

**Kowo Solomon  
Akpoviroro<sup>1</sup>  
Akinbola Olufemi  
Amos  
Akinrinola Olalekan**

## **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM) IN THE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

**Abstract:** *The study examines the Implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the Telecommunications Industry: Problems and Prospects with a focus on Globacom Nigeria PLC. Some firms aspire to be market leaders without considering their customers as being vital to their success. This has led to the collapse of erstwhile good businesses. Two research questions were posed for the study and two hypotheses formulated in line with the objectives. The paper adopted survey method. 124 copies of questionnaire was given to the respondents to write clearly their views and observations. The population of the study is Globacom Nigeria. (SPSS) and (Cronbach's alpha) was employed. Also descriptive, statistical and content analyses techniques were used in the analysis of the data collected. The study made use of statistical tools such as regression analysis in testing hypotheses and ANOVA which helped in the interpretation of results. The study found out that Strategic Management Process significantly affects Total Quality Management implementation and also planning and training method significantly affects Total Quality Management implementation in the Organization. The results indicated that if the Total Quality Management principles are fully integrated into the organizational functions and the Total Quality Management quality tools applied, then the benefits to be borne are immeasurable..*

**Keywords:** *Total Quality Management Implementation, Strategic Management Process, Planning and Training Method.*

### **1. Introduction**

Strategies comes in various forms and have evolved over the years, based on the economic situation on one hand, and the nature of competition existing at every point in time (Aluko, 2004). Some of these strategies have been used with some degrees of success, while others were absolute failure

(Chenhall, 2003; Davies 2000; Schroeder, 2000). Fernandez and Stahl, 1995 Posit that the reason organizations could not find absolute solace in these strategies has been the subject of many discussions by experts in the field of Management. However, most Nigerian organizations define Quality by engineering standards. Crosby (1974) postulates that Total Quality Management or

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author: Kowo Solomon Akpoviroro  
Email: kowosolomon@gmail.com

Products need not conform to consumer's requirements, but must also be acceptable. All scientific and social scientific research is necessitated by a perceived problem (Nzelibe and Ilogu, 1996). As such the quest and desire of the researcher to study on this topics. Companies producing homogenous products and services have to device workable strategies on how to woo the limited number of consumers (customers) to their sales. Managers in Western countries and parts of Asia have been known to have delved into the use of Total Quality Management in order to enable them compete in the global or international market, and they seem to be doing quite well (at least evidence from Japanese and USA auto and electronics companies is a clear example (Cua, Mekone & Schroeder, 2001; Beer, 2003; Wheelen & Hunger, 2004). The necessity of Total Quality Management in Nigerian Business Organizations stems from the fact that foreign companies have continued to dominate the local market in virtually all sections of the economy, except for those sectors that are under complete government control. The problems associated with the Nigerian companies in relation to Total Quality Management are quite enormous and these can be put as follows: First, the Nigerian companies are evidently lagging behind in the global or international market competition; thus, they are fast losing ground, with some of them going out business completely (Wilkinson & Dale, 2001). Second, the Nigerian Managers have seemingly failed to explore Total Quality Management for their organizations. They have rather gotten struck in the endless pursuit of what does not work for them any longer, the "blind" pursuit of profit stability and growth (Robins et al, 2000; Cooper & Schindler, 2000; Aeker, 1993). Third, they have failed to appreciate that change is necessary and that a change from the above stated pursuit to the pursuit of a consumer (customer) focus strategy is a long overdue strategy decision that has been tipped to

guarantee the ultimate realization of the organizational goals (Parasuraman, 2003). Fourth, due to lack of knowledge of the prospects of Total Quality Management, or lack of adequate finance or engagement of inexperienced personnel in Total Quality Management process or lackadaisical attitude on the part of the organization concerning Total Quality Management, the Total Quality Management impact in the Nigerian industries which the Telecommunications industry is part of, becomes problematic hence, the weak or poor service delivery of the industry in the actualization of its desired goals and objectives (Aluko, 2004). It is therefore, in the light of the foregoing that the study is set to investigate the reality in the above problems and further identify and determine other Total Quality Management challenges; equally, the prospects that are likely to emerge in the proper implementation of Total Quality Management.

### 1.1. Research Objectives

- i. i) To determine the effect of strategic management process on Total Quality Management
- ii. ii) To examine the effect of planning and training method on Total Quality Management.

### 1.2. Research Questions

- i. How does strategic management process influence Total Quality Management?
- ii. To what extent has planning and training method affected Total Quality Management?

### 1.3. Significance of The Study

Strategic management is currently gaining ground in management thinking. At the same time, establishing a successful corporate strategy is central to effective strategic

management in the light of the growing competitive and even turbulent business environment. In no sectors are synonymous problems of fierce competition and turbulence more pronounced today. These sectors are likely to be stepped in distress and devastated by mismanagement, if quality and improved management style is not maintained. Any attempt therefore, at finding solutions to the management problems likely to beset the industry must be a worthwhile effort (Cole, 1994; Deming, 1986; Mintzerg, 1994; Tamunomiebi, 1997). Therefore, this study attempts to identify the underpinnings of successful management in Nigeria's Telecommunication Sector in relation to Total Quality Management Strategy. It investigates the extent to which the strategy has helped Globacom Nigeria PLC to achieve substantial success. It is believed however, that a successful inquiry into this area will offer empirical insights on survival strategies for Telecommunication and other allied organizations. This will be an eye opener and a verifiable reference material for combating any likely organizational distress. Successful application of Total Quality Management strategy on both surfing and distressed organizations will lead to the restriction of confidence to the organization and consumer of services available in the organization. It is envisaged that apart from leading to a more wide Telecommunications system well positioned to contribute to the growth of the rational economy; managers in other sectors can benefit immensely from the research findings. Furthermore, the study is crucial as to pinpointing the strength and weaknesses evident in implementing the Total Quality Management strategy among Nigerian firms. This will enable firms to possibly fine-tune their Total Quality Management programs towards better results

## 2. Review of Related Literature

Change is the only constant thing in life. Therefore, the environment in which

organizations operate is dynamic and such environmental dynamism make organizations evolve changes in order to survive (Hopkins, 2000; Bryson, 1995; Porter, 1980). Change, another management philosophy of adaptation is also part of organizational strategy. Managers must therefore strategize their environment for opportunities to stay afloat (Pearce et al, 1994). Corporate strategies are more often than not worked out to meet the challenges that beset organizations. Always devising strategies that will give organizations differential edge is necessary. The definition and scope of corporate strategy is being revised to the changing nature of corporate competitiveness, even as the issue of quality has become a common denominator in many of the discussions on strategy and competitiveness (Mugenda, 1999; Wilkinson & Dale, 2009). There is, however, no gain saying the fact that the quality revolution has long been embraced in the manufacturing and production companies, but the reverse is the case in the service companies. However an operational style has been strategize by business managers – The Total Quality Management (TQM) strategy which is no more than “Engineering” out (Batt, Andrew & Theresa, 2000). From the start, the prospects or possibilities of disharmonies of internal conflicts and waste and tackled, thus creating a product process that runs clean and smoothly. The first thing to get right in the service industry is the human capital, the right people, the right management.

### 2.1. Overview of Total Quality Management (TQM)

Lynch (2009) stresses that working to improve quality is an important way to lower costs and that investing in quality improvement pays better dividends than any other investment a company can make. Quality is not just associated with a product, it is seen by the customer as the whole relationship (Juran, 1980; Ohmae, 1993).

Gatiss (1996) noted that Quality is the concept the consumer has about is decision to be associated with an organization. The customer is putting his own judgment and reputation on the line when he decides to take what you are offering. He expects you will honour a lifetime of support if that is necessary, otherwise he will perceive that your product is not total quality (Parasuraman, 2008). From an internal customer viewpoint, one's product or job function can affect another's performance and career. "If your deliverable is not total quality, then his perception of you will by, default, be one of not total quality" says Gatiss (1996). "He may expect your involvement and help even though you may feel it's not your job". Consequently, Gatiss defines quality as meeting the customer requirements at all times and striving to exceed them whenever possible.

## 2.2. Strategy Analysis

Strategic analysis and development may play a role in how the future organization strategy is determined. During strategic development, tools and techniques of strategic analysis and decision making are employed (Zikmundi, 1994). During this process, the intended strategy is converted into action by the organization through communication, providing agreed objectives and coordinating resources by involving people. An environmental scanning, during analysis is important to understand the operating environment of the organization (Lynch, 2009). This includes thoroughly scanning the customers, the suppliers, the competitors and the regulations in place for the particular industry. Other than the operating environment, the firm will also need to evaluate its own strengths and weaknesses as well as the threats and opportunities that the firm has and will need to be put into consideration during strategic planning (Haines, 2004; Porter, 1980). Proper analysis and development will ensure a firm attains

strategy fit.

## 2.3. Challenges of Total Quality Management Impacts on Consumers

The following are the problems associated with Total Quality Management which affects its real and effective implementation.

### i. Misconception of Total Quality Management

According to Sashkin and Kiser (1993) A TQM culture is based on certain values and leadership vision. Unfortunately, many organizations lack the knowledge of the efficacy of these three foundations. Some focus only on customers and forgets the other two, while some focus on organization culture, forgetting how important a customer is or how significant and highly important it is to offer the customer with the best quality products which can only be achieved through the acquisition of good planning and skills for identification and solution to problem(Oakland,1993).

### ii. General Ignorance of Total Quality Management Importance

Generally, many organizations lack the efficacy of the TQM workings, due to lack of information, education, and enlightenment on the TQM concept and its working, the appreciation and implementation is zero (Mehra et al, 2001; Peter & Watermann, 1982).

### iii. Lackadaisical Attitude

Many organizations, despite the fact that they are aware of the TQM concepts, its workings and prospects are still lukewarm and uninterested in appreciating and implementing TQM. Some

View this attribute to the tedious or strenuous nature of the concept, while others see it as having a high financial/cost implication (Galvano, 1994).

### iv. Lack of Finance

Unavailability or inadequate finance to implement the Total Quality Management concept is a great factor militating against

the implementation of TQM (Jabnoun & Sedran, 2005). Even when some organizations that is willing to execute the TQM concept, they may be inadequately equipped financially. The resultant effect is that the jobs will be done in a haphazard manner which in the long run might end up not actualizing the desired results (Goldsmith, 1997; Parasuraman, 2001).

v. Involvement of Non-Experts

The engagement of quacks or charlatans (false experts) in the TQM processes and implementation will obviously amount to a waste of resources by the concerned organizations there by killing the dreams of such organizations (Lord & Lawrence, 2001).

vi. Lack of Evaluation and Follow up

The inability of some organizations to evaluate and monitor effectively the processes and implementation of TQM, to determine if actually the result meets or matches the desired set standard is another militating factor against the TQM implementation for the organizational goals and objectives realization (Griffin, 1993; Wheelen & Hunger, 2004).

## 2.4. Prospects of Total Quality Management on Consumer

There are a lot of prospects/gains accruable from the appreciation and implementation of Total Quality Management. And this is if only the TQM concept is properly conceived, appreciated and implemented. The following are the likely prospects.

i. While the above points are obvious from a practical angle, they have deeper implications. Their real importance according to Sashkin and Kiser (1993) is psychological. That is, being able to control one's work outcomes through the use of TQM, tools shows people that they can cause

control and determine how the things turn out. These contrasts will allow frequent role

of the worker as a passive ineffectual by stander, unable to achieve the sort of results expected and of which he or she is capable.

ii. Aluko (2004) Opined that When TQM is used effectively it creates in users a sense of what, psychologists call self efficacy or what ordinary people refer to as self-confidence and self-esteem. These attitudes don't come as some seem to think, from motivational pep talks or from being told how wonderful and valuable one is self-confidence and self-esteem result from doing and succeeding from recognizing that success was due to one's own actions, not to fate or chance.

iii. Like tools, TQM techniques have an important, less obvious purpose than simply providing structured ways for people to work together more effectively to solve quality problems. Techniques like quality circles and group brainstorming help people develop the skills needed for effective team work (Pfeffer, 1994). They reinforce the team structure that is usually crucial aspect of the sort of organizational culture that supports TQM. Other techniques, like quality function development or design from manufacture cross-team cooperation and the systems viewpoint are the two important aspects of culture that support TQM (Korduplski, 1993; Eaton, 1993).

## 3. Research Methodology

This paper adopted survey method. 124 copies of questionnaire were given to the respondents to write clearly their views and observations. The population of the study is Globacom PLC Nigeria. Yamane formula will be adopted in determining the sample size. The instrument used for this research is the questionnaire. For this study, the internal consistency method was applied as it is the most efficient method. SPSS, Regression analysis and ANOVA was employed for the study. For this study, the internal consistency method was employed as it is the most efficient method (Michal, 2011).

The Yamane Formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1} + N(e)^2$$

Where:

*n* = sample size

*N* = population

*e* = margin of error (0.05)

Therefore:

$$n = \frac{180}{1} + 180(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 124$$

The questionnaire used in this survey is closed ended questionnaire; the questionnaire involved “Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree” structured dichotomy questions to facilitate analyzing the data collected from the research. The Likert-Scale form of questionnaire was used in this study. In this study the SPSS and (Cronbach’s alpha) was employed.

### 3.1. Data analysis and Hypothesis Testing

**Table 1.** Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.836	38

**Table 2.** Distribution of respondents and response rate

Respondents Occupation	Questionnaire administered (sampled)	Percentage of total response (%)
Top Level	25	24.2
Middle Level	15	14.6
Level Lower	63	61.2
Total	103	100.0
Gender/Category	Questionnaire administered (sampled)	Percentage of total response (%)
Male	59	57.3
Female	44	42.7
No of Returned	103	83
No of Not Returned	21	17
Total no of Questionnaires	124	100

**Table 3:** The Descriptive statistics of the Implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) In the Telecommunication Industry

Responses	Total (N)	Mean
<b>Strategic management process and total quality management implementation</b>		
Do you see TQM as a strategic tool to gain competitive advantage	103	3.96
Does the success of (TQM) require teamwork and communication	103	3.88
Strategic planning rather than ad-hoc measures are used to bring about Total Quality Service	103	3.77
To what extent is employee participation in strategic planning; and commitment to work necessary for successful (TQM) implementation	103	3.749
The implementation of TQM in your organization gives room for corporate restructuring and engineering	103	3.89
<b>Planning and training method and total quality management implementation</b>		
To what extent is employee’s training instrumental to Total Quality Management success	103	3.88



surveys are also carried out to measure the impact of Total Quality Management (TQM) approach	103	4.69
Regular market surveys are conducted to determine consumer requirements and needs.	103	3.77
Planning and training method technique could help organization to improve on Planning and training method	103	3.98
You have benefitted from Planning and training method organized by Globacom Nigeria Plc	103	3.86
There exist an effect between Planning and training method and Planning and training method	103	3.95

### 3.2. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis One:

- Ho1 strategic management process has no significant influence on Total Quality Management implementation,
- Ha1 strategic management process has significant influence on Total Quality Management implementation.

**Table 4.** Model Summary (a)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.643(a)	.414	.408	.50507

a Predictors: (Constant)

**Table 5.** ANOVA(a)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.173	1	18.173	71.239	.000(a)
	Residual	25.764	101	.255		
	Total	43.937	102			

a Predictors: (Constant), strategic management process

b Dependent Variable: Total quality management implementation

The results from the model summary table above revealed that the extent to which the

variance in strategic management process can be explained by Total Quality Management implementation is 41.4% i.e (R square = 0.414). The ANOVA table shows the Fcal 71.239 at 0.0001 significance level. Strategic Management Process significantly affects Total Quality Management implementation. Thus, the decision would be to reject the null hypothesis (H0), and accept the alternative hypothesis (H1).

**Table 6.** Coefficients (a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.719	.246		6.991	.000
	Strategic management process	.558	.066	.643	8.440	.000

a Dependent Variable: total quality management implementation

The coefficient table above shows the simple model that expresses how strategic management process assists organizations to improve Total Quality Management implementation. The model is shown mathematically as follows;

$$Y = a + bx$$

where y is increase in Total Quality Management implementation and x is strategic management process, a is a constant factor and b is the value of coefficient. From

this table therefore,

"Total quality management implementation = 1.719 + 0.558 Strategic management process"

This means that for every 100% change in Total Quality Management implementation, strategic management process contributed 55.8%

Hypotheses Two

- Ho2 Planning and training method does not improve Total Quality Management Implementation
- Ha2 Planning and training method has improve Total Quality Management Implementation

Table 7. Model Summary (b)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.117(a)	.014	.004	.73914

a Predictors: (Constant), planning&trainingmeth

Table 8. ANOVA (b)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	.765	1	.765	1.399	.001(a)
Residual	55.180	101	.546		
Total	55.944	102			

a Predictors: (Constant), planning&trainingmeth

b Dependent Variable: totalqualitymgtimplem

The results from the model summary table above revealed that the extent to which the variance in work allowances can be explained by Total Quality Management Implementation is 14% i.e (R square = 0.14). The ANOVA table shows the Fcal 1.399 at 0.0001 significance level. Planning and training method Implementation significantly affects Total Quality

Management implementation the in Organization. Thus, the decision would be to reject the null hypothesis (H0), and accept the alternative hypothesis (H1).

Table 9. Coefficients (b)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
1 (Constant)	3.432	.348	9.856	.000
PLANNING&TRAININGMETHOD	.305	.089	.117	1.183

a Dependent Variable: totalqualitymgtimplem

The coefficient table above shows the simple model that expresses how appreciation policy assists organizations to increase Total Quality Management Implementation. The model is shown mathematically as follows;

$$Y = a + bx$$

where y is increase in Planning and training method and x is appreciation policy, a is a constant factor and b is the value of coefficient. From this table therefore,

Total quality management implementation = 3.432 + 0.305 Planning&training method

This means that for every 100% change in Total Quality Management Implementation, Planning and training method contributed 30.5%.

4. Summary of Findings

The results revealed that Strategic Management Process significantly affects Total Quality Management implementation and Planning and training method



Implementation significantly affects Total Quality Management implementation in the Organization. This study has shown that Globacom's choice of strategies is driven by need for sustainable market growth, stiff competition, regulatory environment, Corporate responsibility and revenue generation. Further to this Globacom Plc. Nigeria, through its quality manuals, has to a very great extent ensured that the quality documents remain comprehensible and readily identifiable on the company intranet.

The company has also described the interaction between the processes of quality management system; reviewed and updated as necessary and re-approved documents to evaluate the need for changes to the company's Quality Management System (QMS) to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness. Globacom Plc. Nigeria uses Total Quality Management mainly in pursuit of efficiency, customer loyalty and enhanced revenue generation. To ensure Total Quality Management the company has incorporated the Customer Delight Index (CDI) in every employee's performance appraisals as some of the initiatives.

#### **4.1. Challenges GLOBACOM PLC NIGERIA has faced in applying Total Quality Management in Strategic Management**

Regarding challenges facing the organization in strategy development and implementation process, it is clear from the transcribed responses that lack of adequate resources and lack of proper and adequate training on the importance of TQM are some of the hindrances in the application of TQM as a strategic tool. Further, the team involved in strategy development and implementation faces considerable resistance to the process, with 75% of the respondents indicating so. Managing this resistance has not been easy either, but relevant training programs, quizzes with instant prizes, amongst other

programs have been adopted. On the other hand, lack of top management commitment is not a major barrier. In fact, there was a 100% repeat rate that the senior management is committed to the application of Total Quality Management for competitive positioning in the industry. This study has also found that computer culture acceptance-resistance to change and lack of a shared vision amongst the cross-functional strategy teams are considerable constraints in the application of TQM as a strategic tool in Globacom PLC Nigeria. Further, lack of mature Total Quality Management-IT infrastructure, inappropriate risk and change management, and complacency and lack of business process redesign on strategic TQM were also affecting application of TQM in Globacom Plc Nigeria. Other challenges Globacom Plc Nigeria faces in the implementation of Total Quality Management as a strategic tool, the respondents mentioned lack of across-the-board holistic approach to Total Quality Management, lack of relevant systems and institutional framework in the company and lack of rewards and motivation for staff as some of the constraints in applying Total Quality Management as a strategic tool in the company.

In whole, Globacom PLC Nigeria has to a great extent encountered some of the following major challenges in the implementation of its quality management practices: failure to clearly define the TQM challenges in the organizational functions; the impact and validity of decentralized units like retail shops and Regional Network Departments (RNDs); and there is poor utilization of some organizational resources like skilled labor and IT systems. Lack of customer focus yielded mixed results. However, availability to training is not a constraint since employees are readily available for training programs once scheduled.

## 5. Conclusion

Total Quality Management implementation can be mirrored to the Strategy functions by implementing the Total Quality Management principles when formulating and developing strategies, analyzing and implementing strategies and monitoring the implementation process.

Following the above findings, this study concludes that Total Quality Management has many practical applications in strategy functions. If the Total Quality Management principles are fully integrated into the organizational functions and the Total Quality Management quality tools applied, then the benefits to be borne are immeasurable. This study also concludes that the challenges to the application of Total Quality Management as a strategic tool in the telecom sector are remote. In addition, a majority of staff are aware of the general Total Quality Management principles, albeit in a broad sense.

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immeasurable. This study also concludes that the challenges to the application of Total Quality Management as a strategic tool in the telecom sector are remote. In addition, a majority of staff are aware of the general Total Quality Management principles, albeit in a broad sense.

### *Recommendations*

- i. There should be adequate resources and proper and adequate training on the importance of TQM which will improve strategy development and implementation.
- ii. Management should encourage Mature Total Quality Management-IT infrastructure, appropriate risk and change management, and complacency and business process redesign on strategic TQM which will enhance the application of TQM.
- iii. There must be relevant systems and institutional framework in the company, More so rewards and motivation for staff should be encouraged which will eradicate constraints in applying Total Quality Management as a strategic tool in the company.
- iv. Total Quality Management principles should be fully integrated into the organizational functions and Total Quality Management quality tools applied which will make the benefits to be immeasurable

### *Limitation of the Studies*

- a) The sample size of this study was determined based on the population of the employees of Globacom Telecom Nigeria PLC. Further studies should focus on larger and broad population.
- b) The Sample Size for this research was determined using Yamane formula. Using an alternative method for the sample size determination may offer a different sample size.

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**Kowo Solomon**

**Akpoviro**

Department of Business and  
Entrepreneurship,  
Kwara State University,  
Malete  
Nigeria  
[kowosolomon@gmail.com](mailto:kowosolomon@gmail.com)

**Akinbola Olufemi Amos**

Department of Business  
Administration  
Federal University of  
Agriculture,  
Abeokuta  
[active\\_email\\_adress](mailto:active_email_adress)

**Akinrinola Olalekan e**

Department of Accounting,  
Babcock University  
Ogun State,  
Nigeria  
[olatoyosim@gmail.com](mailto:olatoyosim@gmail.com)

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