

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the findings of the research process and discusses the practical implication of the research. In addition, limitation and suggestion for future research are discussed and highlighted.

5.2 Discussion and conclusion

The objective of this study is to determine the impact of Continuous Improvement towards Job Satisfaction. The study clearly shows that the Continuous Improvement plays an important role to influence employees' Job Satisfaction. The study indicated that Continuous Improvement positively influence employees' Job Satisfaction. There are several previous researches indicated the similar relationship (Sauer, 2009; Noorliza and Muhammad, 2006; Ying, 2000; Clark, 1996; Limon, 1993). It is recommended that the organisation should emphasize the Continuous Improvement practices to enhance the employees' Job Satisfaction. On top of it, Customer Focus has been identified that it gives the biggest impact on Job Satisfaction.

Butler (1996) found that companies that used Continuous Improvement practices achieved improvements in job satisfaction, attendance, turnover, safety, and health. When fully implemented, Continuous Improvement brings benefits to organisation in terms of quality, productivity, and employee development (Lawler et al., 1995) through improved teamwork, creativity,

innovation, training, communication, trust, and decision making. This is supported by this study.

In addition, this study contribute the empirical support to the anticipation that customer focus, process management, supplier as key performance, individual and group recognition, and database decision making enhance the employees' Job Satisfaction. The findings highlight that the stronger emphasize on these continuous improvement practices, the higher employees' job satisfaction can be achieved. Job Satisfaction was found to be greater in the organisation that implemented Continuous Improvement practices than organisation that did not implement Continuous Improvement practices. The strongest factors were the "customer focus", "individual and group recognition", and "supplier as key performance".

Customer focus is kind of support relationship between employees and customers (Noorliza and Muhammad, 2006). Continuous Improvement focuses on improving processes by increasing their value-added component which is beneficial to final customer. Customer focus provides a channel between customers and employees, and the employees could continuously to give improvement according to customers' demand (Bolton and Heap, 2002). Customer focus involves the social interaction where the feeling, emotions and employees' psychological states may play a part, as opposed to the pure technical or mechanical skills for Job Satisfaction (Sauer, 2009). Therefore, the organisation should give more priority to customer feedback and complaints.

Individual and group recognition is important to motivate the employees for work with high job satisfaction. The recognition made the employees felt like part of the organisation because the organisation recognised them with their effort and contribution, such as attendance award and team work performance recognition. The recognition made the employees felt they were playing an important role in achieving the organisation objectives, and they were treated as primary resources (Noorliza and Muhammad, 2006; Limon, 1993).

The process management means standardisation in the process to ensure the consistent quality outcome. The standardisation on organisational structure, task, role responsibility and organisation goals lead to positive impact to employees' Job Satisfaction (Sauer, 2009). Besides that, standardisation has more flexibility to employees in decision making, and made them feel more meaningful in their jobs.

In term of employee involvement, employees who involved more in the project will enhance the Job Satisfaction when they have the relevant experiences and training is provided to them (Sauer, 2009; Ooi, et al, 2007). The willingness of the employees to involvement in the project also might affect their job satisfaction. It is recommended that the organisation improve the employee involvement by appraisals, encouraging positive process improvement, provide more quality training and awareness, encourage team working, and spending more time with staff at delivery points (Kaye and Anderson, 1999). In previous study (Ooi, et al, 2007study), his results indicated that lack of participation would not be able to improve employees'

personal abilities and capabilities, help them change certain aspects of personal traits and increase their self-respect.

Suppliers play an important role in part of process to be improved. If the organisation doesn't enlighten the policies governing relationship with suppliers, this will cause the employees do not have strong relationship with supplier in term of process improvement. Suppliers just play the role supplying the sources without any consensus on the overall organisation performance. Therefore, it is recommended that the organisation should involve employees who are part of the process to be improved as well as suppliers where helpful and feasible (Jha, Noori and Michela, 1996).

Database decision making means the decision making process based on fact and scientific data. The data collection is based on the employees' feedback and therefore the employees' ideas are contributed to the organisation. Employees were given the equal chance to voice up their opinion to the organisation and to be recorded in the system. The decision making is not only based on the top management, but it also considers the voice from employees. This also enhances the communication among employees (Limon, 1993). Therefore, it gives positive impact to employees' Job Satisfaction.

This study has indicated that the achievement of Continuous Improvement is not an easy task. There are many complex variables within an organisation to enhance employees' Job Satisfaction. Continuous Improvement practices are not only focus on final customers' expectation, but

it also requires continuous management to learn the important role in driving the improvement cause and enhance employees' job satisfaction.

Besides that, the findings are considered to have a significant contribution by using Malaysian organisation that proves to be useful as an example of a methodology that might be used to track the extent of Continuous Improvement effects on Job Satisfaction. A firm could use this instrument to do a pre-test baseline measurement, and then periodically re-administer it to identify changes associated with Continuous Improvement efforts. Continuous Improvement must be emphasized from the top of the organisation and it must be supported by employee. Employee and organisational performance is essential to identifying improvement opportunities.

In summary, the present study demonstrates that Continuous Improvement practices enhance Job Satisfaction. The effect of Continuous Improvement practices in these respects is of the utmost importance. Organisations should commit to Continuous Improvement practices and their successful implementation.

5.3 Limitations of Study

There are some limitations in this study need to be addressed. First, most of the respondents were from executive level and working in office. The study was lacking of respondents from the production floor employees. They involve directly on the CI practices and implement it on their daily job.

Second, the survey was conducted within industries in Klang Valley, it might not be applicable to other regions. Due to limitation of time, the sample size was not large enough to generalize overall industry situation.

Third, the survey was conducted based on self-evaluation questionnaire. This might be affected by response biases. Those who returned the survey might perceive the organisation differently from others. Besides that, they might have had negative opinions for their working environment and used the survey to express their dissatisfaction instead based on the Continuous Improvement practices.

Lastly, this study did not specifically focus on any industry and the differences of respondents' organisations were not tested. The scale of operation, organisation structures and organisation cultures were not been considered in this study. Therefore the result provides a general overview of the influence of Continuous Improvement on job satisfaction.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Study

To investigate the reason of low score of job satisfaction by collecting the data from interview, focus group or organisational reports to validate the representation of survey questions.

Several measurements should be included in the future study. This includes the organisation background, experience of respondents in Continuous Improvement practices. Besides that, more dimensions which related to Continuous Improvement should be examined, such as

empowerment, leadership, training and development, motivation and organisational commitment.

Besides that, a wider range of employees' affective reactions such as task characteristics, role ambiguity, role conflict and others can be incorporated into a more comprehensive study (Ooi, et al, 2007).

The measure of Job Satisfaction comprises of only a small number of items, which reflected different aspects of Job Satisfaction, and does not represent an overall view of Job Satisfaction. Therefore it is recommended in future research, to consider more items and better measures, in relation to this outcome variable.

The larger sample size should be tested in future research. Future study may collect the data from other regions from Klang Valley. The sample also should segregate to different groups based on the organisation background and types of organisations. This is to improve the generalization of the study.

5.5 Managerial Implications

Several implications can be used from the findings of the study. It is anticipated that the organisations which willing to implement Continuous Improvement will likely reap the benefits of competitive advantage and retain the intelligent and hardworking employees in a very competitive environment.

The results also contribute and indicate very useful implication and recommendation for Malaysia industry to implement Continuous Improvement

practices which will result a positive effect on the job satisfaction and subsequently reduce the turnover rate. The job satisfaction will direct affect the quality of work (Boselie and Wiele, 2002; Bollinger, 2001; Milburne and Francis, 1981; Morse, 1977)

Furthermore the findings regarding customer focus, employee involvement, process management, supplier as key performance, individual and group recognition, and database decision making and contribute positive effect on job satisfaction. Therefore, in order to have high job satisfaction, the organisation should emphasis the standardisation of process, utilize the information and data to make decision for all, and establish well policy to recognise the performance of employee and team.

With the high job satisfaction, this could create high standard for service excellence, build up trust in employees and enhance employee motivation. This will directly improve the organisation performance and efficiency. This finding is important to Human Resource Department as the department participates in arrangement of employees training and development pertaining to Continuous Improvement activities and projects. Human resource practices and policies play an important role in Continuous Improvement implementation. Recruiting and selecting the appropriate candidates towards a job is a beginning of the improvement culture development. The organisations companies need to increase the awareness on the potential contribution of Human Resource Management to Continuous Improvement. However, there are some weaknesses of people-oriented mechanism and performances which is possibly caused by lack of resources,

leadership and knowledge which need to be look more closely on further research.

In fact, Boselie and Wiele (2002) suggested that human resource management and Continuous Improvement are becoming more interlinked. One reason is that both perspectives use the same theoretical paradigms and assumptions. Another reason is the tendency to link both perspectives with business performance in theory as well as in practice. Furthermore, service organisations are becoming more important in the western world, and Continuous Improvement has to be linked more strongly to the people issues. This might end in a synthesis of human resource management and Continuous Improvement, leading to a broader theme of performance management. According to Oakland (1998), all the employees and top management must develop commitment for Continuous Improvement in their daily work to produce a “quality culture”. Therefore, close co-operation between human resource management and Continuous Improvement can give new theoretical insights and practical implications. Human resource management help to approach Continuous Improvement practices by involving employees’ commitment to accomplish organisational goal.