in whole organizations, processes are properly monitored to ensure continuous improvement and members are well trained on quality processes best practices to improve organization performance. Through these strategies or practices the firm demonstrates that they value ethics and rights of all stakeholders, principals that are set are implemented and all comply with them. One other element critical to this is the monitoring process through which strengths and weaknesses can be identified. This serves as a SWOT analysis for the project quality management practices.

It was revealed that customer focus as a project quality management practice has a positive and significant effect on company's competitiveness, β_2 = 0.195. Specifically, the findings have showed that the firm trains its employees well in customer relationship management. Furthermore, a key objective of the firm is improving customer experience. In addition, good communication is highlighted especially with the customers and the firm gets and responds in a timely fashion to customer information especially with regard to quality and they are able to measure quality of customer service through their feedbacks. The firm also involves customers as project stakeholders in projects. This has specifically aided in enhancing the company competitiveness. 5.1.4 Organization cultures

The findings showed that organization cultures have a positive and significant effect on company competitiveness, β_3 = 0.348. This is mainly through promoting organization competitiveness through learning, defining projects roles well to reduce conflict, setting clear and consistent sets of values that govern the running of projects, recognized and formal mechanisms and systems that ensure transfer of best practices among various areas of work, commitment by project staff especially in terms of accountability, rewarding for innovativeness which is a morale booster resulting in better performance through healthy competition and commitment to values and beliefs. This commitment can only exist if such values and beliefs exist in the first place and this has been shown to be the case for Safaricom as an organization.

It showed that policies as a project quality management practice has a positive and significant effect on company competitiveness, β_4 = 0.230. This is especially because the leadership or management supports project quality policies and practices, there is adherence to set quality standards by the regulator and ISO standards implementation of project quality management, evidence based decision making policy in implementation of project quality management in the firm, there is involvement of members in the formulation of policies, the policies are well defined, there is a formal quality policy as well as regular audit of internal quality policies and procedures.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to establish the role of project quality management practices on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects. More specifically, the study sought: to establish the role of process management as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects, to assess the impact of customer focus as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects, to examine the influence of organization cultures as a project quality management practice on company's competitiveness in Safaricom product development projects and to

The findings showed that increasing the degree to which process management as a project quality management practice is implemented in the firm has an incremental effect on company's competitiveness. On the other hand, increasing the level of customer focus as a project quality management practice would further enhance the company's competitiveness especially in product development projects. In addition, increasing the level of quality organization cultures as a project quality management practice has the effect of increasing the company's competitiveness. Finally, the findings have showed that increasing the quality of policies through defined strategies would enhance company competitiveness. The factors that have been shown to have an effect on company competitiveness have specific elements concerning them that the company focuses on while there are also gaps that need to be addressed for the company to further benefit more especially in project quality management.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the study developed recommendations that can guide the project quality management practices of the company in future. The findings have showed different project quality management practices especially result in better company competitiveness. Further enhancement through strategic investments, inclusivity in the decision making process, enhancing the monitoring mechanisms and specific or targeted investment in the training of the members to ensure that they are well equipped to drive the objectives of the firm.

The lack of objectives, failure to do research, training on project skills and failure to make decisions based on facts carry disastrous effects in addition to lack of planning, documented procedures and relevant knowledge, which cases projects to run late, over budget and deliver less than the required output. The firm needs to further involve all the stakeholders within the decision making process, mutually engage with all the stakeholders especially in terms of communication and invest heavily in customer relationship management. This focus on the customers as key stakeholders would further propel the level of competitiveness.

Using these strategies would not only just enhance quality but also improve the level of ownership and belonging by the members to the organization. The direct involvement with the various stakeholders in all spheres of project management endears them to the organization regardless of whether they are external or internal stakeholders. The existence of reward schemes that have been developed in collaboration ensures that those that are deserving are adequately rewarded thereby promoting the morale of the employees and healthy competition. Although such good practices as existence of policies exists as well as the implementation of such policies through well laid out mechanisms, there is need to further involve the members in the policy development for the firm apart from the general decision making process. This would enhance that sense of belonging to not just the organization but also to the specific projects.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study focused on the Safaricom Kenya Limited only.This was a public entity in Kenya. However, there is need to increase the scope to cover other sectors in the public or private sector so as to confirm the findings of this study and also to add more knowledge. Furthermore, while there are organization-specific factors that determine the direction of competitiveness; there are factors that are inherent from the external environment in terms of policies and operational procedures that might have an influence on the company's practices on quality management. Thus, there is need to have a deeper look into the role of the external environment more, in terms of practices and policies, so as to get an overview of the challenges with view of addressing them from all angles.

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