

**TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF FOOD  
PROCESSING COMPANIES IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF TRUFOODS LTD**

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**DECLARATION**

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University

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This research project has been submitted with my approval as the university supervisor.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my father, Mr. Jones Mokoro, my sisters Isabella Mokoro and Gladys Mokoro in appreciation for their word of encouragement and financial support, which made my plan a success. I also dedicate to my supervisor Mr. Naftali Sang for his leadership in making this research project successful. I also dedicate it to the Management University of Africa family for all support they gave me.

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## ABSTRACT

In Kenya's food processing industry, Total Quality Management is increasingly adopted to enhance performance, competitiveness, and compliance with food safety standards. TQM emphasizes continuous improvement, customer focus, employee involvement, and efficient processes. As consumer demand for safe and consistent products grows, companies use Total Quality Management to improve product quality, reduce waste, and boost customer satisfaction. It also supports meeting both local and international regulatory requirements. Involving employees and monitoring processes ensures sustained operational improvements. Overall, TQM is essential in driving growth and efficiency in Kenya's food processing sector. The purpose of this study was to evaluate TQM practices and performance of food processing companies in Kenya: a case study of Trufoods Limited. The independent variables were top management commitment, supplier quality management, employee training and process management. The study target population was 92 employees. Stratified random sampling was adopted. Questionnaires were adopted as tool for collecting data. Data was presented using tables and quantitative analysis was used. This study finding established top management commitment, supplier quality management, employee training and process management affects performance of food processing companies. In conclusion, clear communication from top management regarding quality expectations helps to break silos between departments such as procurement, production, and quality assurance. When everyone understands their role in delivering a safe and consistent product, operational efficiency improves. Clearly written supplier contracts that specify quality standards, delivery timelines, and testing protocols form the legal foundation for accountability. They also help prevent disputes and clarify expectations. Training encourages cross-functional collaboration and knowledge sharing. Employees from different departments develop a shared understanding of standards and procedures, which minimizes misunderstandings. In food processing, where timing and coordination are crucial, this unity improves the flow of operations and product quality. By applying lean methods or automation, companies can optimize how tasks are performed. This might involve redesigning the workflow, adjusting line speeds, or reallocating staff. The result is faster production cycles and higher output, which enhances the company's ability to meet customer demands on time. The study recommends that, the top management should consistently allocate adequate budgets and technical resources for training, technology upgrades, and quality improvement initiatives. Lack of resources often hinders operational efficiency, especially in food processing, where safety and freshness depend on timely interventions. Supplier agreements should contain clear and enforceable clauses on product specifications, quality testing, packaging standards, and penalties for non-compliance. Contracts should also outline acceptable tolerance levels and procedures for handling defects. These legally binding clauses provide a foundation for managing expectations, reducing disputes, and maintaining accountability throughout the supply chain. Food processing companies should promote internal knowledge sharing by encouraging cross-training between departments or organizing team learning sessions. This collaborative approach helps break operational silos, increases organizational resilience, and ensures smoother operations during staff rotations or absences. Food processing companies should adopt proven process improvement methodologies such to eliminate waste, reduce cycle times, and enhance production flow. This will help identify process bottlenecks, reduce variability, and enhance efficiency across all stages, from raw material handling to final product packaging. Optimized workflows contribute to cost savings, higher throughput, and customer satisfaction.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.3 Statement of the Problem .....	7
1.3 Objectives of the Study .....	7
1.4 Research Questions .....	8
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	8
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	9
1.7. Chapter Summary.....	9
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>10</b>
2.0 Introduction .....	10
2.1 Theoretical Literature Review .....	10
2.2. Empirical Literature Review .....	12
2.3 Summary of Knowledge Gaps .....	20
2.4 Conceptual Framework .....	21
2.5 Operationalization of Variables.....	23
2.6 Chapter Summary.....	24

<b>CHAPTER THREE .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>25</b>
3.0 Introduction .....	25
3.1 Research Design .....	25
3.2 Target Population .....	25
3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique .....	26
3.4 Data Collection Instrument .....	26
3.5 Pilot Study .....	27
3.6 Data Collection Procedure.....	27
3.7 Data Analysis Method and Presentation .....	28
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	28
3.9 Chapter Summary.....	29
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>30</b>
4.0 Introduction .....	30
4.1 Presentation of Research Findings .....	30
4.2 Limitations of the Study .....	39
4.3 Chapter Summary.....	39
<b>CHAPTER FIVE.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>40</b>
5.0 Introduction .....	40
5.1 Summary of Findings .....	40
5.2 Conclusion.....	42
5.3 Recommendations .....	43
REFERENCES.....	46
APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTION LETTER	
APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE	
APPENDIX III: PLAGIARISM REPORT	
APPENDIX IV: BUDGET PLAN	
APPENDIX V: WORK PLAN	

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1</b>	Summary of Knowledge Gaps.....	21
<b>Table 2</b>	Operationalization of Variables.....	24
<b>Table 3</b>	Target Population.....	26
<b>Table 4</b>	Response Rate.....	30
<b>Table 5</b>	Gender Analysis.....	30
<b>Table 6</b>	Age Brackets.....	31
<b>Table 7</b>	Highest Education Level.....	31
<b>Table 8</b>	Length of Service.....	32
<b>Table 9</b>	Rating of top management commitment on performance of food processing companies.....	32
<b>Table 10</b>	Rating of supplier quality management on performance of food processing companies.....	34
<b>Table 11</b>	Rating of employee training on performance of food processing companies...36	
<b>Table 12</b>	Rating process management on performance of food processing company....37	

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1</b>	Conceptual Framework.....	22
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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>KEBS</b>	Kenya Bureau of Standards
<b>NEMA</b>	National Environment Management Authority
<b>QMS</b>	Quality Management Systems

## **OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **Employee Training**

This is the structured development of workers' skills, knowledge, and competencies to perform their roles effectively and safely. In food processing companies, training ensures that employees understand hygiene standards, handling procedures, and quality control measures.

### **Process Management**

This is the systematic planning, monitoring, and optimization of operational workflows to ensure efficiency, consistency and quality in production. In food processing, this includes standardizing procedures, implementing quality control systems and minimizing variations in production.

### **Supplier Quality Management**

This involves the strategic selection, evaluation, and monitoring of suppliers to ensure that the raw materials and ingredients they provide meet predefined quality and safety standards. In food processing sector, managing supplier quality directly affects product safety, consistency and compliance with health regulations.

### **Top Management Commitment**

This is the active involvement and support of senior executives in implementing and sustaining quality improvement initiatives within an organization. In food processing companies, this commitment ensures the allocation of adequate resources, enforcement of food safety standards, and alignment of organizational goals with quality objectives.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The study's background is presented in this chapter. Additionally, it includes the issue description, study objectives, research questions, study significance, study scope, and chapter summary.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Adoption of TQM in Canada has been largely influenced by the need to meet stringent safety and quality regulations, both domestically and internationally. Agyekum, Haight and Panuwatwanich (2019) indicates that, Canadian food manufacturing firms that adopted comprehensive Total Quality Management frameworks-focusing on customer orientation, continuous improvement, and quality assurance-reported improvements in production efficiency and customer satisfaction. These firms were also better positioned to access international markets due to compliance with global standards such as ISO 22000 and HACCP. For Trufoods Limited, lessons from Canadian firms highlight the importance of aligning Total Quality Management with international quality benchmarks to enhance performance and competitiveness, especially as the company considers expanding beyond Kenya's borders.

Germany's food processing industry is renowned for its emphasis on quality engineering and structured management systems. A study by Jabbour et al. (2019) on TQM practices in German manufacturing firms-including food processors-revealed that performance improvements are driven by top management commitment, supplier quality integration, and workforce training. German companies tend to embed Total Quality Management principles into their strategic operations, ensuring that quality is a shared responsibility across all departments. For Trufoods Limited, the German approach underscores the value of leadership engagement and employee empowerment in sustaining high-quality outcomes. By adopting a similar structure that encourages collaboration between departments and emphasizes training, Kenyan food companies can build a more resilient quality culture.

The adoption of Total Quality Management practices in food industry in South Africa has faced both advancements and challenges. Research by Netshandama and Makhubele (2020) indicated that while many South African food processing firms recognize the value of Total Quality Management, inconsistent implementation due to limited resources and lack of continuous training remains a barrier to performance gains. However, firms that consistently applied quality audits, customer feedback mechanisms, and internal process reviews achieved significant improvements in operational efficiency and product quality. For Trufoods Limited, the South African case demonstrates the critical importance of consistency in implementing Total Quality Management practices. It also points to the need for investment in employee development and the establishment of feedback loops for continuous improvement in service and production quality.

The food processing industry has increasingly recognized Total Quality Management as a catalyst for improving competitiveness and operational performance in Ghana. A study by Quartey, Abor, and Djankpa (2019) emphasized that TQM practices like continuous improvement are instrumental in achieving product consistency and regulatory compliance in Ghanaian food firms. However, the study also noted that challenges such as inadequate training and limited management commitment often hinder full implementation. For Trufoods Limited in Kenya, the Ghanaian experience underscores the importance of comprehensive staff training and strong leadership in successfully adopting Total Quality Management practices. Lessons from Ghana suggest that without top-down support and structured quality planning, the impact of TQM on performance may be limited.

In Uganda, Total Quality Management adoption in food manufacturing has been driven largely by consumer demand for safer and higher-quality food products, as well as the need to comply with East African Community (EAC) standards. According to Namagembe, Munene, and Orobia (2019), food processing firms that implemented Total Quality Management practices-especially customer focus, supplier quality management, and employee involvement-achieved significant improvements in product quality and customer satisfaction. The study found that integrating employees into quality improvement initiatives fostered innovation and ownership, which in turn enhanced overall organizational performance. For Trufoods Limited, the Ugandan case provides a strong argument for involving frontline

employees in decision-making processes and training them in quality standards. Such an approach could help the company better meet customer expectations and adapt to a dynamic market environment.

A study by Mwangi and Kihoro (2018) found that companies that consistently applied TQM principles such as continuous improvement, customer orientation, and leadership commitment reported higher levels of operational efficiency and customer retention. However, the study also noted that many firms still face challenges in institutionalizing quality practices due to budget constraints and a lack of strategic focus. For Trufoods Limited, this presents an opportunity to differentiate itself by fully embracing TQM as a core business strategy. By committing to quality at all organizational levels, Trufoods can improve its performance, customer trust, and long-term sustainability in the competitive Kenyan food market.

### **1.1.1 TQM Practices and Performance of Food Processing Companies**

TQM is a holistic approach to long-term organizational success through customer satisfaction and continuous improvement across all operations. In Kenya's food processing sector, TQM practices such as quality planning, customer focus, employee involvement, and process management have increasingly been adopted to improve product safety, operational efficiency, and regulatory compliance. Given the highly competitive and regulated nature of the food industry, these practices are essential for meeting international standards and ensuring food safety. According to Muriithi and Ondari (2021), companies that have institutionalized TQM frameworks-such as ISO 22000 and HACCP-have reported improvements in product quality, reduced customer complaints, and increased market access, especially in export markets. These quality standards are not only a requirement for food safety but also a competitive strategy for companies aiming to penetrate regional and global value chains.

Employee involvement and training are core pillars of TQM that significantly influence performance in Kenyan food processing companies. When staff is adequately trained in food safety protocols, hygiene practices, and operational procedures, they become more effective in identifying and preventing quality issues. This participatory culture also enhances job satisfaction and reduces internal resistance to change, which is critical in the successful

implementation of continuous improvement initiatives. As reported by Wanyonyi, Mwangi, and Kimani (2021), food processing firms that engage employees in decision-making and empower them through training have experienced greater operational efficiency, lower production costs, and higher customer satisfaction. These results are especially evident in SMEs, which often lack sophisticated machinery but compensate through human capital and quality-focused operations.

Customer focus and supplier quality management-both integral to TQM-have been directly linked to improved organizational performance in Kenya's food processing industry. Meanwhile, establishing quality standards for suppliers and conducting regular audits helps maintain consistency in raw material inputs, which is vital for product safety and consistency. A study by Musyoka and Muturi (2021) on Kenyan food processors revealed that TQM implementation improved customer loyalty, reduced production rework rates, and enhanced compliance with the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) regulations. Overall, TQM enables food processing firms to build resilient systems that not only address quality issues reactively but also embed preventive strategies, fostering sustainable growth and profitability.

### **1.1.2 Top Management Commitment**

Top management commitment significantly influences the strategic direction and operational effectiveness of food processing companies. When leaders actively participate in quality management initiatives, allocate necessary resources, and set clear performance expectations, it fosters a quality-oriented culture across all organizational levels. Such commitment ensures the alignment of corporate objectives with quality goals, thereby promoting accountability and continuous improvement. For instance, managers who champion food safety programs, enforce compliance with regulatory standards, and support innovation initiatives directly enhance organizational credibility and market competitiveness (Singh et al., 2021). Their leadership also ensures swift decision-making, especially in responding to market changes and consumer demands for healthier, safer, and more sustainably produced food.

Top management plays a critical role in cultivating an environment where employees are empowered to contribute to performance goals. This is particularly crucial in the food industry, where process precision and hygiene standards are non-negotiable. Management's

visible support for quality assurance initiatives, such as ISO 22000 or HACCP, sends a strong message to employees and external stakeholders about the company's dedication to excellence. Kumar and Bala (2021), companies with highly engaged leadership teams often report improved operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and profitability. Therefore, consistent top management involvement is foundational for establishing robust quality systems that elevate overall company performance.

### **1.1.3 Supplier Quality Management**

Supplier quality management is another pivotal determinant of performance in food processing companies. These organizations rely heavily on raw materials, packaging inputs, and ingredients sourced from third parties. The quality of inputs directly affects the safety and final quality of food products. Hence, managing supplier relationships through rigorous selection criteria, regular audits, and performance evaluations enhances product reliability and compliance with industry standards. Effective supplier quality management systems can mitigate risks such like contamination and regulatory violations; thereby preserving brand reputation and consumer trust (Hassan & Bamford, 2021).

A strong collaboration with suppliers leads to mutual improvement and innovation in product development. Food companies that invest in supplier development programs often experience reduced defects, cost savings, and increased responsiveness in the supply chain. According to Rajesh and Ravi (2021), integrating suppliers into the company's quality assurance framework encourages transparency and fosters long-term partnerships. This strategic alignment enables food processors to respond swiftly to changing market requirements, particularly in a highly competitive and regulated industry. In this regard, supplier quality management serves not only as a compliance mechanism but also as a strategic asset for enhancing overall operational performance.

### **1.1.4 Employee Training**

Employee training is integral to improving performance in food processing companies as it ensures that staff possesses the technical and behavioral competencies required to meet quality, safety, and efficiency targets. Regular training programs aligned with industry best

practices and regulatory standards help reduce operational errors, minimize waste, and improve product consistency. As noted by Osei and Agyeman (2021), firms that prioritize continuous staff development tend to experience higher productivity and lower turnover rates.

Beyond technical skills, in the food processing sector, where hygiene, sanitation, and handling standards are critical, training ensures that employees internalize the importance of their roles in maintaining product integrity. Moreover, cross-functional training encourages flexibility and teamwork, enhancing operational resilience during peak production periods or labor shortages. A study by Fatima and Akhtar (2021) showed that companies that invest in structured training frameworks outperform their peers in both quality metrics and customer satisfaction indices. Thus, employee training is a strategic lever that translates into tangible performance improvements.

### **1.1.5 Process Management**

Process management involves the planning, monitoring, and optimization of production activities to ensure that food processing operations are efficient, consistent, and compliant with industry standards. Effective process management reduces variation, ensures resource optimization, and enhances product traceability. In food processing, where regulatory compliance and food safety are paramount, standardized processes minimize risks associated with contamination, spoilage, and non-conformity. According to Patel and Deshmukh (2021), companies with well-defined process control systems report higher operational efficiency and better responsiveness to customer demands.

Moreover, the implementation of quality management tools such as Statistical Process Control (SPC), Six Sigma, and Lean methodologies can significantly boost performance outcomes. These approaches enable food companies to continuously monitor and improve their processes, leading to reduced downtime, better inventory control, and increased throughput. Improved process management also facilitates data-driven decision-making and enhances the organization's capacity to innovate. As observed by Sharma and Mehta (2021), process excellence is a key differentiator in the food industry, particularly in meeting consumer demands for customized, high-quality, and safe products. Therefore, robust process management is essential to sustaining high performance and competitiveness.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The Kenyan food processing industry has witnessed rapid growth due to increasing demand for processed and packaged foods, but challenges related to quality control, operational inefficiencies, and customer dissatisfaction remain prevalent. According to the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (2020), quality-related complaints and product recalls in the food manufacturing sector rose by 27% between 2018 and 2020, signaling a systemic issue in quality management. Trufoods Ltd., one of Kenya's oldest food processing companies, has not been exempt from such challenges. Public consumer reviews and reports by the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) have cited instances of inconsistent product standards and packaging defects in Trufoods products between 2019 and 2021, which impacted the brand's customer trust and market competitiveness (KEBS, 2021). These concerns raise critical questions about the implementation and effectiveness of Total Quality Management (TQM) practices at Trufoods Ltd., and whether these practices are adequately addressing quality assurance and performance expectations in a dynamic market.

Although TQM is globally recognized for enhancing organizational performance through continuous improvement, employee involvement, and customer focus, its implementation in Kenyan food manufacturing firms appears inconsistent and insufficiently evaluated. For example, a study by Njoroge and Karugu (2020) on Kenyan manufacturing firms revealed that only 42% had fully implemented core TQM principles, citing leadership gaps and inadequate employee training as key barriers. Furthermore, while the theoretical benefits of TQM are well-documented, empirical research specific to Kenyan food processors such as Trufoods Ltd. is limited. This lack of localized evidence creates a critical research gap, particularly in understanding how TQM practices influence operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and overall performance in Kenya's food processing context. Addressing this gap is essential not only for the improvement of Trufoods Ltd. but also for policy-makers and industry stakeholders seeking to enhance quality management standards across the sector.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to evaluate the effect of total quality management practices on performance of food processing companies in Kenya: a case of Trufoods Ltd

### **1.3.1 Specific Objectives**

- i. To establish the effect of top management commitment on performance of food processing companies in Kenya
- ii. To evaluate the effect of supplier quality management on performance of food processing companies in Kenya
- iii. To determine the effect of employee training on performance of food processing companies in Kenya
- iv. To assess the effect of process management on performance of food processing companies in Kenya

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- i. How does top management commitment affect performance of food processing companies in Kenya?
- ii. What is the effect of supplier quality management on performance of food processing companies in Kenya?
- iii. To what extent does employee training affect performance of food processing companies in Kenya?
- iv. What is the effect of process management on performance of food processing companies in Kenya?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The management team of Trufoods Limited will be the study's main beneficiary. By assessing how TQM practices affect organizational performance, the study will offer important information about which quality techniques are effective and which need to be improved. To improve productivity, product quality, and customer happiness, managers will be able to use the findings to pinpoint gaps in areas like staff involvement, continuous improvement, and customer focus. They will also be able to make data-driven decisions. The company may then benefit from improved resource use, less operational waste, and heightened market competitiveness as a result.

This study will also benefit policymakers and regulatory bodies such as the Kenya Bureau of Standards and the Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development. The

research will offer empirical evidence on the current quality management practices within the food processing industry and how these practices influence performance. Such insights can guide the formulation of more effective quality assurance policies, regulations, and support programs that enhance compliance with food safety and quality standards, contributing to the development of a more robust and sustainable food manufacturing sector in Kenya.

Academic scholars and students who are interested in the connection between TQM techniques and organizational performance in emerging economies will find this study to be a useful resource. It will close a gap in the literature by concentrating on a particular case study within the Kenyan food processing sector and offer a useful point of reference for further research in related fields. Scholars can build upon the findings to explore additional variables such as innovation, employee training, or supply chain integration, thereby contributing to the growth of knowledge in quality management and performance enhancement.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study determined the effect of TQM practices on performance of food processing companies in Kenya: with reference to the Trufoods Limited, located along Jogoo Road, near Makongeni Police Station in Nairobi County. The target population was 92 employees. The study was conducted from February to July 2025.

### **1.7. Chapter Summary**

The study's introduction is that has the background of the study, which discusses the previous author's contributions to the primary research theme, is included. The problem statement explains the nature of the issue and its root causes. The study's general and particular objectives are determined by the independent variables under investigation. Based on the particular goals of the study, research questions have been developed. The importance and scope of the study are also covered in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The theoretical and empirical literature reviews, research gaps, conceptual framework, operationalization of variables, and chapter summary are all included in this chapter.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Literature Review**

A thorough examination and synthesis of previous studies and theories pertinent to a certain subject or area of study constitutes a theoretical literature review. Its main goals are to identify gaps in the current literature, offer a conceptual framework for comprehending the subject, and guide future research directions. Deming's Theory of TQM, is best suited as the anchored theory for the study because it offers a holistic and foundational approach to understanding how Total Quality Management practices influence organizational performance. The theory emphasizes continuous improvement, system thinking, understanding variation and knowledge-based decision-making-principles that are central to TQM implementation (Kiran, 2020).

##### **2.2.1. Deming's Theory of Total Quality Management**

Founded by W. Edwards Deming in (1986), the theory forms one of the cornerstones of TQM. It is built on four interrelated elements: appreciation for a system, knowledge of variation, theory of knowledge, and psychology (Deming, 1986; Osabiya & Okunade, 2020). In the context of food processing companies such as Trufoods Ltd., understanding how these components influence internal processes is essential. For instance, recognizing company as a system of interconnected processes helps managers to better coordinate operations such as procurement, production and quality assurance, which in turn enhances overall performance.

A critical aspect of Deming's theory is the emphasis on reducing process variability. In food processing, maintaining product consistency is key to satisfying customer expectations and complying with health standards. TQM practices such as Statistical Process Control (SPC) and continuous feedback loops, which are aligned with Deming's principles, help minimize defects and ensure quality outputs. As Kiran (2020) observes, companies that rigorously apply

Deming's theory often experience improved quality control, reduced waste, and higher operational efficiency.

Furthermore, the psychological aspect of the theory emphasizes employee motivation, empowerment, and training as critical to achieving quality. In the case of Trufoods Ltd., involving employees in decision-making and quality improvement initiatives fosters ownership and accountability. This aligns with findings by Adebajo et al. (2021), who argue that companies with strong employee involvement in TQM practices are more likely to sustain quality performance and innovation. Thus, Deming's theory provides a holistic framework for guiding TQM implementation and performance improvement in the food processing sector.

### **2.2.2. Crosby's Theory of Quality Management**

Founded by Philip B. Crosby in (1979), Philip Crosby's approach to quality is famously anchored in the philosophy of "doing it right the first time" and the concept of zero defects. His theory advocates that quality is conformance to requirements and that it should be measured by the cost of non-conformance (Crosby, 1979; Elshaer et al., 2019). For a food processing firm like Trufoods Ltd., this philosophy is highly relevant because errors in product formulation, packaging, or hygiene can lead to significant health risks, product recalls, and reputational damage. Implementing Crosby's principles ensures that quality is not just a goal but an integral part of every operation.

One of Crosby's central ideas is that prevention is less costly than inspection. By investing in preventive measures-such as training, supplier quality management, and robust production protocols-food companies can reduce defects and operational disruptions. In fact, according to Baporikar (2020), companies that adopt preventive quality practices often report fewer customer complaints, greater product reliability, and stronger regulatory compliance. At Trufoods Ltd, application of Crosby's theory could translate into a corporate culture where every employee is responsible for preventing defects and ensuring conformance to standards.

Crosby emphasized the need for management commitment and quality improvement programs to institutionalize a zero-defects mindset. In the Kenyan food industry, this calls for

strategic alignment between senior leadership and quality management teams. For example, having clear quality objectives, proper documentation, and employee recognition for quality achievements can motivate continuous improvement. As highlighted by Khalil et al. (2021), organizational commitment to zero-defect principles leads to higher employee morale and customer satisfaction, which are key indicators of firm performance.

### **2.2. 3. Juran's Quality Trilogy**

Founded by Joseph M. Juran in (1986) and according to Juran, quality management must begin with strategic planning that identifies customer needs, aligns processes, and establishes measurable objectives (Juran & Godfrey, 1999; Santos-Vijande et al., 2020). For Trufoods Ltd., quality planning may involve understanding consumer preferences for healthy food products, sourcing from reputable suppliers, and designing recipes that meet regulatory and nutritional requirements.

The second component, quality control, involves monitoring operations to ensure that products meet the desired standards. In food processing, this might include real-time temperature checks, microbial testing, and batch sampling. Implementing control mechanisms such as HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) can significantly reduce safety risks and maintain consistency. According to Okibo and Orwa (2021), strong quality control systems lead to fewer recalls and higher product trust in the Kenyan food sector, suggesting that Juran's principles are highly applicable in this context.

Lastly, Juran stressed the importance of quality improvement as a continuous, organization-wide effort. In this phase, tools like Six Sigma and Lean are often applied to eliminate waste and enhance efficiency. For a company like Trufoods Ltd., such initiatives could include reducing energy consumption in production, streamlining packaging lines, or adopting digital tracking systems. As argued by Muthoni and Muturi (2022), companies that continuously innovate and refine their processes based on customer feedback and performance metrics are more likely to gain a competitive edge. Therefore, the Juran Trilogy not only supports operational excellence but also fosters long-term strategic performance in the food industry.

## **2.2 Empirical Literature Review**

An empirical literature review involves a critical examination of studies that are based on observed and measured phenomena, typically through data collection and analysis. It focuses on reviewing previous research findings that use quantitative or qualitative methods to investigate a specific topic or research question. This type of review helps identify patterns, gaps, and inconsistencies in existing knowledge, providing a foundation for justifying the current study (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

### **2.2.1 Top Management Commitment and Performance of Food Processing Companies**

A study by Müller, Steinle, and Fürst (2021) research revealed that strong leadership support was positively correlated with the implementation of Total Quality Management practices, which in turn improved operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Top management was seen as instrumental in setting quality goals and allocating resources. However, the study focused primarily on firms in technologically advanced regions and did not adequately explore leadership practices in companies facing resource constraints or operating in emerging markets. The study lacked consideration for companies operating in low-resource environments and failed to address how top management commitment influences performance when infrastructure and funding are limited. Trufoods Limited, operating in Kenya's developing economy, faces challenges that differ significantly from those in Germany. By examining how Kenyan top executives drive performance under financial, regulatory, and infrastructural constraints, this study provided insights into how leadership commitment functions in less mature economies, thus contributing comparative data to global quality management literature.

In Ghana, Asamoah, Amoako, and Oppong (2020) study findings showed that commitment from top executives significantly influences compliance with safety and quality regulations, especially under Ghana's evolving regulatory framework. The study highlighted the importance of leadership in mobilizing employee support and enforcing hygiene protocols. However, it did not quantitatively measure how top management commitment translated into performance metrics such as profitability, market share, or customer loyalty. The study was largely qualitative and lacked a robust performance measurement framework linking top management commitment directly to key performance indicators. The study at Trufoods

Limited adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches, examining not just regulatory compliance, but also how top management commitment affects profitability, productivity, and customer satisfaction. This comprehensive framework provided empirical evidence that was missing in the Ghanaian context.

A study by Nakimera and Bananuka (2021) indicated that when senior managers were actively involved in monitoring and evaluation, employee performance and compliance with international food safety standards improved. However, the study concentrated only on managerial oversight and did not consider strategic decision-making aspects such as investment in technology, staff development, or customer relationship management. The study focused narrowly on monitoring activities and ignored other strategic dimensions of top management commitment that impact organizational performance holistically. The Trufoods study expanded the focus to include strategic leadership roles such as investment in innovation, policy formulation, human capital development and stakeholder engagement. This broader scope helped illuminate how comprehensive top management involvement enhances both operational and strategic performance outcomes.

Wanjiku and Kihoro (2021) looked into how senior management commitment affected Kenyan food firms' adoption of ISO 22000 food safety standards. The study found that leadership support was crucial in securing employee buy-in and implementing safety systems. However, the research was limited to the adoption phase of quality standards and did not assess the long-term effect of management commitment on market competitiveness. The study concentrated on the initial stages of standard adoption without evaluating the long-term performance benefits of sustained management commitment. The study at Trufoods assessed the ongoing impact of top management commitment on a broader range of performance metrics such as employee retention, customer loyalty, innovation and financial performance. By doing so, it captured sustained effects of leadership engagement beyond initial compliance

### **2.2.2 Supplier Quality Management and Performance of Food Processing Companies**

Patel and Shah (2021) research study revealed that, rigorous supplier evaluation, continuous communication, and supplier development programs were positively associated with product quality and delivery performance. The study emphasized the importance of collaborative

relationships between manufacturers and suppliers. However, it mainly focused on large-scale multinational companies and ignored the experiences of medium-sized or local firms, especially those operating in resource-constrained environments. This research study lacked insights into how small and medium-sized food processing firms implement supplier quality management, particularly in environments with limited infrastructure and supplier capabilities. Trufoods Limited, a mid-sized Kenyan firm, operates in a developing context where supplier networks are less formalized. By analyzing how such a company enforces supplier quality management practices in a more constrained supply ecosystem, this study contributed unique insights into supplier management under non-ideal conditions—something overlooked in India context.

Mabasa and Makgato (2022) examined the role of supplier quality management in ensuring food safety and performance in South African food manufacturing companies. Their study revealed that consistent supplier audits, third-party certifications, and strong documentation systems significantly improved operational efficiency and reduced product recalls. While the study captured a comprehensive view of supplier governance, it primarily emphasized food safety compliance and did not explore the broader performance indicators such as profitability, market competitiveness, or innovation capacity. The study was limited to food safety aspects of supplier quality management and did not account for other performance outcomes like financial sustainability, customer satisfaction, or strategic agility. The study at Trufoods explored a wider range of performance indicators influenced by supplier quality management, including production efficiency, cost control, brand reputation, and market responsiveness. This broader scope helped link supplier quality management to overall organizational performance in a more holistic manner.

Msuya and Kisanga (2021) looked into how supplier selection and evaluation criteria affected food processing businesses' performance in Tanzania. They concluded that choosing suppliers based on quality certifications, reliability, and previous performance had a direct impact on product consistency and timely delivery. But because the study used a cross-sectional methodology, it was unable to account for the long-term effects of investments in supplier development or improvements in supplier quality. Due to its temporal limitations, the study was unable to evaluate the long-term viability and advantages of supplier quality management

investments. The Trufoods study took a long-term approach, looking at how capacity-building initiatives and long-term supplier engagement strategies affect business performance over time. A practical insight into how consistent SQM initiatives support competitive advantage and ongoing improvement was provided.

Kilonzo and Wambua (2020) research established that supplier audits and quality agreements helped improve inventory management and product quality. Nonetheless, the study was limited to firms operating in Nairobi County and did not address regional food processors or those that rely on informal suppliers, particularly in peri-urban or rural areas where quality assurance frameworks are less standardized. The study's narrow geographic focus limited the generalizability of its findings, and it did not consider firms that operate in more decentralized or rural supply chains. Trufoods Limited operates across multiple regions in Kenya and sources inputs from both formal and informal suppliers. This case study therefore provided richer, more context-specific data on how companies can implement supplier quality management in diverse supply chain settings, particularly in developing economies where weak regulatory enforcement may exist.

### **2.2.3 Employee Training and Performance of Food Processing Companies**

A study by Fournier and Morin (2021) investigated the impact of employee training on productivity and innovation within Canadian agri-food processing companies. A strong link was established between structured training programs and improvements in technical efficiency, product innovation and employee engagement. It emphasized the importance of continuous professional development, especially in adapting to new technologies in food production and packaging. However, the study was conducted in a highly industrialized context with advanced infrastructure, automation, and government training incentives. The study did not explore how training affects performance in low-resource environments, particularly where formal training budget and technologies are limited. Trufoods Ltd operates in a developing economy with budgetary and infrastructural constraints. By examining how low-cost, locally driven training programs influence employee efficiency and company performance, this study offered insights into sustainable, scalable training models suitable for resource-constrained settings, something overlooked in the Canadian context.

Hassan and Farag (2022) examined the role of vocational and on-the-job training in enhancing the performance of employees in Egypt's food processing sector. Their findings showed that hands-on training significantly improved productivity, reduced operational errors, and enhanced compliance with food safety standards. However, the study primarily focused on frontline production workers and did not consider how training affects managerial staff or cross-functional departments such as procurement, marketing, or quality assurance. The study had a narrow scope, focusing only on production-level staff and excluding the impact of training on overall organizational performance and interdepartmental synergy. The Trufoods study adopted a broader scope by evaluating the impact of training across all organizational levels—from production floor staff to supervisors and department heads. This approach helped determine how a comprehensive training framework can holistically improve performance, communication, and innovation across departments.

A study by Uwineza and Mugisha (2020) analyzed effects of workforce training on performance of small-scale food processors in Rwanda. It found that basic technical training improved quality control and reduced wastage. However, the study relied heavily on self-reported performance measures without linking training initiatives to verifiable business metrics. The study lacked empirical performance data and over-relied on subjective assessments, limiting the ability to establish causality between training and company performance. The study at Trufoods Limited used a mixed-methods approach, combining employee surveys with quantifiable performance indicators such as production output, defect rates, sales volumes, and customer retention. This provided a more robust and evidence-based analysis of training's actual contribution to firm performance.

Kamau and Njoroge (2021) study results indicated that regular training improved time management, reduced downtime, and enhanced team collaboration. However, the study was geographically limited to urban-based processors and did not consider the challenges faced by companies with distributed operations across urban and rural areas, where access to training resources varies significantly. The study lacked a geographic and operational diversity perspective, ignoring how training programs function across different regions and organizational units. Trufoods Limited sources raw materials and operates distribution in both urban and rural areas. This study analyzed how training initiatives are implemented and

adapted in geographically diverse environments, providing insights into region-specific challenges and best practices for decentralized food processors in Kenya.

#### **2.2.4 Process Management and Performance of Food Processing Companies**

In France, Moreau and Leblanc (2021) research study findings revealed that standardized workflows, lean management practices, and automation led to significant improvements in operational performance, quality consistency, and production speed. The study focused mainly on large-scale food processors in technologically advanced environments, benefiting from Industry 4.0 integration. The research study did not address how smaller firms in less technologically advanced contexts manage processes without high-level automation or advanced digital infrastructure. Trufoods Limited, operating in a developing country context with limited access to high-end automation, relies on more manual and semi-automated systems. The research study assessed how structured but low-cost process management techniques (like SOPs, Kaizen practices, and manual tracking systems) affect the performance, offering insights into the scalable alternatives for firms without access to high technology.

Mumbere and Kasereka (2020) explored process efficiency and waste reduction strategies in small-scale food processing cooperatives in Congo. The study found that basic process documentation and regular workflow audits helped reduce material waste and improved production throughput. However, the study relied heavily on qualitative interviews and lacked empirical performance data, such as changes in production output or profitability. There were no quantitative measures in the study to confirm the link between firm performance and process management techniques. A mixed-methods approach was used in the Trufoods Limited study to include quantitative performance data, like cost per unit, customer returns, and production turnaround time, with qualitative observations. This dual approach allowed for more robust conclusions about the tangible benefits of process management in developing country setting.

Ndayishimiye and Ntakarutimana (2021) studied quality control processes in Burundi's small and medium-sized food enterprises. They found that firms with clearer production procedures and batch tracking systems had fewer customer complaints and higher product consistency.

However, their focus was mainly on food safety and compliance, not broader organizational performance indicators such as profitability, market share, or customer loyalty. The study emphasized food safety outcomes without exploring how process management impacts food processing firms' overall performance. The Trufoods Limited case research study investigated the broader impact of process management-including cost control, employee productivity, and customer satisfaction-beyond just food safety. This contributed a more comprehensive understanding of process management as a strategic tool for organizational success in the food processing industry.

Mutua and Wanjiru (2021) research study found that, firms with well-defined processes experienced fewer production delays and better inventory control. However, their research was limited to firms within Nairobi County and did not consider operational challenges faced by firms with multi-location operations or rural production sites. The study was geographically limited and did not address how process management functions in more dispersed or rural production environments. Trufoods Limited operates across different regions in Kenya, including semi-urban and rural areas. The study explored how the company adapts process management practices across locations with varying infrastructure and workforce capacity. It generated insights into region-specific strategies for maintaining process discipline and performance consistency across a distributed operation.

## 2.3 Summary of Knowledge Gaps

**Table 1: Summary of Knowledge Gaps**

<b>Author &amp; Year</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Research Gaps</b>	<b>Focus on Current Study</b>
Müller, T., & Schneider, A. (2021).	Leadership commitment and quality performance in the German food processing industry	Top management commitment significantly influences organizational performance through resource allocation, strategic focus, and fostering a quality culture	The study largely focused on large multinational food processing firms, leaving a gap regarding how top management commitment impacts smaller, local firms in developing economies.	This study aimed at assess role of top management commitment in enhancing performance specifically within Trufoods Limited, a Kenyan-based company, providing contextual insights applicable to local firms.
Reddy, S., Sharma, V., & Gupta, P. (2020).	Supplier quality management and operational efficiency	This study revealed that, close collaboration and stringent quality assessments of suppliers reduce defects and improve production consistency	Despite these findings, the study's focus was primarily on urban-based large manufacturers, overlooking rural-based firms and their supplier challenges.	By examining Trufoods Limited's supplier quality management practices, this study addressed supplier-related challenges in Kenya's unique business environment.

<b>Author &amp; Year</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Research Gaps</b>	<b>Focus on Current Study</b>
Nkosi, P., & Mbeki, L. (2022).	The role of employee training in enhancing food processing quality	Continuous employee training enhances skill levels, reduces errors, and boosts overall production quality in food processing firms	The research did not deeply explore the long-term sustainability of training programs or their impact on employee retention.	The current study assessed not only the immediate performance outcomes but also the sustainability and employee retention impact of training programs at Trufoods Limited.
Habimana, E., & Nsengiyumva, M. (2019).	Impact of process management on operational efficiency: Evidence from Rwandan food processing companies	Effective process management leads to reduced production cycle time and rework rates in food companies, thereby improving operational efficiency	The research concentrated on process standardization without considering how process management adapts to evolving market demands.	This study investigated how Trufoods Limited manages and adapts its processes in response to changing market needs and the effect on overall performance.

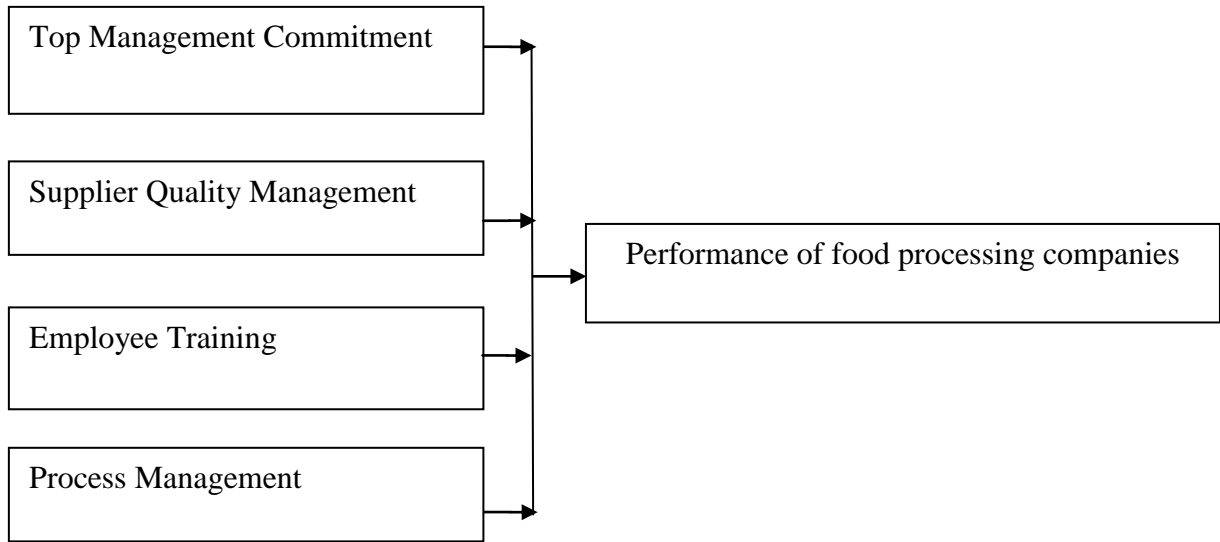
## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

This serves as a theoretical model that links variables and helps identify the key factors influencing an issue. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2017), it guides the researcher's approach to a subject and lays the groundwork for formulating hypotheses, obtaining information, and evaluating that information. The study independent variables were

top management commitment, supplier quality management, employee training and process management while the dependent variable was performance of food processing companies.

**Independent Variables**

**Dependent Variable**



**Figure 1 Conceptual Framework**

## 2.5 Operationalization of Variables

**Table 2 Operationalization of Variables**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Measurement Scale</b>	<b>Tools of Analysis</b>
<b>Top Management Commitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource Allocation</li> <li>• Goal Clarity</li> <li>• Employee Engagement</li> <li>• Leadership Involvement</li> <li>• Compliance Rate</li> </ul>	Likert Questionnaire	Frequencies Percentages
<b>Supplier Quality Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defect Rate</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Performance Review</li> <li>• Feedback Timeliness</li> <li>• Quality Standards</li> </ul>	Likert Questionnaire	Frequencies Percentages
<b>Employee Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training Rate</li> <li>• Skill Improvement</li> <li>• Competency</li> <li>• Quality Impact</li> <li>• Learning Culture</li> </ul>	Likert Questionnaire	Frequencies Percentages
<b>Process Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOP Compliance</li> <li>• Cycle Time</li> <li>• Deviation Frequency</li> <li>• Improvement Rate</li> <li>• Rework Rate</li> </ul>	Likert Questionnaire	Frequencies Percentages
<b>Performance of food processing companies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Satisfaction</li> <li>• Production Efficiency</li> <li>• Defect Rate</li> <li>• Cost Control</li> <li>• Market Growth</li> </ul>	Likert Questionnaire	Frequencies Percentages

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

The theoretical literature that connects several theories to the subject of this inquiry has been discussed. Numerous studies that other authors have added to the linking of the research variables are listed in the empirical literature review. The overview and gaps in the study have been explained. It also covers operationalization of variables and the conceptual framework.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter includes the research design, target population, sampling strategy, data instrument, method for presenting and evaluating results, ethical considerations, and chapter summary for this study.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The general plan, framework, or approach a researcher uses to address particular research questions or test hypotheses is referred to as research design. It describes the rational and cogent methods for gathering, measuring, and analyzing data. A study design's goal is to guarantee that the evidence gathered allows the researcher to use the right methodologies to effectively address the research topic (Saunders et al., 2019). An effective research design synchronizes the goals of the study with the proper techniques and protocols. Descriptive research design that was adopted in this study involved systematic collection and presentation of data to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon as it naturally occurs (Kothari, 2021). It does not test hypotheses but aims to provide a detailed account or snapshot of variables or conditions at a particular point in time (Saunders et al., 2019). Descriptive studies helped identify patterns and relationships among variables, which can inform future analytical or experimental research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

#### 3.2 Target Population

Kothari (2015) describes a target population as the whole set of people or things that a study is trying to figure out or make inferences about. This study target population was 92 Trufoods Limited employees.

**Table 3 Target Population**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Top Management	4	4
Middle Level Management	10	11
Operational Staff	78	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

Sampling method is the process or technique used to select a portion (sample) of the population for participation in a research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It helps researchers gather data that represents the larger population without having to study every individual, making research more feasible and cost-effective. This study used stratified random sampling, a probability sampling technique in which the population is split up into discrete subgroups or strata and a random sample is then drawn proportionately or equally from each stratum (Kothari, 2021). This guarantees the inclusion of all pertinent subgroups in the sample. According to Kumar (2022), this approach also increases the precision of population estimates by decreasing sampling error within each homogeneous stratum. To determine the sample size, the Nassiuma (2000) formula was applied.

$$n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2(N-1)e^2}$$

$$n = \frac{92(0.5^2)}{0.5^2 + (92-1)0.05^2}$$

$$n = 45$$

The study sample size was 45 respondents, which is almost 50% of the target population as supported by Amin (2005) who argued that, when populations are relatively small, a large proportion, up to 50% should be sampled in order to ensure representativeness and minimize sampling error.

### 3.4 Data Collection Instrument

A questionnaire that was adopted as tool for collecting data in this study is a structured set of written questions designed to collect information from respondents about their opinions, behaviors, attitudes, or characteristics (Kothari, 2021). It is a common research instrument used in surveys to gather quantitative or qualitative data efficiently. The use questionnaires were effective since they reduce social desirability bias (Kumar, 2022).

### **3.5 Pilot Study**

Prior to the major research endeavor, a pilot study is a small-scale preliminary examination. Its primary purpose is to test the feasibility, time, cost, risks, and potential challenges of the full-scale study. By doing so, it helps researchers refine their research design, methods, instruments, and procedures (Kumar, 2022). Pilot study identifies any weaknesses or issues so that adjustments can be made before the full-scale research begins. A total of 5 respondents participated in pilot study but were excluded in the final study. The suggestion to use approximately 10% of intended sample size for a pilot study has been recommended by several scholars, including Kothari (2021). This rule of thumb is practical because it provides a sufficient number of participants to effectively test the data collection tools and procedures, without expending excessive resources.

#### **3.5.1 Validity Test**

The process of assessing how well a research tool measures what it is supposed to measure is known as a validity test. It determines the degree to which the results obtained from a tool or method truly reflect the concept being studied (Creswell, 2018). Validity confirms the meaningfulness and relevance of the data collected. To enhance validity, the researcher ensured the instrument covers all relevant aspects of the concept by consulting experts and reviewing literature. This was through the help of the supervisor during the development of questionnaire.

#### **3.5.2 Reliability Test**

A reliability test evaluates a research instrument's stability and consistency throughout time. It evaluates whether the same results can be obtained when the measurement is repeated under similar conditions (Kothari, 2021). Reliability ensures that the data is dependable and not significantly affected by random errors. To enhance reliability, the researcher conducted a pilot study or pretest to identify unclear or ambiguous questions that could lead to inconsistent responses. Respondents that participated in pilot test were not included in the final study.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

After proposal approval, the researcher wrote a formal letter to the leadership of Trufoods Limited to as a form of request to be granted a permission to conduct a research study in their

firm. During the day of the research process, the researcher introduced herself to respondents and explained the need for conducting this research study. The researcher then gave respondents instructions on how to conduct this exercise and later collect the questionnaires after all respondents have managed and completed filling.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Method and Presentation**

Data analysis is the systematic process of organizing, transforming, and examining collected data to extract meaningful insights, identify patterns, relationships, or trends, and support decision-making or hypothesis testing (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It involves techniques ranging from simple descriptive statistics to complex inferential methods. Completed questionnaires went revisions to enhance their completeness, consistency, and uniformity. The qualitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and basic statistics. The unprocessed field data was coded before the research findings are made publicly available. In this investigation, two descriptive statistics-frequency and percentage were employed. Tables were used to display the final analysis of the study results.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

#### **3.8.1 Informed Consent**

This is the process by which a researcher provides participants with all necessary information about the study, allowing them to make a knowledgeable and voluntary decision to participate (Kumar, 2022). Researchers promote informed consent by giving participants a clear, understandable consent form before data collection begins. The form should be written in simple language and researchers must verbally explain key details and confirm participation is fully voluntary. Participants should be aware they can withdraw at any time without penalty.

#### **3.8.2 Voluntary Participation**

This means that individuals choose to participate in a study of their own free will, without coercion, undue influence, or pressure (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To ensure voluntary participation, researchers must emphasize that involvement is optional and participants can refuse or stop at any point. Recruitment should avoid any form of force or incentives that could unduly influence decisions. Clear communication and respectful interaction foster an environment where participants feel comfortable making their own choice.

### **3.8.3 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality refers to the ethical obligation to protect participants' information from unauthorized access, ensuring that data provided is kept private and shared only with authorized personnel (Kothari, 2021). Researchers uphold confidentiality by securely storing data-using password protection, locked cabinets, or encrypted files-and limiting access only to the research team. When reporting results, data should be presented in aggregated form or using codes instead of names to prevent identification. Researchers should also explain confidentiality procedures to participants.

### **3.8.4 Privacy**

Privacy concerns protecting participants' personal space and control over access to their private information or behavior during the research process (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). To respect privacy, the researcher conducted data collection in private settings where participants felt safe and free from observation by unauthorized individuals. They should avoid intrusive questions unless necessary and explain how information will be used. Participants must have control over what personal information they disclose.

### **3.8.5 Anonymity**

This means identifying of participants cannot be linked to their responses, ensuring complete privacy such that even the researcher cannot identify who provided specific data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher promoted anonymity by not collecting identifiable information such as names, addresses, or contact details. Data collection tools can use codes or pseudonyms, when publishing results, researchers avoid any details that could indirectly reveal participant identities, especially in small or unique populations.

## **3.9 Chapter Summary**

The researcher employed quantitative techniques to gather comprehensive data on the topic of interest. Data for the study was mostly gathered through questionnaires. The association between the investigated variables was examined using the descriptive study design. Stratified random sampling method was used. To provide a thorough interpretation of the results, statistical techniques were applied while examining quantitative data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

The presentation of research findings, the study's limitations, and a chapter summary are among the subheadings that make up this chapter.

#### 4.1 Presentation of Research Findings

**Table 4 Response Rate**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Response	43	95
Non-Response	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

The research questionnaires that were issued had a sample size of 45 respondents, which was used to calculate the response rate. The results of this study showed that it was a successful study because 95% of the total responses were positive, while 5% of the responses were minority responses.

**Table 5 Gender Analysis**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	30	70
Female	13	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

The Male research participants were the predominant gender when calculating the percentage of each gender in this organization. This was an unmistakable clue that there was a gender imbalance in this organization. According to the study's findings, 70% of the research participants were men, while 30% were women.

**Table 6 Age Brackets**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18-22 years	2	5
23-27 years	5	12
28-32 years	10	23
33 years and above	26	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

The evaluation of the age analysis of this organization's employees who participated in this study was improved. A 5% of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 22, 12% were between the ages of 23 and 27, 23% were between the ages of 28 and 32, and 60% were older than 33, which was the most common response.

**Table 7 Highest Education Level**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Secondary Certificate	28	65
College Diploma	12	28
University Degree	2	5
Postgraduate Level	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

The best educational levels attained by the research participants were identified in this investigation. This discovery demonstrated that the workforce was highly educated and, hence, capable of producing results. The results showed that 2% represented postgraduate level, 28% for college diploma, 5% for university degree and 65% for secondary certificate.

**Table 8 Length of Service**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
1-4 years	6	14
5-8 years	19	44
9 years & above	18	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

It was established to evaluate research participants' experiences. A total of 42% had worked for nine years or more, 44% for five to eight years and 14% for one to four years. This result showed that the company had a strong and highly experienced workforce, which is indicative of the workers' improved performance.

**Table 9 Rating of top management commitment on performance of food processing companies**

	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
Top management allocates sufficient resources to support quality improvement efforts	59%	41%	0%	0%	0%
Our inventory management system has reduced the time taken for order processing	55%	45%	0%	0%	0%
Senior managers are actively involved in quality planning and monitoring	57%	43%	0%	0%	0%

Management sets and communicates clear quality objectives to all departments	52%	48%	0%	0%	0%
Management ensures that quality policies are consistently enforced across the company	61%	37%	2%	0%	0%

The study rated the effect of top management commitment on performance of food processing companies. The statement regarding whether the top management allocates sufficient resources to support quality improvement efforts indicated that, 59% strongly agreed indicating, that the leadership is committed to quality management by ensuring that financial, human, and technological resources are available. This reflects positively on organizational performance, as resource allocation is critical for sustaining quality standards in food processing. Regarding if the inventory management system has reduced the time taken for order processing, a large agreement of 55% of participants implied that top management has invested in efficient inventory systems, which enhances order fulfillment speed, customer satisfaction, and cost reduction. It also reflects proactive leadership in process improvement. In relation to the whether the senior managers are actively involved in quality planning and monitoring, a strong agreement of 57% from respondents demonstrated a hands-on leadership approach, which often results in better implementation of quality frameworks. It shows that leadership is not delegating quality as a peripheral function but integrating it into strategic management. In determining if the management sets and communicates clear quality objectives to all departments, a large number of 52% of the respondents were in agreement which indicated that, the company values transparency, goal alignment, and cross-functional coordination, all of which are key to quality performance. Clear quality objectives guide employee efforts and reduce ambiguity. The finding on whether leadership provides visible support for continuous improvement initiatives, a strong agreement of 61% to this statement suggested that, a culture of kaizen fostered by leadership. It reflects that management is present, supportive, and willing to invest in employee suggestions, new technologies and process optimization. This leads to innovation and adaptability in a competitive food market. In regards to whether the management ensures that quality policies are consistently enforced

across the company, a high level of agreement indicated a strong policy enforcement, discipline, and quality uniformity across departments, which is a key driver of customer trust and compliance with regulatory standards.

**Table 10 Rating of supplier quality management on performance of food processing companies**

	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
We evaluate suppliers based on quality performance before contracting	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Our company collaborates with suppliers to maintain and improve quality	45%	55%	0%	0%	0%
Supplier performance is regularly reviewed for compliance with quality standards	48%	52%	0%	0%	0%
Feedback is provided to suppliers on quality issues in a timely manner	50%	48%	2%	0%	0%
Quality expectations are clearly stated in supplier agreements and contracts	59%	41%	0%	0%	0%

The study assessed the rating of the effect of supplier quality management on performance of food processing companies. On whether the organization evaluate suppliers based on quality performance before contracting, the majority 50% of respondents were in agreement and

indicated that, the company has a structured pre-qualification process where quality metrics- such as hygiene standards, certification, traceability, or consistency-are key criteria in supplier selection. This proactive approach helps avoid poor inputs, reducing product defects and recall risks, thereby improving overall operational performance. On whether the company collaborates with suppliers to maintain and improve quality, a high agreement of 45% from respondents reflected a partnership-oriented supply chain, where the buyer and supplier work jointly to solve quality problems, improve specifications, and adopt better handling or processing standards. This collaborative relationship is critical in the food industry where freshness, handling, and hygiene directly impact output. On assessing if the supplier performance is regularly reviewed for compliance with quality standards, a strong agreement of 48% from the research participants indicated the presence of a systematic monitoring mechanism, such as supplier scorecards, audits, or regular inspections. These practices help ensure suppliers remain accountable, consistent, and aligned with company quality expectations. This enhances trust, reduces variation, and minimizes risk of contamination or non-compliance. On determining if the feedback is provided to suppliers on quality issues in a timely manner, a high level of 50% agreement from the respondents reflected a responsive and communicative relationship with suppliers, enabling them to take corrective action quickly. Timely feedback helps in root cause analysis, improves accountability, and promotes continuous improvement. On assessing if quality expectations are clearly stated in supplier agreements and contracts, a strong agreement of 59% indicates a well-structured procurement framework, where suppliers are contractually obligated to meet defined quality thresholds. Clear documentation and expectations reduce ambiguity, help enforce compliance, and serve as legal recourse in the case of underperformance.

**Table 11 Rating of employee training on performance of food processing companies**

	<b>Strongly Agreed</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>	<b>Strongly Disagreed</b>
Employees receive regular training on quality control and process standards	64%	36%	0%	0%	0%
Training programs are tailored to improve job quality performance	48%	52%	0%	0%	0%
Staffs are equipped with knowledge of key quality tools and techniques	48%	50%	2%	0%	0%
Training has led to measurable improvements in product quality and consistency	55%	45%	0%	0%	0%
Continuous learning and development are prioritized across all departments	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%

The study assessed the effect of employee training on the performance of food processing companies. In regards to whether employees receive regular training on quality control and process standards, most respondents of 64% indicated that, the company invests consistently in quality-focused training programs. This indicated a strong commitment to maintaining industry and regulatory standards and minimizing process-related errors. This high agreement of 48% implied that, a workforce that is regularly updated on best practices, resulting in improved operational reliability. On whether training programs are tailored to improve job-specific quality performance, a high respondents agreement of 48% indicated that the organization takes a strategic and personalized approach to training, ensuring that each employee receives the skills and knowledge relevant to their specific function, whether it's

production, packaging, or quality inspection. This customization enhances efficiency and reduces errors caused by generic or irrelevant training. In relation to whether staffs are equipped with knowledge of key quality tools and techniques, a high level of agreement of 55% show that employees are familiar with tools like statistical process control, root cause analysis, all essential for maintaining high-quality output in food processing, this reflects well on employee competency and process control. In relation to whether training has led to measurable improvements in product quality and consistency, most respondents of 50% agree with this statement, which indicated that training initiatives are not only implemented but are effective and impactful, leading to observable performance improvements such as fewer defects, improved shelf-life, or better customer feedback. This correlation strengthens the business case for continued training investment. On whether continuous learning and development are prioritized across all departments, a strong respondent’s agreement reflected an organizational culture that values learning, where training is not seen as a one-time activity but as a continuous process tied to long-term growth and adaptability. This promotes innovation, cross-departmental alignment, and responsiveness to changes in consumer demands and food safety regulations.

**Table 12 Rating of process management on performance of food processing companies**

	<b>Strongly Agreed</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>	<b>Strongly Disagreed</b>
The company has well-documented standard operating procedures	48%	48%	2%	2%	0%
Production processes are monitored and optimized continuously	59%	41%	0%	0%	0%
Deviations in process are addressed promptly to maintain quality	48%	48%	2%	2%	0%

The regularly review and update our processes for efficiency	56%	42%	2%	0%	0%
Strong process control has reduced rework and improved output consistency	50%	48%	2%	0%	0%

The study assessed the effect of process management on the performance of food processing companies. On whether the company has well-documented standard operating procedures, most respondents of 48% agreed which shows that the company has formalized SOPs that guide all operations, including how raw materials from suppliers are handled, inspected, and incorporated into production. SOPs ensure supplier compliance with quality standards and reduce ambiguity during processing. This high agreement indicates a strong quality management system that aligns well with supplier expectations. In relation to whether production processes are monitored and optimized continuously, a high of 59% agreement by respondents reflected a company culture of continuous improvement and process oversight, which is often driven by the need to accommodate variability in supplier quality. If suppliers provide consistent, high-quality inputs, it supports smoother and more predictable production flows. In relation to whether deviations in process are addressed promptly to maintain quality, a strong respondent's agreement of 48% suggested an agile quality assurance system capable of responding quickly to issues, including those originating from supplier materials (contamination, incorrect packaging, or moisture content variance). This responsiveness is key to preserving end-product quality and customer satisfaction. In regards whether the organization regularly review and update its processes for efficiency, a strong agreement of 56% with this statement shows that the company systematically evaluates and adjusts its operations, often incorporating feedback from supplier performance assessments. Efficient supplier relationships can inspire process innovations such as Just-in-Time delivery or reduced buffer stock. In regards to whether a strong process control has reduced rework and improved output consistency, a high number of 56% of respondents strongly agreed, which highlighted a direct benefit of high-quality supplier inputs-less material rejection, smoother processing, and consistent product quality. Supplier quality plays a foundational role in

enabling this consistency, especially in food processing, where even minor raw material variation can cause production delays or spoilage.

#### **4.2 Limitations of the Study**

The researcher experienced challenges in accessing key respondents, especially senior staff members who had tight schedules or were reluctant to participate in the study. This led to delays in data collection and a risk of having an insufficient sample size. To address this limitation, the researcher scheduled interviews and questionnaire distribution during off-peak hours or during less busy days, often through prior appointments. Additionally, the researcher employed follow-up emails and phone calls to encourage participation. In cases where in-person interviews were not possible, the researcher offered virtual options via email or video conferencing platforms to increase flexibility and convenience for respondents.

Some participants submitted questionnaires with incomplete or vague answers, reducing the reliability and comprehensiveness of the data collected. The researcher minimized this issue by pre-testing the questionnaire to ensure clarity and relevance. During actual data collection, the researcher provided guidance on how to answer questions effectively and reassured respondents about confidentiality to encourage honest and complete responses. Where possible, the researcher followed up with respondents to clarify unclear answers or request completion of missing sections.

#### **4.3 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provides a general summary of the data or information collected from the field. The first concrete or primary source of information was the questionnaires used to collect the data. A wide range of conclusions have been offered by numerous respondents, and some confirming authorities have also been added.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides a final explanation on researcher findings from the questionnaires administered. It comprises of summary, conclusion and recommendations.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

##### **5.1.1 Effect of top management commitment on performance of food processing companies**

The finding established a large number of the study respondent who agreed that top management commitment has an effect on the performance of food processing companies in Kenya. The respondents indicated that, when leadership shows visible support for quality initiatives, such as attending quality meetings, endorsing employee improvement efforts, or leading by example, it fosters a sense of ownership among staff. Employees become more engaged and are likely to take initiative in problem-solving, ensuring daily tasks are done with care. In food processing, this is vital as human error can lead to contamination or spoilage. Thus, visible support boosts morale and quality compliance, enhancing overall organizational performance. This finding concurs with Nkosi & Mbeki (2022) study which indicated that, enforcing quality policies uniformly across departments ensures that standards are not only set but actually followed. In food processing, where variation in processes can lead to safety issues, this consistency is critical. Management must ensure inspections; audits and penalties are applied fairly to maintain discipline. By holding departments accountable, firms reduce quality deviations and enhance reliability in their supply chain. This contributes to reduced product failure and stronger brand equity in the market.

##### **5.1.2 Effect of supplier quality management on performance of food processing companies**

The study finding established that supplier quality management affects the performance of food processing companies in Kenya. The respondents revealed that, continuous monitoring of supplier performance helps ensure that incoming materials meet expected standards. This includes routine quality checks, delivery audits, and supplier scorecards. Inconsistent supplier

performance often leads to production halts or increased quality control costs. Monitoring helps identify underperforming suppliers early, enabling corrective actions. As a result, consistency in raw materials translates into consistency in finished goods which strengthens the company's competitive edge. This finding concurs with Nakimera & Bananuka (2021) who indicated that, providing timely feedback to suppliers when issues arise ensures that they can act quickly to prevent future occurrences. This is crucial in food processing where delays in addressing quality issues may lead to widespread contamination. Open lines of communication foster transparency and allow for shared responsibility in maintaining standards. When errors are corrected promptly, companies avoid extended downtimes, preserve production schedules, and improve supplier relationships.

### **5.1.3 Effect of Employee Training on Performance of Food Processing Companies**

The study established a link between employees training on performance of food processing companies in Kenya. The respondents revealed that, equipping employees with knowledge of tools like Six Sigma, 5S, or cause-and-effect diagrams allows them to analyze problems systematically. Instead of guesswork, decisions are made based on data. This leads to fewer recurring issues and more consistent output. It also empowers lower-level staff to contribute to quality improvements, making the organization more agile. This finding relates to Kilonzo & Wambua (2020) study which revealed that, well-trained employees are less likely to mishandle equipment or overlook critical steps in production. This reduces the likelihood of spoilage, contamination, or safety violations. Lower error rates mean reduced costs for rework, disposal and compensation. Overall, consistent training contributes to cleaner, safer and more cost-effective operations.

### **5.2.4 Effect of Process Management on Performance of Food Processing Companies**

The high number of research respondents agreed that, process management on performance of food processing companies in Kenya. The respondents indicated that, regularly reviewing production processes helps identify unnecessary steps, outdated practices, or inefficient workflows. By eliminating these inefficiencies, companies can produce more using the same resources. This lowers costs, increases throughput, and makes the organization more competitive. This finding relates to Moreau & Leblanc (2021) research finding which revealed that, when quality control is embedded throughout the production process-not just at

the end-errors are caught early. This reduces the volume of rework and minimizes disruptions. It also frees up labor and materials for productive use. Lower rework rates are a direct indicator of strong process discipline and quality control.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Strategic leadership plays a central role in embedding a quality-focused culture across a food processing company. When senior leaders prioritize quality in their strategic goals, the entire organization aligns with these expectations. This results in better adherence to food safety standards and regulatory compliance. It also empowers mid-level managers and frontline workers to take quality seriously, reducing the chances of product recalls. Ultimately, strong strategic leadership translates into improved customer trust and market competitiveness.

Top management's commitment is most effective when reflected in tangible investments such as modern machinery, skilled labor, and robust quality control systems. Without sufficient resource allocation, quality policies often fail at the implementation stage. By providing resources to maintain hygiene, handle perishable goods, and implement safety standards, companies improve their productivity and reduce waste. This also allows timely completion of orders and better product shelf-life. Resource-backed commitment therefore leads to sustainable performance growth.

Choosing suppliers based on quality parameters, rather than price alone, results in fewer defective materials and more consistent production. In food processing, poor-quality ingredients can compromise product safety and customer health. A prequalification process involving inspections, certifications, and sample testing ensures that only reliable suppliers are engaged. This safeguards the production line and minimizes product rejection rates. Effective supplier selection directly boosts quality outcomes and operational stability.

Building a strong, collaborative relationship with suppliers goes beyond transactions, it fosters mutual improvement. When food processors work with suppliers to improve farming, harvesting, packaging, or delivery, both parties benefit from fewer disruptions. This collaboration can lead to joint innovations, such as shelf-life extension or environmentally friendly packaging. It also creates a sense of loyalty and accountability, reducing the risk of

raw material shortages or quality lapses. Ultimately, such synergy enhances both efficiency and reputation.

Training tailored to specific job roles ensures that employees have the technical knowledge and skills to perform tasks effectively. In food processing, this may include machine calibration, hygiene protocols, or hazard control techniques. Competent employees make fewer errors and work more independently, reducing supervision needs. This results in smoother workflows and improved productivity.

A learning culture encourages employees to propose ideas that improve quality or reduce costs. The training sessions that update staff on emerging food safety trends or customer expectations help in keeping the organization ahead of competitors. Employees trained on innovation tools can help develop new products or processes that increase market share. This adaptability becomes a key strength in dynamic markets.

Documented standard operating procedure ensures that all employees perform tasks in the same way, reducing variation and increasing consistency. This is vital in food processing, where deviations in temperature, ingredient ratios, or timing can affect product quality. Standard operating procedure also improves training efficiency and accountability, as they provide a benchmark for evaluating performance.

Real-time monitoring of temperature, humidity, or machinery output allows quick intervention when parameters go off-course. This reduces the risk of producing substandard batches and prevents expensive product recalls. It also builds confidence in compliance audits and strengthens process discipline across teams.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The organization top management should integrate quality performance goals directly into the organization's strategic plans. These goals should be specific, measurable, and tied to organizational KPIs such as customer satisfaction, product rejection rates, and compliance scores. By doing this, quality initiatives are no longer viewed as operational side tasks but as central to business growth. This alignment will enhance focus, coordination, and long-term commitment across all departments.

Senior executives within food processing companies should actively participate in quality audits, improvement meetings, and employee feedback sessions. Their presence sends a strong message about the value placed on quality. When leaders take ownership of quality outcomes and are visibly involved in process reviews, it boosts employee engagement and motivates teams to meet performance standards. Such visibility fosters accountability and reinforces a company-wide culture of excellence.

Food processing companies should implement formal qualification criteria for supplier selection. Suppliers should undergo rigorous vetting, including site visits, sample analysis, and performance history reviews. This systematic approach reduces the risk of quality lapses and ensures that only compliant and reliable vendors are engaged in the supply chain.

Food processing companies should conduct regular reviews of supplier performance using structured scorecards that evaluate parameters like delivery reliability, quality consistency, responsiveness to feedback, and compliance with safety standards. Feedback should be shared constructively with suppliers, and underperformance should trigger corrective actions or re-training. Long-term supplier partnerships built on transparency and data-driven dialogue result in improved input quality and operational efficiency.

The organization should develop training programs that are tailored to the specific roles of employees. For example, production staff should be trained in machine handling, hygiene protocols, and safety standards, while quality control officers should master statistical quality tools and audit procedures. Tailored training ensures relevance, promotes efficiency, and equips staff with the right skills to deliver on performance targets.

The organization should ensure that training should not be a one-time event but a continuous process supported by regular learning modules, refresher courses, and assessments. A structured evaluation mechanism, such as pre- and post-training tests or on-the-job performance monitoring, can measure knowledge retention and practical impact. Continuous learning improves adaptability and ensures that the workforce remains updated with evolving food safety regulations and market expectations.

Food processing companies should standardize all operational tasks through well-documented standard operating procedures. These standard operating procedures should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect process changes, technological upgrades, or new regulatory requirements. Standardization ensures consistency, supports training, and facilitates quality control audits, ultimately enhancing product reliability and performance.

Food processing companies should invest in digital monitoring tools such as automated sensors to improve process efficiency and quality. These tools provide real-time insights into temperature, humidity, or batch timing, allowing quick interventions. Automation reduces human error, improves traceability, and enhances the company's ability to meet regulatory and customer standards.

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## APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE

This is an academic questionnaire and exercise that aim at collecting information in relation to **Total quality management practices and performance of food processing companies in Kenya: a case study of Trufoods Limited**. Kindly fill it correctly in spaces provided. The collected information will only be applied for academic purpose.

### PART A: RESPONDENTS INFORMATION

1. What is your gender?

Male ( )

Female ( )

2. What is your age bracket?

18-22 years ( )

23-27 years ( )

28-32 years ( )

33 years and above ( )

3. What is your highest level of education attained?

Secondary Certificate ( )

College Diploma ( )

Undergraduate Degree ( )

Post Graduate Level ( )

4. What is your Length of Service in this organization?

1-4 years ( )

5-8 years ( )

9 years & above ( )

**SECTION B**

5. Rate the statements provided below using the scale provided on the extent that you agree or disagree on the effect of top management commitment on performance of food processing companies in Kenya

Scale 5=strongly agree 4= agree 3= neutral 2= disagree 1=strongly disagree

<b>Statements</b>	1	2	3	4	5
Top management allocates sufficient resources to support quality improvement efforts					
Our inventory management system has reduced the time taken for order processing.					
Senior managers are actively involved in quality planning and monitoring.					
Management sets and communicates clear quality objectives to all departments.					
Leadership provides visible support for continuous improvement initiatives.					
Management ensures that quality policies are consistently enforced across the company.					

6. Rate the statements provided below using the scale provided on the extent that you agree or disagree on the effect of supplier quality management on performance of food processing companies in Kenya

Scale 5=strongly agree 4= agree 3= neutral 2= disagree 1=strongly disagree

<b>Statements</b>	1	2	3	4	5
We evaluate suppliers based on quality performance before contracting					
Our company collaborates with suppliers to maintain and improve quality					
Supplier performance is regularly reviewed for compliance with quality standards					
Feedback is provided to suppliers on quality issues in a timely manner					
Quality expectations are clearly stated in supplier agreements and contracts					

7. Rate the statements provided below using the scale provided on the extent that you agree or disagree on the effect of employee training on performance of food processing companies in Kenya

Scale 5=strongly agree 4= agree 3= neutral 2= disagree 1=strongly disagree

<b>Statements</b>	5	4	3	2	1
Employees receive regular training on quality control and process standards.					
Training programs are tailored to improve job-specific quality performance.					
Staff are equipped with knowledge of key quality tools and techniques.					
Training has led to measurable improvements in product quality and consistency.					
Continuous learning and development are prioritized across all departments					

8. Rate the statements provided below using the scale provided on the extent that you agree or disagree on the effect of supplier quality management on performance of food processing companies in Kenya

Scale 5=strongly agree 4= agree 3= neutral 2= disagree 1=strongly disagree

<b>Statements</b>	5	4	3	2	1
The company has well-documented standard operating procedures (SOPs).					
Production processes are monitored and optimized continuously.					
Deviations in process are addressed promptly to maintain quality.					
We regularly review and update our processes for efficiency.					
Strong process control has reduced rework and improved output consistency.					

**APPENDIX IV: RESEARCH BUDGET PLAN**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Transport	3,500
Meals	4,500
Communication	2,500
Printing	8,500
Stationary	12,000
Internet	3,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>34, 500</b>

**APPENDIX V: WORKPLAN**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Feb 2025</b>	<b>March 2025</b>	<b>April 2025</b>	<b>May 2025</b>	<b>June 2025</b>	<b>July 2025</b>	<b>August 2025</b>
Topic selection and writing of chapter one							
Writing and sourcing for literature review							
Presenting chapter two & three							
Data collection							
Data analysis and data collection							
Finalization							