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The Strategic JOURNAL of Business & Change MANAGEMENT
ISSN: 2312-9492 www.strategicjournals.com
Vol. 6, Iss. 3, pp 875- 894 September 27, 2019. www.strategicjournals.com, ©Strategic Journals

QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND MARKET SHARE: A CASE OF AFRICAN AIRLINES IN NAIROBI

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Accepted: September 24, 2019

ABSTRACT

The study aimed at assessing the relationship between quality management and market share taking a case of African airlines in Nairobi County. The target population for the study was thus 650 respondents from African Airlines based in Nairobi County. The sample size was thus determined as 242 respondents. The primary data was collected using self-administered questionnaires. The study used descriptive and inferential statistical analysis using SPSS Version 22. The findings showed that in terms of continuous improvement practices, staff in airline companies where quality assurance staff effectively coordinated their efforts with others improved the quality of service delivery. The findings showed that staff moderately agreed that airlines' had plans in place to retain its customers; that respondents agreed that the workforce was well motivated to undertake quality improvement; respondents' agreed that the top management had the responsibility to make strategy in their firm; that coordination between quality assurance staff and service delivery staff had an impact on market share. The findings showed positive and significant effect of continuous improvement practices, customer focus, employee empowerment, and leadership on market share. Technology utilization and firm's age had a moderating effect on performance of African airline companies. The findings revealed that leadership had the greatest effect on market share. The study concluded that the African airlines did not have any strategies to retain customers; motivated staff to undertake quality improvement; that there was need for leadership of African airline companies' leadership to be committed and involved in the TQM implementation process. The study recommended that African airline companies to make concerted efforts to enhance collaboration and coordination between quality assurance staff and service delivery staff in an effort to enhance quality practice in delivering services to their customers; that African airlines should design and implement strategies that are aimed at retaining their current customers. This can be done by conducting evaluations on service delivery and expectations of consumers in the future to be able to meet and satisfy the customers' needs and increase their loyalty to the airline; African airlines should motivate employees to undertake quality management practice. Leaders in African airlines should be more involved in implementation of quality management practices in the company.

Key Word: *Continuous Improvement, Customer Focus, Employee Empowerment, Leadership Commitment, Firm Factors, Market Share*

CITATION: Muyanda, B. K., Okumu, S., & Fr. Mathenge, P. (2019). Quality management and market share: A case of African Airlines in Nairobi. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management,* 6 (3), 875 – 894.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the airlines serve three main regions: the Americas, EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) and Asia-Pacific. However, most of the traffic is inside and between North America, Europe and Asia. Latin America, Africa and the Middle East account for only 10 % of overall traffic. The industry can be categorized as big leading companies, medium-sized companies and niche players. Big leading companies concentrate mostly on inter-continental and domestic routes. Medium-sized companies fly in the domestic market and operate partially in the inter-continental as well as regional markets. Niche players participate mainly in regional markets with a secondary focus on the domestic market (Czipura and Jolly, 2007).

The African Airlines Association (AFRAA) is a trade association of airlines from the African Union member states. It was founded in Accra, Ghana, in 1968, and today has its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The main objective of the association is to promote commercial and technical co-operation among African airlines and to represent their common interests. AFRAA membership comprises of all major intercontinental African carriers across the continent. The Association members represent over 85% of total international traffic carried by all African airlines (Chingosho, personal communication, March 2015).

The company's market share is defined in terms of a portion or percentage that the firm controls out of the total proportion of the market for its products or service rendered. The factors that influence competition among airlines include: flight frequency, Airline schedule, Air ticket fare, service quality and customer experience. (Belobaba, 2009).

Airline performance is measured by the revenue and profits the organisation makes over a given period of time, and this depends largely on the number of passengers that the airline can win and retain during this period. Passengers can be won by attractive fares, ranges of services, opening new routes and overall good customer experience (Faboya & Siebers, 2015). Market performance refers to the firm's "ability to satisfy and retain customers by offering quality products and services…" and financial performance reflects the firm's profitability and market impact (Moorman and Rust, 1999 as cited in Zhou, 2009).

Several studies have examined linkages between quality and performance (Kannana & Tanb, 2005). And according to Hendricks & Singhal (2001) effective implementation of TQM improves financial performance.

The airline industry has proved to be one of the most fundamental sectors in the development of a Country. It contributes in improving the economy of a nation. It plays a crucial role in carrying passengers or cargo from one point to another or different airports, which may be at the national, continental or intercontinental levels (Namukasa, 2013). The industry environment is ruled by heavy regulations and stiff competition that players have to face for them to survive and succeed.

Statement of the Problem

Market share as a generic measurement of performance under customer strategic perspective (Kaplan, 2010; Khantimirov, 2017) is one of the main goals that Airlines would like to grasp. And like any other business in the world, African airlines are supposed to increase their market share and make revenues; despite of the fact that the airline industry is structurally challenged by its very nature because of high overhead and capital costs, intense competition and vulnerability to external shocks (Doganis, 2010, as cited in Mhlanga, Steyn & Spencer, 2018). African Airlines instead have been losing out their markets to foreign carriers (Katzellenbogen, 2017; Ngetich 2019). This study is attempting find out the reason behind the fact that the airlines within the continent are losing out their market as it strives to establish the relationship between quality management and African airlines' market share.

The research related to quality management and performance in the airline industry has been growing in interest because the delivery of high service quality is essential for airlines' survival and competitiveness (Archana and Subha, 2012 as cited in Namukasa, 2013). Service quality has become a major area of attention to practitioners, managers and researchers because of its strong impact on business performance, lower costs, return on investment, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and gaining higher profit (Seth and Deshmukh, 2005 as cited in Baker, 2013). The delivery of a high level of service quality by airline companies became a marketing requisite in the early 1990s, as competitive pressures continued to increase (Baker, 2013). The ability of a company to outperform its competition depends on the ability to take advantage of market activity trends; ability to capture and protect 'unfair share' of markets; ability to capture premium pricing; prudent creation and introduction of new products. A firm can use low cost leadership, differentiation strategy and the market focus strategy as generic strategies to seek long-term competitive advantage (Doyle, 1992 and Porter, 1998, as cited in Wambua et al, 2014).

A number of studies have been carried out in the region to investigate causes associated with African airlines' poor performance; yet African Airlines such as Kenya Airways are still struggling to realize improvement in operating performance (Kenya Airways Press, 2017) that would enable the company to be in a position to compete with other international airlines like Turkish airlines and Emirates, which have convinced passengers of their savoir faire in the airline's industry. Several researches as well have been carried out at the academic level as regards airlines and its performance in the aviation industry. This includes a research by Nzioka (2016) on strategic quality management practices and performance of Airlines found that strategic quality management as a strategic tool for an organization if adequately practiced, can bring about added value to an organization in terms of efficiency in operation, customer and employee satisfaction as well as increased profitability. Mwikya (2014) on relational factors influencing on-time service delivery at Kenya Airways found that effective communication, coordination and product component influences on- time service delivery and the airline employs world class operations and technology including the hub and spoke model to ensure efficiency in customer satisfaction. Wanjiku (2014) study on strategic issues affecting African Airlines found out that appropriate strategies and some measures need to be applied to counter various strategic issues affecting the airlines.

Although the aforementioned studies have contributed to knowledge on airlines' performance, such kinds of researches have not focused on all aspects particularly with reference to quality service and market share. So far there is dearth of literature on the extent to which quality management and service influence market share in the airline industry. This prompted this study on relation between airlines' quality management and market share.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between quality management and the African airlines market share. The specific objectives were;

- To establish the effect of continuous improvement on market share of African airlines in Nairobi
- To determine the effect of customer focus on market share of African Airlines in Nairobi
- To establish the effect of employee empowerment on market share of African airlines in Nairobi
- To determine the extent to which leadership commitment effects market share of African airlines in Nairobi
- To establish the extent to which firm factors influence market share of African Airlines in Nairobi

LITERATURE REVIEW

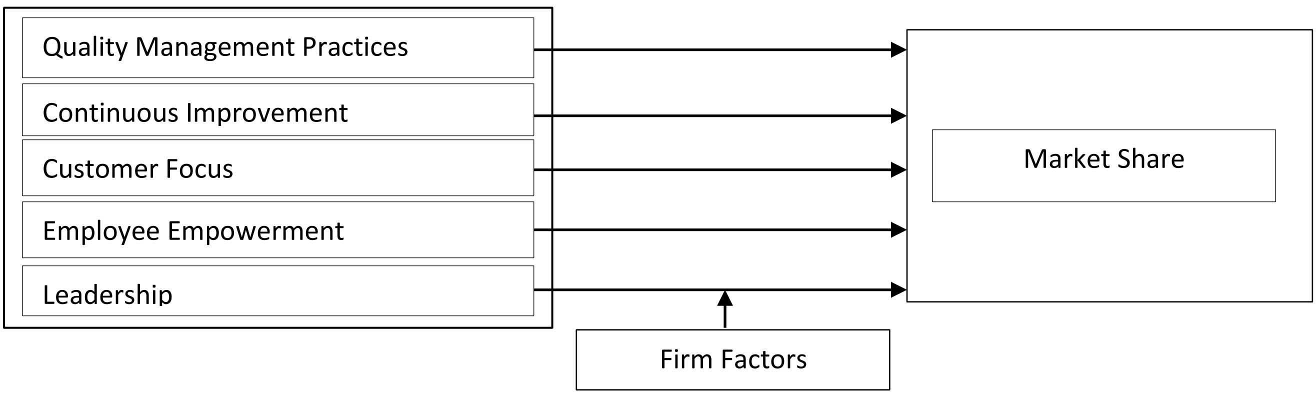
Balanced Score Card Theory: The balanced scorecard as strategic concept was developed by Kaplan & Norton (2008) to enable organizations measure business performance using data, which are both financial and non-financial. Market share is incorporated in financial and nonfinancial metrics that measure performance and forms the basis of customer perspective (Kaplan, 2010). Regardless of the value discipline chosen, this perspective will normally include measures widely used today: customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, market share, and customer acquisition, for example. Equally as important, the organization must develop the performance drivers that will lead to improvement in these indicators of customer success (Niven, 2006).

Cost Benefit Theory: The cost benefit theory has been promoted by different Scholars including Kidokoro (2004), Mishan (2015). This theory argues that quality management will increase market share because enterprises that are quality management certified such as ISO 9000 have better incentives to produce goods and services in whatever quality and quantity to satisfy consumers would desire more (Mulaku & Ahmed, 2014). However it should be reminded that it is not enough to achieve quality certification but being able to meet customers' needs while maintaining a quality system that is effective and efficient. According to Deming (1986) no quality management system could succeed without top management commitment.

Contingency Theory: Contingency theory was pioneered by Fred Fiedler (1958). The contingency theory as of performance management (PM) theory is established on the argument that there is no collectively appropriate PM system that applies equally to all firms in all conditions (Wadongo and Abdel-Kader, 2014).

Strategic orientation is argued to play a key role in adoption and implementation of PM systems (McAdam and Bailie, 2002; Maltz et al., 2003) and organizational effectiveness (Siciliano, 1996; Brown and Iverson, 2004) in organizations (as cited in Wadongo and Abdel-Kader, 2014).

Quality Improvement Theory: Quality Improvement theory was influenced by a number of scholars including Deming, Juran, Crosby, Feigenbaum, and Ishikawa (Khan, 2010). While contributions by Juran, Crosby, Feigenbaum, and Ishikawa were essentially about re-focusing management attention, Deming, on the other hand, saw the need for a total transformation of management practice-a far more challenging analysis. His theory states that management is the root cause of 80 percent of an organization's problems. Deming's theory affirms that the management is liable for the systems, and that it is the systems that cause most of the problems in firms.



Independents Variables **Moderating Variable** **Dependent Variable**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2019)

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Empirical Review

Continuous Improvement and Market Share

Kiprono & Genga (2018) carried out a study to evaluate the effect of quality management on performance. The study sought to examine the effect of quality management practices on performance of the Air Kenya Express Ltd. It assessed the effect of continuous improvement on performance of the Kenyan local airline. The indicators of performance included customer satisfaction, profitability and market share.

Continuous improvement most often involves creating a team that includes representatives from all areas of the company. The team first spends time learning about their company and other companies (benchmarking is common during this phase). The necessary quantitative data is created (McManus, 2009 as cited in Kiprono & Genga, 2018).

Customer Focus and Market Share

Sheikholeslam & Emamian (2016) conducted a study on TQM and Customer Satisfaction towards Business Excellence. The study sought to identify the effects and methods of gaining the customer satisfaction towards business excellence through the application of TQM. Since the customer satisfaction plays almost the most essential role in the market and business excellence, one of the major objectives of TQM is customer satisfaction (Sheikholeslam & Emamian 2016).

In order to improve the customer satisfaction, some methods have been identified and among these methods, some of the most common ones are: (1) developing relationship with customers, (2) offering a greater service, (3) keeping close with the customers, (4) respond to the changes in the customer expectations, (5) support networks development, (6) commitment to the customers, (7) implementation of an efficient complaint handling process. In addition, as many researchers have previously shown, job satisfaction of employees, along with other job related factors could improve customer satisfaction and business excellence (Sheikholeslam & Emamian 2016).

Employee Empowerment and Market Share

Busara (2016) conducted a study on the relationship between employee empowerment and Performance. The research sought to assess the relationship between empowerment and performance in public sector. And according to the scholar this empowerment consists of three components, training employees, creating a culture of allowing employees to give input and have control of their work, and giving employee access to information and providing feedback. A sample of 30 was selected to carry on with the research. Descriptive survey research design was the research design used by the study and made use of a stratified simple random sampling. The study revealed that employees find that empowerment strongly influences employee performance. There is significant correlation between the constructs of empowerment and employee performance. The implications of these findings are discussed (Busara, 2016).

Leadership and Market Share

Ndiritu, Kidombo, and Ndiritu (2016) carried out a study on top management commitment for successful small and medium-enterprises. The research sought to investigate the influence of top management commitment as a Total Quality Management (TQM) practice on performance of small and medium enterprises. Focusing on youth projects in Kajiado, Kenya, the research selected a population of 210 to carry on with the study. The research designed used by the study was descriptive research design and mixed approach was used as regards data collection analysis so that both the qualitative and quantitative data maybe captured. The research revealed that there is significant relationship between top management and performance.

Technology Utilization and Market share

Dhareshwar (2018) carried a study to assess the linkage between technology utilization and market share. The study sought to investigate the intervening role of technology utilization in achieving market share. This study presented

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results that were obtained from statistical analysis of the outcome of a questionnaire given in advance out to some companies. A sample of 19 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) was acquired. The result of the analysis indicated that there was a link between technology utilization and market share in the author selected countries for this research, which include: Bangladesh, El Salvador, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Philippines, and Zambia. Technological implementation can significantly enhance business bottom-line revenues through process improvement, wastage reduction, automation of high-risk activities (Dhareshwar, 2018). The study further reported that Modern business that uses technology efficiently grows at a phenomenal rate (Statista.com, 2018 as cited by Dhareshwar, 2018).

Age of the Company and Market share

Rossi (2016) carried out a study on the impact of age on firm performance. The study sought to present a systematic review of the existing literature. The critical examination of the relation between firm age and performance provides new insights for executives. The research revealed that although progress has been made in our understanding of how firm age affects firm performance, there are still many opportunities remaining for improving our understanding of how firm behaviour changes as firms grow older. Pervan, Pervan and Ćurak (2017) conducted a study on the influence of age on firm performance. The research sought to investigate the extent and nature of the relationships between firm age and business on firms operating in the Croatian food processing industry for the period from 2005 to 2014. A sample of 956 firms operating in Croatia was selected to carry the research. The analysis's result indicated that age negatively affects firm's performance. It implies that as firms get older, benefits of their accumulated knowledge in all crucial aspects of the business (technology, supply channels, customers relations, human capital and financing costs) become overcome with their inertia, inflexibility and osseous by accumulated rules, routines and organizational structure. The study recommends further researches toward the investigation of the presence/existence of non-linear age performance relationship, with its application on a broader research sample together with the inclusion of additional explanatory/control variables (Pervan et al., 2017).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. Through this research design the researcher collected data from African Airlines based in Nairobi, document the quality management and compared the result. The study population targeted was African Airlines based in Nairobi. The study selected as objects of attention five of the African Airlines represented in Nairobi. They included Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, South African Airways, Royal Air Maroc and EgyptAir. The target population for this study was drawn from these firms' top, middle and lower management. The target population for the study was thus 650 respondents. Stratified random sampling strategy was adopted in this study which involved categorizing the population and sample into their echelon based on the African Airline companies based in Nairobi County. The primary data was collected regarding the relationship between Airline's quality management and market share using structured questionnaires which were self-administered. For data analysis procedure the researcher chose to use descriptive and inferential statistics in order to examine the quantitative data collected, which would allow critiques to intellectualize the outcomes. The data analysis was handled through the use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) Version 22.0 and results were presented in tabular format and percentage. The study used ANOVA in order to test the significance in general of the model at 95% level of significance. Regression model was presented as:

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$

Where:

Y = Market share

β_0 = Constant (coefficient of intercept)

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X_1 = Continuous improvement practice
X_2 = Customer focus
X_3 = Employee empowerment
X_4 = Leadership
ε = error term

RESULTS

Continuous Improvement Practices

The study aimed to understand the continuous improvement practices of the airlines sampled in this study. The findings showed that respondents agreed that quality assurance & operations managers effectively coordinated their efforts with others to improve the quality of service delivery as shown by a mean score of 3.89 and standard deviation of 1.247 as shown in Table 1. These findings agreed with Kiprono and Genga (2018) study on total quality management practices and performance of airlines in Kenya who found that majority of the respondents agreed that the airline staff underwent continuous training to improve customer service. The findings also showed that the airline motivated staff on quality awareness and increase their participation in continuous improvement.

Table 1: Continuous Improvement that affects Market share

Continuous improvement practices statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The quality assurance staff effectively coordinates their efforts with others to improve the quality of service delivery	133	3.89	1.247
The airline has effective policies to support improving the quality of service delivery	133	3.32	1.240
The airline works closely with suppliers to improve the quality of their services	133	3.23	1.369
The airline tries to design quality into new services as they are being developed.	133	3.71	1.505
The services which the airline provides are thoroughly tested for quality before they are implemented.	133	3.41	1.256
The airline encourages employees to keep records of quality measurements	133	3.46	1.475
The airline reduce product/service nonconformities or defects	133	3.62	1.428
The airline monitors process improvement progress	133	3.41	1.493
The airline motivate quality awareness and increase total participations in continuous improvement	133	3.79	1.262
There is elimination of waste to achieve low cost and reduce the operating cost	133	3.33	1.561
Aggregate score	133	3.52	1.384

KEY: 1-1.8 – Strongly disagree, 1.9-2.6 – Disagree, 2.7-3.4 – Neutral, 3.5-4.2 – Agree 4.3-5 – Strongly agree
(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

Kiprono and Genga (2018) confirmed that local Kenyan airlines motivated its staff to work and the firm complied with all requirements on employee welfare and management. The findings also showed that respondents agreed that their companies motivated staff quality awareness and increase total participations in continuous improvement as shown by a mean score of 3.79 and standard deviation of 1.262. Nzioka (2016) research on strategic quality management practices and performance of airlines found that majority of respondents the highest mean of 4.23 agreed that the workforce is well motivated to undertake quality improvement. The findings are line with Muli (2014) researching on quality improvement practices and business performance among commercial state corporations in the ministry of health, Kenya who found that respondents mean of 3.92 agreed employees are interested in the quality improvement practices, which include systems, methods and tools to enhance business performance. The findings were consistent with Kiprotich, Njuguna & Kilika, (2018) research on Total Quality Management Practices and Operational Performance of Kenya Revenue Authority who found that respondents mean 3.424 agreed that staff is encouraged to continuous improvement process and technology integration in the system to enhance their operational performance.

The findings further revealed that improvement of quality service affects market share of African Airlines in Nairobi. This statement agreed with Namukasa (2013) who states that airlines' competitive advantage lies in their service quality as perceived by customers (Chang and Yeh, 2002). Therefore ensuring quality service is the key for survival of all businesses/industries dealing in service offerings airlines inclusive.

Improvement of quality service enables airlines capturing new markets. This was line with Baker (2013) who asserts that implications related to operating costs, market share, infrastructure and customer service were evident in airlines that have improved their quality service.

Improvement of service quality is related to customer satisfaction. This statement was supported by Namukasa (2013) who says that in order to achieve customer satisfaction, organizations must be able to build and maintain long-lasting relationships with customers through satisfying various customer needs and demands which resultantly motivates them to continue to do business with the organization on an on -going basis (LaBarbera and Mazursky, 1983as cited in Namukasa, 2013).

Improvement of quality can also be expressed in terms of improvement of airline fleet. And among African Airlines based in Nairobi, Ethiopian airlines operate the youngest fleet with average of 5.7 years. (Loh, 2019). This according to the company contributes to their better performance in terms modern technology and saving on fuel.

African Airlines in Nairobi are putting drivers in place through continuous improvement practices in order to recapture their market shares (CAPA, 2019). The table below showed airlines shares with Ethiopian airline taking the lead.

Table 2: African Airlines Association in Nairobi ranked seat capacity 2019

Rank	Airline	IATA Code	Seats	Seat Share
1	Ethiopian Airlines	ET	345,016	8.4%
2	EgyptAir	MS	229,885	5.6%
3	Royal Air Maroc	AT	204,346	5.0%
4	South African Airways	SA	188,421	4.6%
8	Kenya Airways	KQ	123,333	3.0%

Source: Adapted from CAPA, 2019

Customer Focus

Customer satisfaction is seen as a key strategy by firms to maintain their customers. It is defined as the extent to which customers feel that their needs have been met. Customer focus therefore has become a key element to be considered by organizations (Esiaba, 2016). Table 2 showed the responses of staff on customer focus in their companies and the findings indicate that respondents were neutral on most of these statements. The findings show that staff were neutral on their airlines' had plans in place to retain its customers as shown by a mean score of 3.38 and standard deviation of 1.352. This finding supports Esiaba (2016) findings which found that respondents agreed that the company has provided an avenue for customers to provide feedback on service quality. Kiprono and Genga (2018) also affirmed airlines in the Kenyan aviation industry responded to customer needs around the clock. The findings are in line with Wanyoike (2016) research on Quality Management practices and firm performance among manufacturing firms in Kenya who found that that respondents' higher mean of 4.23 agreed that firm is committed to customer retention by ensuring quality products. The findings are consistent with Kaguri (2016) research on Effects of customer retention strategies on customer retention. A case study of the banking industry in Kenya who found that respondents mean of 3.8 agreed that the institution has done all it required to retain customers.

Table 3: Customer Focus Descriptive Statistics

Customer focus statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Your airline does its best in solving customer complaints	133	3.08	1.619
Your airline has plans in place to retain its customers	133	3.38	1.352
Our airline is concerned about excellent customer service	133	3.26	1.576
Your airline has a room to record and address customer feedback	133	3.34	1.370
Your airline works towards customer satisfaction	133	3.11	1.519

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

Employee Empowerment

In regard to employee empowerment, the findings showed that respondents agreed that the workforce is well motivated to undertake quality improvement as shown by a mean score of 3.99 and standard deviation of 1.197 as presented in Table 4. These findings agreed with Sumathi, Muralitharan, and Venkatramana (2018) on the airline industry in India which found that workforce was motivated by more work, hard work of the team and in making certain decisions based on Total Quality Management. The findings were in line with Nzuve & Bakari (2012) research on the relationship between Empowerment and Performance in the City Council of Nairobi who found that respondents mean of 3.5357 agreed that employees were encouraged to take quick action to improve service quality.

Table 4: Employee Empowerment Descriptive Statistics

Employee empowerment statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The employees are given feedback on the way they perform	133	3.66	1.392
Employees consider quality as their responsibility	133	3.35	1.442
The workers are indeed encouraged to take on quality improvement	133	3.99	1.197
Consistent Training for staff is organized I order to improve on quality	133	3.44	1.416
Quality service delivery is due to workers empowerment	133	3.24	1.528
The airline believe in its people as its first resources	133	3.31	1.533
The airline keeps Employees always Motivated	133	3.26	1.650
Employee participation in all functional is required for successful implementation of TQM Practice	133	3.16	1.614
Employee team work is needed to synergize the cumulative efforts in maintaining TQM enabled in the airline	133	3.30	1.767

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

The findings further showed that respondents were neutral on the employees being provided with feedback on the quality of their performance as indicated by a mean score of 3.66 and standard deviation of 1.392. This finding agreed with Mwikya (2013) research on relational factors influencing on-time service delivery at Kenya Airways where respondents were neutral on whether they were getting timely feedback in everything that they did. Mwikya asserts that lack of communication and feedback from employers cause employees to feel overlooked and inhibits them from performing to the best of their ability. Raza et al. (2016) empirical study on employee empowerment in TQM practice asserted that employee motivation is one of the strategies of managers to enhance effective job performance among workers in organizations. Management should also be flexible with target deadlines, they should not create undue stress within the process and they should be able to motivate and encourage the individual employees and the group as a whole within the empowerment process.

Leadership

Leadership plays a crucial role in ensuring the success of quality management because it is the management's responsibility to communicate the vision in order to move the firm toward performance improvement. In reference to leadership, the findings revealed that respondents agreed that management had the responsibility to implement strategy as shown by a mean score of 3.77 and standard deviation of 0.942.

Table 5: Leadership Descriptive Statistics

Leadership statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Management commitment is indispensable	133	3.71	1.028
Management has the responsibility to implement strategy	133	3.77	0.942
Management provide direction for implementing TQM in organization	133	3.17	1.452
Management is working towards reducing cost and increasing airlines' profits	133	3.63	1.417
Management focus on increasing the airline market share	133	3.68	1.373

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

This finding agreed with Kiprono and Genga (2018) opinion that the management commitment and leadership requires effective change in organizational culture and this can only be made possible with the deep involvement of management to the organization's strategy of continuous improvement, open communication and cooperation throughout the organization. The findings were in line with Muli (2014) research on quality improvement practices and business performance among commercial state corporations in the ministry of health, Kenya who found that respondents highest mean of 4.51 agreed that management commitment are important.

The findings were consistent with Wanyoike (2016) research on quality management practices and firm performance among manufacturing firms in Kenya who reported that respondents mean of 4.09 and standard deviation of 0.52 agreed that Top management establish trust and commitment to quality improvement by eliminating fear.

Technology Utilization

The mediating variable for the study was technology utilization, the descriptive statistics showed that most of the respondents were neutral on the use of technology in their airline. The findings revealed that respondents were neutral on whether employees were conversant with the new technology as shown by a mean score of 3.21 and standard deviation of 1.522 as seen in Table 6. This finding disagreed with Esiaba (2016) who found that employees in the aviation industry had adopted the latest information technology in operations to a great extent. Buhalis (2004) on eAirlines: Strategic and tactical use of ICTs in the airline industry, argued that Airlines were early adopters of ICTs and had a long history of technological innovation, in comparison to many other travel and tourism businesses. Ojwang (2016) research on Information Technology usage on humanitarian logistics of Relief Organisations in Kenya reported respondents mean score of 3.62 and standard deviations of 1.251 agreeing that IT ensures quality service were at the top notch in the organization. Muchiri (2015) research on factors affecting the adoption of technological innovation in selected organizations in Nairobi, Kenya found that respondents means vary from 3.5428 – 4.3269 agreed to have adopted technological innovation in selected organizations in Nairobi, which include mobile banking innovations, electronic transactions innovations and intelligent security management systems in order to improve on the running of their business.

Table 6: Technology Utilization Descriptive Statistics

Technology utilization statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Staff is ready to adopt new technology	133	2.97	1.552
Staff is conversant with new technology	133	2.21	1.552
Staff is of the opinion that technology utilization contributes to the achievement of market share	133	2.92	1.444
Regular training for workers is put in place to update themselves on new technology	133	3.06	1.491
The airline invests on new technology	133	3.08	1.279

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

Market Share

Market share was the dependent variable for the study. Table 7 showed the descriptive statistics of this variable which indicate that respondents were neutral on whether their respective company had been able to occupy most of the domestic market as shown by a mean score of 3.56 and standard deviation of 1.221. The respondents were also neutral on whether the company was able to create and hold customers in the long term as shown by a mean score of 3.47 and standard deviation of 1.228. The findings were in line with Mwangi (2018) research on growth strategies and performance who found that respondents mean of 2.63 were neutral on the overall response as regards market expansion approaches. Macharia, (2018) research on the Influence of strategic alliances on competitiveness of internationally ranked law firms in Kenya found that firms in the Swiss Verein model reported the greatest influence on increase in revenues and market share than those law firms that posted the Ad Hoc Referral and Best Friends models as a result of entering the strategic alliance. Changole (2018) research on impact of customer retention strategies on market share among commercial banks in Kenya: a case of I&M Bank found that respondents overall mean of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 0.973 agreed that service quality improvement on market share has a great impact on market share.

Table 7: Market Share Descriptive Statistics

Market share statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The company has been able to occupy most of the domestic market	133	3.56	1.221
The company has been losing market share to foreign competitors	133	3.32	1.438
The company is able to create and hold customers in the long term	133	3.47	1.228
The number of passengers carried by the airline at JKIA has been on a gradual increase	133	3.15	1.443
The company is satisfied with the current market share in the airline sector	133	3.27	1.533

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

Correlation

Table 8: Correlation Analysis

		Quality Improvement Practices	Customer Focus	Employee Empowerment	Leadership
Quality Improvement Practices	Pearson Correlation	1			
Customer Focus	Pearson Correlation	.245**	1		
Employee Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.184*	.153	1	

Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.153	.067	.245**	1
Market Share	Pearson Correlation	.184	.059	.191	.218*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	.028	.032	.012

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

The finding implied that a quality improvement practices had a 0.184 correlation coefficient with market share, customer focus had a 0.059 correlation coefficient with market share, employee empowerment had a 0.191 correlation coefficient with market share, and leadership had a 0.218 correlation coefficient with market share. The findings showed that leadership had the largest linear association with market share followed by employee empowerment, quality improvement practices, and customer focus.

Regression Analysis

Table 9 showed the results of the multiple regression analysis which consists of the model summary, ANOVA, and regression coefficient results. The model summary results indicated that coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.739 which suggested that the model (quality improvement practices, customer focus, employee empowerment, leadership) explained 73.9 % of change on market share. The ANOVA results indicated that the F statistics was 1.896 and the *p* value was 0.015 which was less than 0.05 which suggested that the model was significant in explaining market share. The regression coefficient results showed that a unit increase in leadership resulted to a 0.241 increase in market share and this was significant (*p* value = 0.013). A unit increase in employee empowerment contributed to a 0.097 increase in market share and this was significant (*p* value = 0.026). A unit increase in quality improvement practices resulted to a 0.066 increase in market share and this was significant (*p* value = 0.045). A unit increase in customer focus resulted to a 0.044 increase in market share and this was significant (*p* value = 0.045). The finding implied that leadership had the greatest effect on market share of airlines according to perceptions of staff. The regression model was thus confirmed as:

Market Share = $2.466 + 0.066X_1 + 0.044X_2 + 0.097X_3 + 0.241X_4 + \varepsilon$

Table 9: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.860[a]	.739	.026	.68602

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership, Customer Focus, Continuous Improvement Practices, Employee Empowerment

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.569	4	.892	1.896	.015[b]
	Residual	60.240	128	.471		
	Total	63.809	132			

a. Dependent Variable: MarketShare

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership, Customer Focus, Continuous Improvement Practices, Employee Empowerment

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

(Constant)	2.446	.575		4.255	.000
Continuous Improvement Practices	.066	.115	.052	.578	.045
Customer Focus	.044	.093	.043	.478	.034
Employee Empowerment	.097	.122	.072	.799	.026
Leadership	.241	.095	.225	2.521	.013

a. Dependent Variable: Market Share

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

The regression findings indicated that leadership in TQM had the greatest effect on market share of sampled airlines. This required that quality leadership to be made a strategic objective and this meant that the leader provided the suitable environment to provide the most comfort to the members who improve performance and productivity. Top management commitment has been identified as one of the major determinants of successful TQM implementation (Kiprono & Genga, 2018). The findings suggested that quality management practices through organization leadership had an effect on market share. This findings was supported by Nzioka (2016) who found a relationship between leadership and market share in the aviation industry in Kenya.

The findings also showed that employee empowerment component of TQM had an effect on the market share of airlines in the Kenyan aviation industry. This finding also agreed with Kiprono and Genga (2018) which found that employee empowerment significantly influenced performance of Air Kenya Express Limited.

Mediator Relationship

A multiple regression analysis that included technology utilization was conducted in an effort to measure the mediator influence of technology utilization on the relationship between quality management and market share of airline companies. The findings from the regression coefficients showed that technology utilization (β = 0.249, p = 0.002) and firm age (β = 0.249, p = 0.005) had a positive and significant effect on African airline market share (β = 0.198, p = 0.002) and the TQM enablers did not have a statistically significant effect on market share which suggested that technology utilization had a mediator effect on the relationship between quality management and market share. The importance of technology use in adopting quality management and also achieving greater market share among airlines has been confirmed in past studies. Al-Hashimi and Fuad (2018) study found that customer preferred airlines that had adopted technology to a great extent.

Table 10: Regression Coefficients for Mediator Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.352[a]	.124	.090	.66336

a. Predictors: (Constant), Technology Utilization, Customer Focus, Employee Empowerment, Quality Improvement Practices, Leadership, Firm Age

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.924	5	1.585	3.601	.004[b]
	Residual	55.885	127	.440		
	Total	63.809	132			

a. Dependent Variable: MarketShare

b. Predictors: (Constant), Technology Utilization, Customer Focus, Employee Empowerment, Quality Improvement Practices, Leadership, Firm Age

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.032	.571		3.556	.001
	Quality Improvement Practices	.056	.111	.044	.506	.614
	Customer Focus	.063	.090	.061	.701	.484
	Employee Empowerment	.103	.118	.077	.877	.382
	Leadership	.142	.097	.133	1.457	.148
	Technology Utilization	.249	.079	.278	3.146	.002
	Firm Age	.198	.065	.125	2.856	.005

a. Dependent Variable: MarketShare

(Source: Survey Data, 2019)

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to determine the influence of continuous improvement practice on market share among African airlines in Kenya. The findings showed that there was a positive and significant effect of continuous improvement practice and market share. The study thus concludes that coordination between quality assurance staff and service delivery staff has an impact on market share. This study is in line with nzioka (2016) who reported that workforce is to be motivated to embark on quality improvement, which wll enable the achievement of market share. The study is as well supported by the findings of Changole (2018) who reports that service quality improvement has a great impact on market share.

The study aimed to establish the influence of customer focus on market share among African airlines in Kenya. The results revealed that there was a positive and significant association and positive effect of customer focus on market share on sampled firms. The study thus concludes that the African airlines did not have any strategies to retain customers. According to Wanyoike (2016) Customer retention is essential to the achievement of market share. Firms need to commit to that. This is in line with Kaguri (2016) who recommends that institution need to do all it requires in order to retain customers.

The study aimed to establish the effect of employee empowerment on market share among African airlines in Kenya. The findings revealed that there was a positive and significant association and effect on market share. The study thus concludes that African airlines motivated staff to undertake quality improvement. The findings agree with Nzuve & Bakari (2012) research on the relationship between Empowerment and Performance in the City Council of Nairobi who found that employees are encouraged to take quick action to improve service quality. Raza et al. (2016) on employee empowerment in Total Quality Management practice stated that employee motivation is one of the strategies of managers to enhance effective job performance among workers in organizations. These would enable the achievement of market share.

The study sought to determine the influence of leadership on market share among African airlines in Kenya. The results revealed that leadership had the largest positive and significant association and effect on market share. The study thus concludes that there is need for leadership of African airline companies’ leadership to be committed and involved in the TQM implementation process. This is in line with Bergquist at al. (2015) who noted that TQM practice requires that quality leadership to be made a strategic objective and this means that the leader provides the suitable environment to provide the most comfort to the members who improve performance and productivity. The study supports the findings from Wanyoike (2016) who instills that top management establish trust and commitment to quality improvement by eliminating fear, which in turn will enable staff to fully contribute to the success of the organization.

The study aimed to find out the moderating effect of technology utilization and firm age on market share of African airlines. The study found that technology use and firm age had an effect on market share of African airlines. The study thus concludes that firm age and technology utilization had a control effect on the relationship between TQM enablers and market share.

The findings show that the proposed regression model was a good fit for the data with the ANOVA results showing a significance level of less than 0.05 and the model predicted 73.9 % of change in market share of African airlines based in Nairobi County.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The study recommended that African airline companies should make concerted efforts to enhance collaboration and coordination between quality assurance staff and service delivery staff in an effort to enhance quality practice in delivering services to their customers.
- The study recommended that African airlines should design and implement strategies that are aimed at retaining their current customers. This can be done by conducting evaluations on service delivery and expectations of consumers in the future to be able to meet and satisfy the customers' needs to increase their loyalty to the airline.
- The study recommended that African airlines should motivate employees to undertake quality management practice. This can be done by involving employees in decision making in quality management and rewarding programs for employees who meet quality standards in service delivery.
- The study recommended that leaders in African airlines be more involved in implementation of quality management practices in the company. The leaders in the company should be champions for quality management and should allocate resources, guidance, and motivation to employees towards quality management in the firm.

Areas of Further Study

The study aimed to examine the relationship between quality management and market share: a case of African airlines in Nairobi. The study was limited to four TQM practices. The study therefore recommends for further study on the eight principles of TQM on market share of airline companies. The study was limited to African airlines, there is need for further study on TQM and market share of other international airline companies operating in Kenya. The study focused on the market share aspect of airline performance, there is need for a similar study on different measures of performance such as profitability and financial performance.

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