TQM and Its Introduction in Malaysia's Public Service

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ABSTRACT

Lately TQM is becoming a new way of managing organisations towards efficiency and effectiveness. This new management concept viewed quality as the ability of a product or service's features and characteristics to continue to meet the customers' requirements and to satisfy their needs. Although many companies have succeeded in this effort, in Malaysia's public service organisations however, the process of inculcating this new management concept has not been effective enough. Several issues were identified responsible for this failure. Therefore, it is important to address those issues to ensure success.

ABSTRAK

Sejak kebelakangan ini pengurusan kualiti menyeluruh (TQM) merupakan pendekatan terbaru dalam usaha meningkatkan keceka-pan dan keberkesanan pengurusan organisasi. Konsep pengurusan baru ini melihat kualiti sebagai keupayaan sesuatu barangan atau perkhidmatan dari segi ciri-ciri dan sifat-sifatnya untuk memenuhi kehendak dan kepuasan pelanggan secara berterusan. Walaupun banyak syarikat telah berjaya menggunakan pendekatan ini, tetapi bagi sektor awam di Malaysia proses penerapan konsep pengurusan ini masih belum begitu berkesan. Beberapa isu telah dikenalpasti sebagai penyebab kepada kegagalan ini. Sehubungan itu untuk mempastikan ianya berjaya, isu-isu tersebut perlulah diatasi.

INTRODUCTION

Quality is the most important strategic issue facing top management in the 1990s. It is becoming increasingly important in the public service as a result of new approaches that are being adopted in

management practices. Many organisations are beginning to recognize Total Quality Management (TQM) as the new way of managing for the future, especially in a very competitive economy.

Originally, quality management approaches, such as the Quality Control Circles (QCC) was designed to serve the industrial sector which is directly involved in producing manufactured goods where productivity and quality could easily be controlled and measured. In the late 1970's for instance, many Japanese companies successfully used quality programmes to assist them to compete with western companies. Through raising quality, they were able to penetrate the world market and sell their products. The impact of quality management techniques in the service sector has also been proved to have a positive effect in terms of increasing the effectiveness of this sector and creating better working conditions. It is for these reasons, TQM was introduced in the public service departments and agencies throughout the country in 1992 to increase productivity, efficiency and the effectiveness of the public service.

A major concern here is whether this concept will become just another management fad in most government departments. Past experiences have demonstrated that many quality improvement efforts, including the QCC fizzled out almost as quickly as they came in. Therefore the purpose of this paper is to identify potential obstacles to the effective implementation of TQM in public service organisations and propose ways to overcome them. The paper begins with a brief overview of the concept of TQM and its importance to the public service in Malaysia.

WHAT IS TQM?

Quality improvement is a systematic approach to quality planning and managerial activities. The underlying concepts were first initiated in the United States (US) in the late 1940s by quality practitioners, such as Deming (1981, 1982) and Juran (1988, 1989). The Japanese took up the idea after World War II and promoted these principles successfully in their manufacturing industries. In the US, much of the concern for quality began in the 1960s and 1970s stemming primarily from the demands of the military and related consumers, which then percolated through to consumer products.

In Malaysia, however, the drive towards quality awareness only became important in the early 1980s.

TQM can be referred to as an attitude towards motivating all members of an organisation to strive continuously to improve the products or services and the processes involved in generating them which will satisfy both the external and internal customers.[3] Quality, thus, embraces how an organization meets all its customers' requirements, including even how they are greeted over the telephone. The TQM system defines 'quality' as total conformance to customer requirements, not only product or service specifications. TQM has changed the ways of dealing with quality, through primarily a shift from 'corrective' to 'preventive' systems. In the former, poor quality is accepted and corrected but causes are not eliminated. The latter case, defects in the assembly-line are not accepted. Therefore, the quality of the product need to be assured once the product is off the assembly-line. This is related to the concept of 'zero defect' noted by Crosby (1984).

TQM can be a catalyst for achieving success in organisational management. According to Munro (1992: 9), the aim of TQM is to ensure that each activity contributes to achieving the key objectives of a business, and should be carried out efficiently. The basic philosophy of Total Quality is 'do the right things right the first time'. TQM requires a change in the basic philosophy of everyone in the company, especially management. It requires management to recognise the contributions which every employee can make and to harness the skill and enthusiasm of everyone in the organisation. To achieve this, Munro (1992: 9), suggested that individuals must be provided with the skills, tools and authority to investigate problems and introduce improvements. Managers must demonstrate that they believe that their employees can make important contributions to managing the organisation and must create an open atmosphere to allow this to happen. Munro believes that teamwork will help to enhance TQM effectively.

However, many organisations face problems in driving TQM programmes in their management systems. They do not succeed in sustaining and maintaining these continuous improvement programmes because they fail to create an environment which is conducive to performance improvement, and fail in managing change in their organisation. According to Erickson (1992: 59), many organisations that have implemented TQM have found that

they could not accomplish their stated goals because of three primary problems, i.e.:

1. a lack of focus on the most critical business processes;
2. a failure to align the organisation and its resources to support long-term improvement efforts; and
3. the separation of improvement from the strategic goals of the organisation.

Due to these problems, they have failed to foster and sustain performance improvements in their organisations, and this in turn led to the failure of TQM. In implementing TQM, regardless of what tools or techniques are used, an organisation that seeks to improve quality must first dedicate itself to accomplishing three things, viz. building a shared vision, designing the organisation for high performance and driving continuous improvements in the organisation (Kane 1992: 407).

CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOME QUALITY PHILOSOPHERS

Quality experts from US and Japan have developed a number of concepts and methodologies which have had a significant impact on how quality is to be managed. What do these quality experts say about quality?

Deming (1981), who was considered to be the 'father' of quality control in Japan developed his approach on the basis of fourteen management principles which he referred to as the *"14 Points"*. He believed that achieving excellence in quality starts with top management. Deming cited in Krajewski (1990: 105-106), recommended that a company should have a strategic plan for its goals, and find ways and means to achieve them. Management should also incorporate the philosophy that mistakes, defects, and unsuitable materials are no longer acceptable and should be eliminated. This can be achieved through developing proper statistical methods to control processes or in coming materials and to help identify the sources of quality problems. Statistical methods can even be used to determine whether more training of workers is needed. Management should be responsible for training or retraining employees in new skills to keep pace with changes in the workplace. Deming believed that statistical methods are the

backbone of managements' stockpile of tools for managing quality. He also pointed out that management should also create an environment in which employees will not fear reporting problems or recommending improvements.

Juran, along with Deming, pioneered the education of Japanese firms in quality management and have been a major influence on quality improvements by Japanese manufacturers over the past 40 years. Juran (1989: 15), defined quality as *"fitness for use or purpose"* and distinguished it from the definition of quality which is often used as *"conformance to specification"*. He pointed out that a product could meet all the specifications but might not be usable effectively. Juran promoted 'quality trilogy' incorporating in total quality improvement, planning, control and improvement. Through this theoretical framework, he explained how quality should be managed. He believed that the vast majority of quality problems were caused by management, and the only way to improve quality was through the participation of management. Juran's approach had its focus on top and middle managers, and the use of quality circles to improve communications between management and employees. Although quality control was important, it was still only part of total quality improvement. He also recommended using statistical process control (SPC), but worried that it could lead to a 'tool-oriented' response. Juran provided ten steps for management to approach total quality improvements, and believed that annual improvements, and training were fundamental to achieving excellence in quality.

Philip Crosby is another American quality 'guru' who is best known for the concept of 'zero defect'. Crosby (1979) believed that quality management can be achieved through prevention, replacing the conventional view that quality can only be achieved through inspection, testing, and checking. He was not in favour of statistically acceptable levels of quality, as it can lead to the belief that errors are inevitable. Crosby promoted four aspects of quality:

1. quality has to be defined as conformance to requirements, not as goodness or excellence;
2. the system for causing quality is prevention, not appraisal;
3. the performance standards must be 'zero defects' not 'that's close enough'; and finally
4. the measurement of quality is the price of non-conformance, not indices.

To Crosby (1979), quality comes free. He pointed out that what costs money were all the things involved in not doing the job right the first time. He was referring to the hidden costs of poor quality, for example increased labour and machine hours, increased machine failures and down-time, customer delivery delays and lost future sales, and even increased warranty costs, all which are costs over and above the loss of materials to scrap. Like Deming and Juran, Crosby also proposed fourteen steps for the management of quality improvements.

There are also other quality advocates such as Feigenbaum, Kaoru Ishikawa and Genichi Taguchi, all of which have their own relative merits. Although there are differences in each of their approaches, Munro (1992: 288) identified that there was also common ground between them. As noted by Munro, the following common elements can be identified:

1. quality is the key to a successful business. Inadequate attention to quality will lead to the failure of the business in the long run;
2. quality improvements require the full commitment of management to succeed. This commitment to quality must be continuous;
3. quality improvement is hard work. There are no short cuts or quick fixes. Successful quality improvement frequently requires a change in culture for the whole organisation;
4. quality improvement always requires extensive training; and
5. successful quality improvement requires the active involvement of all employees, and absolute commitment from senior management;

In pursuing quality, every organisation needs to identify the most appropriate approach which is suitable for them. Each organisation, especially the service sector, is unique and so each improvement programme needs to be individually tailored. There is no one right way to succeed with TQM.

TQM IN MALAYSIA'S PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

Past experiences in implementing quality improvement efforts in Malaysia's public service organisations will be helpful in identifying

factors which explain the failure of such efforts. For example, since QCCs were launched in the public service in 1983, there have been numerous courses and talks conducted by INTAN (Institut Tadbiran Negara), MAMPU (Manpower Administration, Modernization and Planning Unit) and many other training agencies such as NPC (National Productivity Center), to introduce and promote QCCs amongst civil servants. Since then, 3,360 facilitators were trained by INTAN. However, in 1993, it was discovered that only 500 QCCs were still in existence, and out of this, only 30 per cent of them were still active (Zakaria 1993:1-3). The question which arises here is, why have these QCCs failed?

Quality improvement programmes in the past have been implemented in Malaysia's public service organisations mainly through the use of government circular, called the *"Development Administration Circulars"* (first issued in 1991). Many of these circular were formulated by central agencies, rather than through the initiatives of their top management within the organisations. To date, eighteen circulars have been issued - eleven circulars in 1991; four circulars in 1992 and another three in 1993 (Malaysia 1992a; Malaysia 1992b; Malaysia 1993). Although numerous initiatives have been taken by central agencies such as MAMPU and INTAN in terms of providing guidelines and training to ensure that quality improvement efforts can be sustained continuously in the public service organisations in this country, virtually nothing can be said of their achievements so far.

One of the factors which is central is top management commitment towards implementing TQM. According to Drummond (1992: 4), a fundamental requirement of TQM is the commitment of top management and a business strategy which is oriented towards customer satisfaction. In many instances, top management tends to view quality as the responsibility of their workers and the quality assurance department. This will lead to the failure of most TQM programmes. To overcome this failure, Collard (1989: 39) urges that top management should continuously reinforce their complete commitment towards the approach through discussing quality issues in their management meetings, company magazines or newsletters. Top management should make sure that everybody within the organisation from top to bottom is clear and aware about the concept. Therefore, to ensure success, it is

important to acquire top management commitment towards implementing TQM in those organisations.

The second constraint is regarding understanding the concept of TQM. Many civil service employees in Malaysia do not have adequate knowledge regarding the reason for or the techniques required to undertake quality improvement programmes. Quality management programmes have failed because the quality messages is not sufficiently well disseminated among the staff within the organisation. Without proper understanding and knowledge regarding the subject, quality cannot be managed effectively and successfully. Therefore, TQM concept needs to be communicated sufficiently at every level, from top to shop-floor levels, within the organisation. In relation, adequate training programmes and guidance are essentially important to communicate the quality management concepts which have been introduced.

The third factor is related to peoples attitude towards change. Resistance to change is an attitude which is difficult to break. People are generally reluctant to change, especially regarding new ways of doing things. To implement TQM successfully, it requires a change in attitudes and beliefs among civil service employees in Malaysia. However, it is important to note that we cannot introduce change without first changing people's attitudes towards the intended change. This fact was highlighted by Dale (1990: 5) who noted that to foster TQM successfully, it is necessary to change people's behaviour and attitudes throughout the organisation. Some people feel threatened by change. To overcome this, Tribus (1992: 6-10), suggested that an organisation must have awareness of the need to change, a vision of what the change will be and finally a sensible first step of change which will involve education and training. Theories of organisational behaviour have emphasized the important role of training, interpersonal skills, organisational development, communication and effective groups in achieving and sustaining organisational change (Wilson 1992: 7). Therefore, it is important to begin the process of gaining commitment to change through providing the directors, executives and senior managers with adequate knowledge of the concepts, tools and techniques of the intended change. This would obviously require exposing the various department heads and directors in government departments to such mechanism of change.

Another important factor relates to leadership style which has a significant impact on staff motivation. It is believed that highly motivated employees will help promote quality management effectively, thereby ensuring its sustenance over the long period. Torrington et al. (1989: 234) explains the role of motivational leadership as:

The implication behind the notion of leadership is that there is a combination of personal qualities and skills that enables some people to elicit from their subordinates a response that is enthusiastic, cohesive and effective, which other people in the same situation cannot achieve . . .

Therefore, top management in the public service should ensure that their management styles can encourage and motivate their staff towards performing high performance.

Inadequate evaluation and job recognition systems within organisations is another constraint inhibiting the adaptation of TQM successfully. It is important for organisations, if they are to succeed, to have proper employee evaluation systems and provide sufficient recognition for outstanding job performance amongst their staff. However, with regards to this aspect, there have been several arguments put forward by quality experts in terms of appropriate rewarding strategies. Many quality experts are not in favour of monetary rewards. Deming, (Drummond 1992: 3) for instance, argued that monetary rewards are an inadequate means of recognizing employee contributions. According to Drummond (1992: 6-7):

One reason that monetary rewards may be inappropriate is that the resultant compliance relationships are basically calculative.

Drummond went on to recommend symbolic rewards, which entail the manipulation of praise, badges, medals and other such accolades, as alternatives to monetary rewards. However, in some instances, the combination of monetary and symbolic rewards may be more appropriate tools of job recognition.

Finally, in many public service organisations in Malaysia, the working environment is not conducive to the enhancement of team working. With TQM, it is essential to establish quality improvement teams at the management and shop floor levels to ensure that quality management efforts are implemented successfully. In many Japanese organisations, team working has proved successful. Oakland (1989: 247-248) defines a quality improvement team as a

group of people with the appropriate knowledge, skills, and experience brought together by management specially to tackle and solve particular problems, usually on a project basis. James (1992: 53-54) presents the following benefits that arise from working in groups:

1. it provides the opportunity to devolve decision-making;
2. it has considerable impact on the breadth and depth of knowledge of people in the team; and
3. it creates the necessity for disseminating considerable information to the team.

The most difficult task for many public service organisations, is to ensure and make these quality improvement teams functional.

Through the above discussions, several reasons have been identified to explain why previous efforts towards quality improvements programmes in public service organisations have failed to be sustained continuously. The final section of this paper will try to propose ways to ensure that the TQM concept, which was introduced by the government recently, can be implemented in public service organisations effectively and continuously.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

As noted earlier, several efforts have been taken towards implementing quality management in public service organisations in Malaysia. A lot of excellent ideas have been put forward by the central agencies through government circulars in the process of promoting quality awareness amongst civil service employees. Although much of these strategies are formulated based on the ideas of quality experts, their efforts will not succeed if the environment within the organisation is not ready and not conducive to foster the requisite changes. For many public service organisations, to start and to foster quality awareness amongst their employees is the most difficult task.

The question that has to be raised here is how then, can we create such an environment which can foster quality improvement efforts in the public service organisations in Malaysia? We present seven means of facilitating this:

1. *Getting Top Management's Commitment* The most fundamental issue of any quality improvement programme is getting top management's commitment when implementing programmes, which is obviously a difficult task. However, if organisations have acquired top management's obligation to implement quality improvement programmes, part of the problems can be regarded as solved. A high level of commitment will help provide all the wherewithal needed for the implementation of TQM programmes effectively. This brings us to the question of, how to gain such a commitment?

Top management's commitment can be achieved through the following means:

(a) discussing the importance of 'quality' in every managerial meeting. Crosby (1984) suggested that issues on quality becomes the fixed agenda in those meetings;

(b) organising seminars regarding the importance of quality, which involves all the top and senior management in the organisation; and

(c) publishing articles on quality, especially on successful quality achievements within or outside the organisation in newsletters.

2. *Changing The Management Style* In many public service organisations, their management styles do not encourage employees to be involved in solving problems that are related to their jobs. As noted earlier, the successful implementation of quality management efforts needs to encourage involvement and participation amongst employees. Involvement and participation will increase commitment amongst the staff. Therefore, to foster quality management successfully, management styles within public service organisations require drastic change.

However, it is difficult to change existing styles overnight. To facilitate change, it is useful to expose managers in public service organisations to training programmes which focus on attitudinal change, gaining commitment and driving away fear of the consequences of new behaviour towards adopting the new way of management. Managers in these organisations must realise that, TQM can only succeed in a participative environment which requires full involvement of every individual in the organisation.

With participative management, individual employees should be encouraged to express their opinions and allowed to contribute at all stages of work. The implications of this approach, is that it will transfer primary responsibility for quality to all the individuals involved and hence increase their commitment in pursuing quality issues within the organisation.

3. ***Create A Conducive Corporate Culture*** To foster quality improvement efforts, the corporate culture in the public service organisations must be appropriate and conducive to foster TQM successfully. It is now generally accepted that the corporate culture shapes the way people act and interact and strongly influences the way things get done (Amstrong 1991:198; Hunt 1986:133). James (1992:42-48) argues that the cultural foundation is an intrinsic element of TQM which is essential to determine success. To James,

A quality work life cultural underpinning is essential to a successful TQM strategy. The aim of a quality work life culture is to create a fear-free organisation in which employee involvement is vigorously pursued. It generates a high degree of reciprocal commitment... Such a culture anchors the development of total quality.

The important issue here is, how can this thinking be translated into practice in Malaysia's public service organisations?

Managing corporate culture in an organisation is not an easy task. This is because the existing culture which has often evolved over many years through a number of learning processes and hence deeply rooted in the organisation, may be difficult to change. Nevertheless, as Amstrong (1991: 202-204) notes, the best approach in managing corporate culture is by taking and maintaining the good aspects of culture, and subsequently attempting change in the counterproductive aspects of behaviour. For further improvements, managers in public service organisations can manage their corporate culture through the following efforts:

(a)   communicate the message across about the values, beliefs and standards that need to be achieved within the organisation. This may involve specifying the organisation's mission statement. Every individual in the organisation must have a clear understanding about this mission statement and set their target to achieve it;

(b) re-organisation, which will involve the elimination of unnecessary layers of management. In TQM, organisational barriers should be minimised to encourage participation and staff involvement. It is believed that participation and involvement will increase their commitment;

(c) organise training programmes which can help employees to form new attitudes and perceptions towards performing their task. These training programmes may include aspects related to quality management which involve productivity and customer service, teaching new skills, responsibility and accountability; and finally,

(d) establish a proper and suitable assessment system to evaluate every individual's work in the organisation. This performance measurement is important to ensure that every person in the organisation is aware of their objectives and is assessed on the basis of the result they achieved. High performances must be given recognition and any weaknesses must be remedied by further training.

These suggestions can be implemented as an alternative or in combination depending on the existing corporate culture which exists in Malaysia's public service organisations. The most important issue that needs to be addressed here is that, managers in Malaysia's public service organisations must realise that if they want to succeed in improving the quality of their work, they must first nurture their existing corporate culture sufficiently for TQM to be implemented successfully.

4. *Resistance And Staff Commitment* Another important aspect which is related to culture is people's attitudes. The success or failure of any quality improvement effort in an organisation is significantly influenced by the type of attitudes and beliefs which exist in them. According to Collard (1989: 41), the issue of attitudes always emerges early in the introduction of any quality programme. As mentioned earlier, people are generally reluctant to change. To drive away fear and resistance towards change, the organisational culture must be driven towards participation and employee involvement in order to increase employee commitment in every quality management programme. There are many ways of getting people involved in management. In this aspect, Sherwood (1988: 5-

27) suggested five strategies which can encourage employee involvement in organisational management:

(a) Delegation – giving responsibility for decisions and actions to the people who have the most relevant and appropriate skills. This strategy can be implemented in public service organisations in Malaysia by encouraging individuals in organisations to make decisions regarding issues which are related to their job. Such a strategy can help generate new ideas and ways of doing things, and thus, increase the commitment of persons who contribute them.

(b) Teamworking – involving the right people at the right time. With TQM, team working is fundamental in achieving success. Therefore it is important for the management in Malaysia's public service organisations to encourage their employees to work in groups. In TQM, the QCC is amongst the best approach that can be adopted to foster effective team working. In many Japanese organisations, the team-working approach has proved successful. Where appropriate, team-working therefore, need to be given serious consideration by the public service organisations in Malaysia. Given the collective nature of work and rewards associated with government institutions, team working appears as an ideal recipe for success. The most successful effort to date towards encouraging team-working is through promoting QCCs.

(c) Empowering – providing opportunities and valuing contributions. People need to be motivated to increase their commitment towards achieving organisational goals. To achieve this, public service organisations in Malaysia need to have proper performance evaluation systems and sufficient job recognition. Only through such a system, employees will feel that their organisational contributions are useful and acknowledged.

(d) Integrating people with technology - that they must be able to exercise initiative and creativity on the production floor, in the office, or in the laboratory. Management in Malaysia's public service organisations must create an environment which can encourage employees to demonstrate their ability to generate new skills through the use of new technology. In achieving this task, employees must be furnished with proper incentives and training programmes. Increasing employees' skills through

sufficient wherewithal within the organisation will increase their commitment towards achieving better performance.

(e) Shared sense of purpose – sharing a vision that is based on a clearly stated set of values describing both the organisation's mission (purpose) and the methods of realising it. In this aspect, there is a need for public service organisation in Malaysia to lay out the quality standards that need to be achieved by the organisation and have them communicated clearly to all staff, including the ways and means of realising them. A clear understanding of and an adequate knowledge and skills regarding implementing quality improvement programmes will help organisations achieve the intended quality standards effectively.

Whatever attempts are undertaken, however, the most fundamental issue in overcoming resistance and gaining staff commitment, is to create a fear-free working environment and to encourage participation in decision making regarding job related tasks.

5. *Appropriate Education and Training Programmes* It is important for organisations to provide appropriate education and training programmes amongst their employees to ensure that the quality improvement efforts are successful. With appropriate and sufficient training programmes, each individual in the agency would be able to understand the quality concept introduced, and becomes better equipped with the necessary skills and techniques to implement the quality procedures within the organisation. However, the question that need to be asked here is, how can an effective training programme be implemented?

Traditional teaching techniques which rely mostly on off-the-job classroom-type courses may not be effective in providing the attitude and skills necessary for a successful TQM programme (Tattersall 1989: 47). Therefore, other types of training techniques should be introduced to increase staffs' ability to learn. Nonaka and Johansson, as quoted by Smith (1990: 24), point out that a key feature in the success of Japanese companies is not only their ability to adapt quickly, but also to learn rapidly from such experiences. Therefore, one of the best ways of getting people to become aware of the learning process is to start with their own experiences of learning (Smith 1990: 25). To implement these training techniques, a group of managers in several public service organisations in

Malaysia can be asked to reflect on how they learnt a skill, or something significant, in the past. It is believed that learning through past experiences can be more effective in providing skills and knowledge amongst the staff than merely pursuing new concepts outside the workplace.

Another approach towards effective training is through action learning. As Tattersall (1989: 52) noted, action learning focuses on what the individual or group of people need to do to improve performance. He argued that the essence of the concept is that performance is a function of results achieved, not the level of knowledge possessed. To ensure success, public service organisations in Malaysia should encourage action learning amongst their staff. Through action learning, their employees, regardless of which level they are in, will benefit from the knowledge, skills and experience of individual participants in the improvement programmes in which they are involved. It is also believed that action learning will encourage team-working to function effectively.

6. *Recognising High Performance* In many government departments and agencies, rewarding good performance is still not embedded in their organisational culture. Although the central body of Malaysia's public service provides several guidelines for awards, many of them still do not realise that job recognition will motivate public service employees to perform at consistently high levels.

Rewards need not take the form of monetary awards. In fact, many quality experts do not encourage pecuniary awards. For instance, Deming criticised bonuses which are tied to individual performance. In Japan, recognition is generally given through prizes and competitions for either the most or the 'best' proposal and projects (Collard 1989: 46). "The Employee Of The Month" scheme which was introduced by some government departments in Malaysia can be considered as one type of recognition of good performance, which many other government departments in the country could follow. Whatever the approach, recognising people's contribution will motivate and increase staff commitment towards performing their job. Therefore, management should realise and adapt their styles accordingly.

7. *Evaluate Every Quality Improvement Programme* Finally, public service organisations in Malaysia should evaluate the achievements

of every quality improvement programme which they have implemented. Proper measurement and evaluation of achievement is important to ensure that quality efforts meet their targets. 'Follow-up and follow through' of every quality improvement effort which was suggested by MAMPU should be carried out by management in public service organisations. In measuring programmes' achievements, it is important to seek feed-back from relevant external and internal customers of the organisations' concerned. This feed-back will help improve continuously the performance of quality improvement programmes implemented.

CONCLUSION

TQM is suitable, applicable and practical in Malaysia's public service organisations. Especially where it involves administrative and organisational set-ups, the participative and cognitive oriented TQM can bring substantial long-term productivity gains. However, to ensure that this management concept can be implemented and sustained successfully, the environment that exists within these organisations must be conducive to foster this concept effectively. Therefore, the management in public service organisations should realise that it is their responsibility to ensure that they are ready to adopt and adapt TQM in their organisations. A conducive environment in this respect may include attitudes and beliefs which are embedded in their organisations' corporate culture.

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