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The Influence of Total Quality Management Practices towards Employee Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study was conducted to identify the relationships between Total Quality Management (TQM) practices as well as their effects towards employees' job satisfaction at *Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah (MBMB).* The objective is to have a better understanding on one of the approaches as in TQM practices in preparing the organization which is to deal with environmental changes. This study involved 261 respondents from lower and middle level management employees. This study found that training and teamwork dimension had significant, strong and positive relationships with job satisfaction, while top management commitment and customer focus dimensions were recognized to have significant, moderate and positive relationship with job satisfaction. On top of that, it was discovered that training and teamwork dimension of TQM practices had the greatest influence towards employees' job satisfaction. Top management commitment was the second influential factor of TQM practices towards employees' job satisfaction. However, customer focus was not found to have any significant influence towards MBMB employees' job satisfaction.

Keywords: Training and teamwork; Top management commitment; Customer focus; Job satisfaction; Task identity.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, quality is seen as a crucial element in gaining competitive advantage in the market as well as a strategic tool for organization to support continuous improvement throughout the organization. Total Quality Management (TQM) began during 1990s Teddy and Rainey (2003) and in Malaysia, The Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) manages the implementation of quality management in the Malaysian Civil services. In Malaysia, the Public Service Department (PSD) is the responsible body that manages human capital in public service departments and continuously improves human resource management policy capable of rendering quality services to the people (PSD Annual Report, 2011). In an organization, the term "quality" does not only emphasize on the output or product created but also the quality of their employees (Karia and Abu, 2006). Total Quality Management (TQM) is a set of principles that coordinates the organization, to ensure that the organization is consistently exceeding the customers" expectations by engaging all divisions, departments and levels of management to reach common goals set in that organization. Management concept in TQM emphasizes on the way how employees in the organization are managed (Sallis, 2002; Toreman and Karakus, 2009). TQM is also

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used as a mechanism to measure organizational outcomes such as work standard and achieving zero defects (Deming, 1986; Toreman and Karakus, 2009). An organization is an established entity, which is created to achieve the defined goals and objectives set earlier by that organization. In order to achieve the targeted objectives, organizations need to be allied with the environment (Yusof and Ali, 2002) and to actively interact and manage any changes that occur in their surroundings. Managers and employees alike need to prepare themselves to adapt to the changes and keep up with the developments in the environment as a strategy to remain in the market. For instance, technological advancement has brought the removal of manual and repetitive work which had become the barriers in achieving automated and efficient work. Moreover, it has become necessary for organizations to improve their performance to gain the competitive advantage in the market (Toreman and Karakus, 2009). To this day, Total Quality Management (TQM) is seen as a relevant and vital approach for organizations in preparing themselves to deal with the changes in the environment. Moreover, work motivation, satisfaction and commitment among employees can be improved if they possessed extra-role performance behavior such as involvement and engagement with continuous improvement activities, for instance TQM and 5S activity (Waldman, 1994).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Total Quality Management Practices

Total Quality Management (TQM) has become a basic management issue in increasing the quality in organization and directly enhances the amount of competitiveness in global stage. TQM has been accepted as the management system in managing quality since the 20th century (Martinez-Lorente *et al.*, 1998). As the quality management initiatives are widely implemented and applied, some factors in TQM are also applicable to non-manufacturing industry (Powell, 1995). According to Karia and Abu (2006) employees‟ positive feelings generated from the TQM process, would undoubtedly boost up their satisfaction and organizational commitment, and that organizations that had implemented TQM practices in management process have created an improvement in employee work-related attitudes such as reduced absenteeism and turnover. TQM is recognized as being an important determinant in ensuring the successfulness and survival of manufacturing and servicing organization in current competitive environment (Ooi *et al.*, 2008). TQM implementation is not only focusing on the quality of product, but also on the quality of the internal customer. The success of TQM implementation depends heavily on the employee‟s willingness and their attitude Karia and Abu (2006) to embrace it. Theoretically, the implementation of TQM can produce positive employees by improving their satisfaction and organizational commitment, and also helps in increasing employees‟ attendance, safety and health (Butler, 1996). Total Quality Management Practices (TQM) have been proven in contributing larger market shares and return of investment, lower operational cost and improved organizational productivity (Zhang, 2000). Research conducted by Karia and Abu (2006) found that holistic implementation of TQM brings a lot of advantages to the organization in the area of quality, productivity as well as employees‟ development through creativity, innovation, training, teamwork, communication, trust and also decision making process.

Research conducted by Ooi *et al.* (2008) found that TQM is relatively significant with the production worker‟s satisfaction, and the same result was obtained by Ijaz *et al.* (2012) who found that TQM practices have a significant and positive impact on employees‟ performance, and indirectly lead to greater job satisfaction. According to Ooi *et al.* (2007), employees‟ job satisfaction is positively related with their perception toward TQM practices in the organization. Employees who perceived greater awareness of TQM practices tend to achieve high satisfaction with their job. In this study, Total Quality Management (TQM) was signified by employees‟ commitment to continuous improvement towards organizational process in delivering highly satisfied services as well as fulfilling the demand from their customer (Lee and Chang, 2006). In addition, Ali (2006) stated that TQM is the viewpoint that strives for preparing the organization with guidelines for development through their customers‟ satisfaction. In addition, he also concluded that TQM is the sequence method of developing an organization‟s environment, aided by top management contribution.

2.2. Job Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction has become a trend and grabbed the organization‟s attention these days, since it is related to the organizational effectiveness as well as crucial elements in identifying organization‟s bottom line. According to Mockler (2002), employee satisfaction is represented by an organization‟s bottom line with innovative behavior, pleasant customer relationship, high quality production and profitability, reduced absenteeism and turnover. Many organizations nowadays prioritize in increasing the employee satisfaction programs to reduce employee turnover and enhance the productivity, indirectly leading to organizational success (Atchison, 1999). Arnold and Feldman (1986) also indicated that organization‟s effort in maintaining employees‟ job satisfaction has an impact on productivity, absenteeism and turnover, as well as on union activity. Locke (1976) stated that awareness of job satisfaction was arisen during the 20th century, and more than 3000 related publications in this area were published from 1935 to 1976. An organization that comprises of highly satisfied workforce will contribute to the operational effectiveness, and ensuring the organization‟s survival. Findings by Schultz and Schultz (1998), found that employees spend one third to one half of their daily hours at the workplace, for about 40 to 45 years, were frustrated and dissatisfied. Furthermore, these kinds of negative feelings can unconsciously take home their dissatisfaction to family and social life.

Generally, there are numerous features which can contribute to the employees‟ job satisfaction. Armstrong (2003) specified that intrinsic and extrinsic elements influenced employees‟ job satisfaction. Intrinsic elements

which influence employees‟ job satisfaction are the sources that the workforce will have control. Some of the intrinsic factors that have influences on the employees‟ job satisfaction are:

1. Job background: The amount of job provided to the holder with exciting task; ability for development and personnel accomplishment as well as responsibility assigned, as a result lead to job satisfaction (Robbins *et al.*, 2003).
2. Recognition: The common and frequently used aspect in representing causal of employees‟ satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Locke, 1976; Roos, 2005). For instance, Syptak *et al.* (1999) indicated that employees who are acknowledged by the superior will create the feelings of satisfaction.
3. Job autonomy: The condition in which the employees are given enough freedom and control over their task. This is supported by Anderson (2001), manager needs to add some accountability to employees‟ job to increase their job satisfaction.
4. Person-environment fit: The congruent state between workforce and their working condition (Kristof, 2006). Bowling and Hammond (2008) supported that matching wants and needs between employees and the organization would truly provide the employees with job satisfaction.

Other than intrinsic elements that can improve employees‟ job satisfaction are the extrinsic elements, which are referred to as the sources that the employees who do not have the power or control over. The two well-known extrinsic factors are social and organizational support and employee supervision. Bowling and Hammond (2008) as cited by Roos (2005) revealed that there is a positive connection between social and apparent organizational support and satisfaction. Allocation of reasonable quantity of time for employee to mingle around will provide them with satisfaction and stimulate a sense of team work (Syptak *et al.*, 1999). In addition to social and organization support, support and encouragement from supervisor or managers also has a relationship with employees‟ job satisfaction (Roos, 2005). (Robbins *et al.*, 2003) stated that supportive supervisors are those who technically, emotionally and socially encourage their subordinates have the advantage of nourishing job satisfaction among them. Besides, leadership style demonstrated by the supervisors or managers towards their colleagues can facilitate in identifying the degree of job satisfaction within the organization (Bergh and Theron, 2001).

2.3. Research Objectives and Hypotheses

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the relationship between TQM practices and employees‟ job satisfaction. There are two research objectives that need to be fulfilled in order to thoroughly understand the issue of this study. The research objectives are: (1) To identify the relationships between Total Quality Management (TQM) practices and employees‟ job satisfaction and (2) To examine the elements of TQM practices that has the major influences on employees‟ job satisfaction. In relation to that, the researchers have formulated a few hypotheses for this study, by referring to other previous studies and findings:

H_{1a}: The higher the level of training and teamwork in organization, the greater the employees‟ job satisfaction.

H_{1b}: The higher the level of top management commitment in organization, the greater the employees‟ job satisfaction.

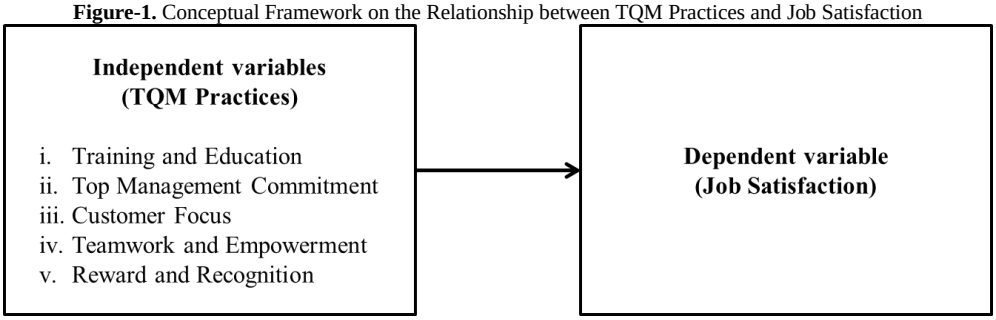
H_{1c}: The higher the level of customer focus in organizations, the greater the employees‟ job satisfaction.

H_{2a}: Training and teamwork is the most influential factor of TQM practices towards employees‟ job satisfaction.

H_{2b}: Top management commitment is the most influential factor of TQM practices towards employees‟ job satisfaction.

H_{2c}: Customer focus is the most influential factor of TQM practices towards employees‟ job satisfaction.

Figure-1. Conceptual Framework on the Relationship between TQM Practices and Job Satisfaction



3. Methodology

This study was a cross-sectional study, conducted in *Majlis Bandaraya Melaka Bersejarah (MBMB)* with 261 employees. These targeted respondents comprised of lower and middle level management employees. Employees‟ information was obtained from the Human Resource Department at MBMB, with an up-to-date data up till April 2017. In order to determine the sample size of this study, the Krejcie and Morgan table was used as the reference. The sample size suggested was 261 respondents as the potential population was 762 employees. A stratified sampling technique was used in collecting data from the respondents. According to Salkind (2012), stratified sampling technique was most suitable to be used in differentiating information needed when it comes to various data within the population. A pilot study was conducted prior an actual data collection, to determine the reliability of the instrument used in this study. The pilot study will be deliberately explained in Section 4 in terms of both reliability and factor analysis. As for the actual data collection, a 23 items of instrument was used to measure both TQM

practices and job satisfaction among employees in MBMB. Section A described demographic background of the respondents, Section B was on TQM practices while Section C designated to explain on job satisfaction. Both Section B and C were in Likert-type scales; specifically, a 5 point Likert scale questions explaining level of agreement and satisfaction respectively. The scale was presented with values of 1=Strongly disagree /dissatisfied, 2=Disagree/Dissatisfied, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree/Satisfied and 5=Strongly Agree/Satisfied. This instrument was distributed to the MBMB employees according to their departments through a department representative. They were given a week's time to complete and return the questionnaire to the specific representatives.

4. Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted by the researchers before the actual distribution of questionnaires. This pilot study was conducted at Jasin Municipal Council which involved 50 respondents from the middle level management to ascertain the reliability of the instrument.

4.1. Reliability Analysis

The instrument"s initial reliability was tested prior factor analysis in order to eliminate certain items which were unlikely to represent the study. The results are tabulated in Table 1. It was discovered that all of the items in the instrument were reliable as the Cronbach"s Alpha values for each dimension was greater than 0.6 which was the acceptable value for reliability (Sekaran, 2006). In fact, the Cronbach"s Alpha values were found to be greater than 0.8 which can be considered as having good internal consistency (George and Mallery, 2003a). Hence, all of the items for both independent and dependent variables were retained as they were and used for data collection process.

Table-1. Reliability Analysis (Pilot Data)

Variable(s)	Dimension(s)	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Independent	Top Management Commitment	6	.845
	Training and Education	7	.910
	Customer Focus	4	.918
	Teamwork and Empowerment	7	.901
	Reward and Recognition	7	.911
Dependent	Job Satisfaction	10	.939

4.2. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is the method of data reduction that groups the underlying variables into the same set of variable (Coakes *et al.*, 2010). The researchers decided to conduct a factor analysis to ensure that all items used in this study were in the possible group set. Table 2 summarized the results found in the factor analysis whereby there were dimension reduction, dimension merger and items deletion. For TQM practices, it was found that only two elements were loaded under their own factors which were top management commitment in factor four and customer focus in factor six. Hence, these items were retained in the initial factors with the initial names respectively. On the other hand, the items from dimensions of training and education as well as teamwork and empowerment were loaded in component one. This new combination was therefore named as „training and teamwork". Originally, there were a total of 31 items in TQM practices instrument as stated in Table 1, which were then reduced to 16 items after the factor analysis procedures. Out of 16 items, 10 items represented training and teamwork, followed by top management commitment with four items. Meanwhile, customer focus had the remaining two items. Furthermore, there was also item reduction for dependent variable whereby out of the original 10 items, only seven items were suggested to be retained.

Table-2. Summary of Factor Analysis

Variable	Difference Details	Before Factor Analysis	After Factor Analysis
Total Quality Management (TQM) Practices	Dimensions	1.Top Management Commitment 2.Customer Focus 3.Reward and Recognition 4.Training and Education 5.Teamwork and Empowerment	1.Top Management Commitment 2. Customer Focus 3.Training and Teamwork
	Items	31	16
Job Satisfaction	Dimensions	1. Job Satisfaction	1. Job Satisfaction
	Items	10	7

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Reliability Analysis (Actual Data)

The instrument"s initial reliability was tested prior to factor analysis test in order to eliminate certain items which were unlikely to represent the study purposes and the results were tabulated in Table 1. However, it was discovered that all of the items in the instruments were reliable as the Cronbach"s Alpha values for each dimension were greater than 0.6 which was the acceptable value for reliability (Sekaran, 2006). In fact, the Cronbach"s Alpha

values found were greater than 0.8 which can be considered as having good internal consistency (George and Mallery, 2003b)(. Hence, all of the items for both independent and dependent variables were retained as they were.

Table-3. Reliability Analysis (Actual Data)

Variable(s)	Dimension(s)	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Independent	Top Management Commitment	4	.790
	Training and Teamwork	10	.917
	Customer Focus	2	.771
Dependent	Job Satisfaction	7	.858

5.2. Pearson Correlation Analysis

In defining the relationship between independent variables (TQM practices) and dependent variable (employees‟ job satisfaction), the researchers used guidelines from Cohen (1988) to interpret the values between the variables as shown in Table 4. It was found that training and teamwork dimension had significant positive strong relationship with employees‟ job satisfaction (r=.531, p<.001) while both top management commitment and customer focus dimensions were found to have significant, positive and moderate relationships with the dependent variable (r=.467, p<.001; r=.355, p<.001 respectively). Besides, the study also discovered that all dimensions of TQM practices were interrelated with each other, concluding that the items in these three dimensions had convergent validity and belonged to the same variable which is TQM practices. Thus, the first objective of this study was achieved with all the three hypotheses (H1a, H1b and H1c) were supported.

Table-4. Pearson Correlation Analysis

No.	Variable(s)	1	2	3
1	Training and Teamwork	-		
2	Top Management Commitment	.578**	-	
3	Customer Focus	.527**	.465**	-
4	Job Satisfaction	.531**	.467**	.355**

** Correlations is significant at .001 level (1-tailed)

According to Yip and Fatt (2011), training can affect employee‟s job satisfaction in a positive way that the employee can gain more knowledge and enhance their abilities to perform well. In addition, the employee that has the opportunity to join training session will have greater understanding about all the work processes that occurred in the organization (Faiz, 2010). Moreover, an organization will get more benefits when it provides its employees with training sessions because this is where the employees can improve their work quality and at the same time their work performance (Noe *et al.*, 2011). This is also strongly supported by Faisal *et al.* (2010) when they also found that employees have higher satisfaction towards their job if the organization can provide training sessions. On the other hand, findings from a study conducted by Prabha *et al.* (2011) found that teamwork is an important element in the organization that helps to improve the organization‟s quality. Moreover, teamwork can help the employees to finish their work on time without having prolonged problems in performing their tasks (Jain, 2010). This is also supported by Ooi *et al.* (2007) whose study found that teamwork is directly related to employees‟ job satisfaction. Therefore, the researchers can conclude that training and teamwork had a positive and direct relationship with employees‟ job satisfaction, in line with previous studies‟ results.

Furthermore, this study has also discovered that top management commitment dimension also had a positive relationship with the employees‟ job satisfaction. This is supported by Ooi *et al.* (2008) who found that top management commitment is able to enhance the organizational culture towards total quality practices. Yusof and Ali (2002) also found in their study that top management commitment can provide significant contribution to the thoughts, feelings, satisfaction and interactions among the employees within the organization. Evans and Lindsay (2002) stated that commitment from top management is crucial in demonstrating quality excellence environment which assimilate quality values in management process.

5.3. Multiple Regression Analysis

Findings from the regression analysis between TQM practices and communication competence were tabulated in **Table 5**. The result indicated R2 value was .320, in which all of the dimensions of independent variable such as training and teamwork, top management commitment and customer focus explained 32% of the variance for employees‟ job satisfaction with sig. F value of .000. Besides, Durbin Watson value was 1.830 which was good as it was in the range of 1.5 to 2, in line with the assumptions for multivariate correlation analysis. The analysis also revealed that training and teamwork was the most influential dimension of TQM practices on the employee‟s job satisfaction (β=.370, p<.001). Consecutively, top management commitment was the second highest factor that influenced employees‟ job satisfaction (β=.220, p<.001). It was also found that job satisfaction was not significantly influenced by customer focus (β=.050, p>.001). Other than that, the collinearity statistics showed that this study has no collinearity problem as the value of VIF <10, Tolerance <1. Therefore, this finding support that training and teamwork and top management commitment significantly contributed to the prediction of MBMB employees‟ job satisfaction. Hence, the second objective of this study was achieved and only hypothesis H2a and H2b. were supported.

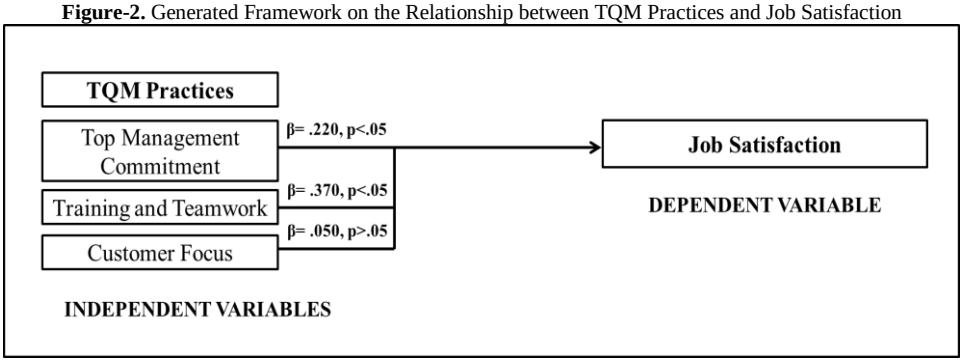
Table-5. Multiple Regression Analysis

Independent variables	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
				Tolerance	VIF
Training and Teamwork	.370			.58	1.72
Top Management Commitment	.220			.63	1.58
Customer Focus	.050			.68	1.46
R Square	.320				
F	39.147				
Sig. F Value	.000				
Durbin Watson	1.830				

Based on the findings in Table 5, the researchers can conclude that training and teamwork and top management commitment were associated with employees‟ job satisfaction. This was supported by Karia and Abu (2006) who found that the correlation of training and teamwork as well as top management commitment explained the most variance in the employees‟ job satisfaction. Hence, the training department should provide continuous training to the employees in ensuring ongoing improvement in their job satisfaction. Besides, teamwork is also undeniably crucial in shaping the employees‟ job satisfaction. This is because through teamwork, the employees are given the opportunity to acquire new knowledge and experiences from their colleagues who have gone through specific training or have taken some courses for personal skill enhancement. In fact, during the knowledge transfer process, employees‟ job satisfaction would increase as these employees are actually involved in two sided discussions whereby they would be able to listen and also point out their views regarding the subjects discussed. In addition, the result from the multiple regression analysis showed that top management commitment is also associated with employees‟ job satisfaction. This has indicated that the employees in top management who committed to TQM effort are usually those who are satisfied with their jobs. They will consequently produce high quality of work as a return to the organization. This was supported by De *et al.* (2005) who stated that top management commitment has significantly influenced the employees‟ work related attitudes, including job satisfaction. However, this finding was contradicting with the finding from other study conducted by Ooi *et al.* (2008) who discovered that top management commitment is not significantly influencing the employees‟ job satisfaction.

Table 5 shows that customer focus has no significant influence towards the employees‟ job satisfaction at MBMB. This finding is surprisingly contradicting from what was found by Ooi *et al.* (2007) who found that customer focus is one of the essentials in TQM practices that contribute to the employees‟ job satisfaction. As a matter of fact, this was supported by Chapman and Al-Khawaldeh (2002) who stated that the implementation of TQM practices would enable the managers to fully use their employees, as well as the resources available within the organization to create product that customers value as well as to deliver the best service to the customers. The researchers concluded that from three dimensions TQM of practices, only two of them influenced employees‟ job satisfaction which were training and teamwork and top management commitment. Figure 2 shows the generated framework for this study as there were changes in the independent variable from five to three dimensions.

Figure-2. Generated Framework on the Relationship between TQM Practices and Job Satisfaction



6. Conclusions

This paper comprised of pilot and actual studies which intended to understand the association and effects of TQM practices on job satisfaction among middle level management employees in both Jasin Municipal Council and MBMB respectively. Findings from the reliability analysis in the pilot study revealed that all items in both independent and dependent variables were found to be reliable. In addition, factor analysis suggested that the dimensions of training and education as well as teamwork and empowerment to be merged into one new dimension named as training and teamwork. Besides, it also suggested eliminating reward and recognition from the independent variable because of cross-loading items. Hence, TQM practices are now having only three dimensions with 16 items instead of five dimensions with 31 items. As for job satisfaction, the sole dimension remained the same, only to delete three items out of the ten items. Meanwhile, according to results from the actual data statistical analysis, it was discovered that all three dimensions of TQM practices (training and teamwork, top management commitment and

customer focus) had significant and positive relationships with the employees‟ job satisfaction. Furthermore, it was also found that training and teamwork dimension has the greatest influence on job satisfaction among employees in MBMB. As a conclusion, TQM practice is one of the many factors that may influence employees‟ job satisfaction. Therefore, it would be an advantage for organizations to actually understand and focus on how to improve the TQM practices in their working environment to ensure the end results of both having satisfied employees and customers. Job satisfaction may look and sound insignificant but its influence may secure the so-called success or failure of an organization.

7. Recommendations

Total quality management introduced by Deming (1993) is a set of powerful interventions if constructed nicely and thoroughly. With a proper implementation, total quality management can help the organization to improve its deliveries either goods or services to customers, and at the same time having committed and satisfied employees. In this recommendation, the researchers divided the recommendation into three sections which consists of the perspectives of the employer or top level management, employee or middle level management and organization.

Employer or top level management can influence the employee‟s commitment and attitude towards total quality management by demonstrating their commitment towards having better workforce. Employers need to play their role by changing the employees‟ thought and mind especially when change is introduced or when employees resist changing. According to Yip and Fatt (2011) employer or top level management needs to trust the employees and empower them to solve the problems in the organization. Hence, the employees will be able to learn from their mistakes and have the opportunities to explore their creative and innovative talent. Not only that, employee‟s loyalty and job satisfaction will improve when the employees were involved and guided by the top management.

In the meantime, it is recommended for employees to get involved and work together with the top level management to focus on the strategic planning and future direction of the company. Total quality management elements function at encouraging all employees to be involved with the organization’s activities by contributing their creative idea and avoiding status quo. The management values employee‟s ideas or suggestions as they are already familiar with their working environment and know the common cause of the problems. Employee‟s job satisfaction certainly increases when they get involved with the organization’s activities and when the management shows their appreciation to the employees.

Meanwhile, for the middle level management or employees at the supervisory level, both short and long term training courses must be identified and determined to meet the organization's goals. The appropriate training programs can benefit all employees, create a happier workforce, having better teamwork and higher productivity. Besides, work quality awareness needs to be communicated frequently to the employees from time to time, especially to the new employees. This is to provide an overview on the organization’s priority and common goals so that everyone is working toward achieving that goals.

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