

EMBEDDING TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION 9001:2008 FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES OF LEARNERS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish perspectives of learners on the extent to which embedding Total Quality Management in International Organization for Standardization 9001:2008 impacts on continuous improvement of Distance Education in Kenya at the University of Nairobi. The study was guided by a Total Quality Management theory to explain how the management team in an institution is entirely responsible for ensuring that quality management systems are implemented to attain quality delivery of services for customer satisfaction. The study used mixed method in a case study design. The approach entails employing both qualitative and quantitative methods in data collection, analysis and presentation. Through triangulation data was validated. Sampling techniques used to sample students for Focus Group discussion were: criterion; stratified purposeful; and random sampling. The Dean, School of Continuing Distance Education and the Chairman of the department of educational studies were selected through the use of intensity sampling technique. Data collection instruments included interview guide used to collect data from the Dean and the Chairman. A Focus Group Discussions guide and the Course Experiential Rating Matrices were used to collect data from students. The study concluded that although The University of Nairobi has been credited as the leader in the provision of DE and being the pioneer University to offer programmes on DE, the status may not be sustainable. This conclusion is based on students' ratings on the determinants of DE where majority were rated on strongly disagree and disagree scale by the participants. Analysis from the focus group discussions affirmed the fact that there is need to improve on the several aspects provided by SCDE to improve on the service delivery. Themes that emerged to support this conclusion included: flawed evaluation process; faulty curriculum delivery; lack of team work among students; challenges related to study modules; inadequate information and lack of care and support.

Keywords: Total Quality Management, International Organization for Standardization 9001:2008, Continuous Improvement, Distance Education, Perspectives of Learners.