CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of two main sections. The first section describes the research methodology used in conducting the study while the second section is a literature review of the subject matter relating to the topics under study. The section on research methodology explains the methods used for data collection, who the respondents for the study are, what variables are measured, techniques used for data analysis, and key concepts.

The section on literature review presents some of the insights of anthropologists, behavioural scientists and quality experts regarding the subject of culture and quality. The section will be divided into four parts. The first part is the introduction which aims to put in perspective the importance accorded to culture by contemporary management thinkers. The second part will discuss the concept of culture according to two broad areas. The first area is the conceptualisation of culture from the viewpoints of anthropologists and sociologists while the second area is the understanding of culture in an organisational context thus covering discussions by organisational theorists, behavioural scientists and management experts. The third part will focus on a review of organisational culture in the public sector. The fourth part consists of three sections. The first section discusses the meaning of quality culture, the second section deliberates on the principles of a quality culture and interpretation of these principles as values while the last section discusses the assessment of quality culture commonly carried out.
2.1 Research Methodology

2.1.1 Data Collection Methods

Several methods of data collection were used for the study. These are:

i. Books, journals, magazines and periodicals which provided information on theories, concepts and models;

ii. Government documents, published and unpublished reports, speeches and working papers which provided information on government quality efforts as well as background information on the Department of Environment;

iii. Newspaper articles;

iv. Questionnaire survey; and

v. Internet for latest updates in the area of study.

The main method of data collection was through the use of questionnaires (as attached in the appendix).

The first step in the collection of data was seeking approval from the Director General of the department for the study to be conducted in his department. Permission was also sought for the distribution and collection of questionnaires through the official channel. This means that the questionnaires were distributed and collected on behalf of the researcher by the appropriate officers in the department responsible for such matters. This method of distribution and collection of questionnaires is preferred as it is deemed the best compromise between the more effective method of administering questionnaires personally to all respondents and the less effective method of mail questionnaires. The method of
personally administering questionnaires is not feasible in terms of time and cost considering that the survey covers the whole department including the 13 branches throughout the country. On the other hand, mail questionnaires (where respondents are asked to send questionnaires back by post) is not effective as from the researcher's own experience as a government servant, when officers and staff are asked to return the completed questionnaires to the researcher by mail in self-addressed envelopes, the chances of them doing so tend to be very low.

Upon receiving approval from the Director General for the survey to be conducted in his department and for the distribution and collection of questionnaires to be carried out through the official channel, sufficient copies of the questionnaire in both languages, English and Bahasa Malaysia, were brought to the department. A senior officer from the department was assigned to assist the researcher in the survey. The officer together with her assistant thenceforth provided invaluable assistance by distributing the questionnaires to all officers and staff of the department in the head office and the 13 branches at the state level. They also helped to gather completed questionnaires which were then handed over to the researcher at regular intervals. Anonymity was guaranteed as completed questionnaires were deposited at a central place in the office far away from the scrutiny of the officer and her assistant.

Initially, one month was allocated for the return of completed questionnaires. This was later extended to two months to allow more time for those who were busy with their work and did not have the time to complete the questionnaire earlier. At the end of that period, the total number of respondents amounted to 138 with only 28 from the head office. As a result, the researcher appealed to the department to encourage those who have not completed the questionnaires, especially from the head office, to do so. In response to that appeal, 23 more questionnaires were received out of which 8 were from the head office. With this, total respondents came to 161.
2.1.2 Respondents for the Study

The respondents for the study are all the officers and staff of the Department of Environment, Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment, at the head quarters in Kuala Lumpur as well as the branches throughout the country. The department has a total staff strength of 512 as at January 1 1995 which comprises of 116 officers in the managerial and professional group and 396 staff in the support group. Out of this total, 161 responded to the survey. This amounts to a response rate of 31.45 percent. Out of those who responded to the survey, 40 were from the managerial and professional group while 121 were from the support group. This means that the managerial and professional group makes up 24.8 percent of total respondents while the support group makes up 75.2 percent. This corresponds closely to the actual proportion of managerial and professional group to support group where the former makes up 22.7 percent of the total staff strength and the latter 77.3 percent. Thus we can say that the respondents of the survey are the personnel of the department in terms of post. A more detailed profile of the respondents is given in section 3.1.

2.1.3 Variables and Measurement

The variables measured pertain to three main aspects of a quality culture. The first aspect is employee perception of the extent to which a quality culture exists in the organisation. This is measured by obtaining respondents' opinion of whether they agree or disagree that the statements in the questionnaire describe their organisation. Those statements such as 'Your department believes that customers are very important' have all been worded to reflect the existence of different aspects of a quality culture. Essentially, they capture twelve quality principles which make up a quality culture and these are customer focus, quality through prevention, zero defect, process emphasis, quality leadership, training, innovation, employee participation, teamwork, recognition, performance measurement and continuous improvement. Two statements or items are used to measure each principle.
The Likert scale format is used where respondents are asked to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, are not sure, disagree or strongly disagree with each of the statements put forward to them. Each category of response is assigned a score which ranges from 1 for a response of 'strongly agree' to 5 for a response of 'strongly disagree'. Each respondent's mean score for each principle is obtained by summing up and averaging their scores for statements that measure that principle and their overall mean score for all the twelve quality principles is obtained by summing up and averaging the mean scores for all the principles. Based on the scores, the results show that a quality culture is either perceived to exist or not to exist in the organisation.

The second aspect measures the level of understanding of quality concepts. This is done by asking respondents to answer 'True' or 'False' to a variety of statements. Each concept is reflected in two or three statements and some are correct statements while others are incorrect statements. An example of a correct statement is 'The purpose of all work and all efforts to make improvements is to serve the customers better'. An example of an incorrect statement is 'Quality is a measure of how good the product is'. Each correct answer is given a score of 1 and an incorrect answer a score of 0. Scores are added up to show the total score for the understanding of each quality concept. Concepts which contain only two statements are standardised by multiplying them with 3/2. Based on the scores, understanding is classified as either high or low.

The third aspect measured is the extent to which quality principles are translated into action or put into practice by employees. This aspect is measured in the same way as perception but in this case, statements are phrased in the form of action, for example, 'I make it a point to identify my customers'. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which those statements reflect their own action. Based on the scores, the quality principles are classified either as put into practice or not put into practice.
In addition to these three main aspects, there are three implementation aspects which are analysed. These pertain to the degree of importance which respondents attach to factors contributing to the development of a quality culture, the importance of certain sources of information on quality aspects and factors which hinder the practice of quality principles. The relative importance of the factors which contribute to the emergence of a quality culture is determined by using an itemised rating scale. Respondents are asked to rank the importance of the factors on a scale of 0 to 10 in an ascending order of importance with 0 denoting 'very unimportant', 5 denoting 'neutral' and 10 denoting 'very important'. The factors include the following:

i. Customer focus  
ii. Quality through prevention  
iii. Zero defect  
iv. Process emphasis  
v. Quality leadership  
vi. Planning and implementation strategy  
vii. Structure  
viii. Training  
ix. Application of skills and knowledge  
x. Innovation  
xi. Employee participation  
xii. Teamwork  
xiii. Recognition  
xiv. Performance measurement  
xv. Continuous improvement

An example of such a statement is 'To have a quality culture, every individual in the organisation must be a contributor to quality'. The scores are added up and averaged to show the average rank for each factor.
The second implementation aspect pertains to the relative importance of eight sources of information on quality aspects. These sources are:

i. Development Administration Circulars;
ii. Courses, seminars, workshops, forums;
iii. Speeches and remarks;
iv. Directives and letters;
v. Books, journals, magazines, newsletter and newspapers;
vi. Meetings and discussions;
vii. Observation; and
viii. Exchange of ideas with colleagues.

Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which their knowledge on quality can be attributed to the eight sources listed. An example of such a statement reads 'My knowledge of quality and its implementation is mainly derived from the series of Development Administration Circulars issued by government through MAMPU'. The Likert scale which utilises the same categories of responses as mentioned earlier is used for measurement of this variable. The final scores are divided into two groups, one denoting that the source is important and the other unimportant.

The third implementation aspect pertains to the degree to which certain factors have hampered the practice of quality principles. Four factors have been identified as posing possible hindrance to the practice of quality principles. These are:

i. Lack of skills and knowledge;
ii. Lack of authority and power;
iii. Unclear role and responsibilities; and
iv. Impracticality of quality principles.
Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree that the factors listed have hampered their attempts at putting quality principles into practice. An example of such a statement is 'I have not implemented some of the quality principles mainly because I do not possess the skills and knowledge to do so'. The Likert scale of measurement is applied to this variable using the same categories of responses in the earlier instances. The scores are divided into two groups to denote factors which hinder practice and factors which do not hinder practice.

Last but not least, respondents are also asked to indicate those quality principles which are not practical and could not be implemented in their department. They are also requested to provide reasons for their responses.

2.1.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected from the questionnaires were edited, coded and categorised after which they were keyed into the computer. This was followed by processing of data using the SPSS/PC+ programme. Two modes of analyses were used - percentages derived from frequency distribution and the use of chi square test of contingency.

a. Percentage Mode of Analysis

The profile of respondents in percentage terms according to their six personal characteristics, namely sex, age, academic qualifications, place of work, post and length of service, is compiled from frequency distributions. Frequency distributions are also used to describe the following:

i. The perception of the existence of a quality culture in the organisation;

ii. The level of understanding of quality concepts;
iii. The extent of practice of quality principles;

iv. Relative importance of factors contributing to the emergence of a quality culture;

v. Relative importance of sources of information on quality aspects; and

vi. The extent to which certain factors hinder the practice of a quality culture.

b. Chi Square Mode of Analysis

The chi-square test at a 0.10 level of significance is used to analyse the significance of relationship between the following pairs of variables:

i. The perception and understanding of quality concepts;

ii. The understanding and practice of quality concepts;

iii. Sources of information on quality aspects perceived to be important and perception of the existence of a quality culture;

iv. Sources of information on quality aspects perceived to be important and understanding of quality concepts;

v. Sources of information on quality aspects perceived to be important and practice of quality principles;

vi. Factors which tend to hinder practice of a quality culture and perception of the culture; and
vii. Factors which tend to hinder practice of a quality culture and practice of the culture.

The study is also interested to find out whether personal characteristics have any influence on the level of understanding and practice of quality principles. Chi-square test is used to analyse the significance of relationship between the personal characteristics of sex, age, academic qualifications, place of work, post and length of service, and the aspects of understanding and practice of a quality culture.

Where the above tests show that the relationship is significant, cross-tabulations and percentages will be used to determine the nature of association. In respect of the relationship between sources of information on quality aspects and the three main aspects of a quality culture, the contingency coefficient will be used to compare the strength of association among the various sources to see which source is the most strongly related to each of the three aspects.

2.1.5 **Explanation of Key Concepts**

The following paragraphs provide a brief explanation of quality concepts and the beliefs of an organisation which has a quality culture:

a. **Customer Focus**

Customer focus is the cornerstone of a quality mind-set and it differentiates a quality from a non-quality organisation. Being customer-focused is to acknowledge the existence and importance of customers and the fact that they are the final arbiters of how good an organisation is. If in the past, organisations thought they knew best what to do and would only adhere to their own internal production standards, rules, regulations and procedures, now they have no choice but to listen to the voice of the customer if they want to remain in business. This saw a departure from a rule-driven approach to the adoption of a market-driven
approach. In government departments, the concept of 'customer' was deemed irrelevant in the past. They were of the view that in the absence of a profit motive, government departments certainly did not have customers. It is now universally accepted that there is no other way to define quality but as customer satisfaction wherein all improvement efforts have to be geared and aligned towards that goal. Consensus and acceptance of this reality constitutes a fundamental change in the work culture.

Core characteristics of such a culture include the willingness to serve customers and solve customer complaints, responsiveness to their needs and a deep sense of commitment to customer satisfaction. To quote Mahatma Gandhi who once said "A customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us; we are dependent on him. He is not an interruption on our work; he is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider of our business; he is part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him; he is doing us a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so."

b. Quality through Prevention

Quality through prevention is the system of quality that will ensure quality products and services. It is a simple concept based on the adage that 'prevention is better than cure'. In the past, quality was said to be possible only when there was rigorous inspection. Products were usually inspected at the end of the production process to determine whether they had conformed to specifications. Those that did not conform were separated and rejected. Since inspection can only be carried out randomly, many defective products can still be passed on to the unsuspecting customer. This method of ensuring quality through the detection of defects did nothing more than isolating the good from the bad, performing repairs and rework, regrading products or discarding defective products as scrap. Clearly, it involves additional cost in terms of money, manpower and materials and what's more, adds to stress for the worker.
A quality culture requires a preventive mind-set where quality has to be built into the system so that defects are prevented from occurring in the first instance. Quality is thus reflected not only in terms of the final output but by everyone's actions and decisions. It starts with having a good understanding of the requirements of customers and establishing quality standards for inputs and every activity that is carried out. Inspection is done by every one involved and this gives ownership of the process to every operator who then becomes responsible and accountable for what he accomplishes.

c. **Zero Defect**

Zero defect is the standard of performance adopted by quality organisations. An organisation that believes in zero defect as its standard of performance will not compromise on its objectives or targets. Another way of saying it is that it will not tolerate any deviations from standards that have been set. This is achieved by doing the job right the first time and every time. Subsumed within it is an abhorrence of wastage and a belief in proper time utilisation. More importantly, it implies that corrective action will be taken once deviation of standards is detected.

d. **Process Emphasis**

To be able to achieve quality goods and services calls for looking at all work as a process. This means work is organised around processes. This is a departure from the traditional way of organising work around functions. The process-based method of carrying out an organisation's operations promotes the supremacy of organisational interest over divisional interests. To emphasise the importance of processes means that processes are regularly reviewed, redesigned or reengineered to add greater value to customers. Where attention is focused on solving problems and improving systems and processes, time is not wasted in finding faults. This will promote more openness in identifying root causes of problems. An organisation which subscribes to a process orientation will make
sure that each task or activity adds value to the customer. Every member of the organisation is interested in knowing how systems work and will monitor them closely.

e. Quality Leadership

Leadership plays a very important role in a quality organisation. Good quality management starts from the top. Leaders must have a vision for the organisation followed by a clear mission statement which incorporates the organisation's goals and objectives. This is accompanied by the formulation of effective strategies to attain the objectives. Quality leadership includes the ability to view quality as a strategic variable, and to give support and commitment to quality. Leaders play a crucial role in championing the cause of quality and developing a quality culture. They must demonstrate their commitment and support for quality by putting in place systems that support a quality culture.

Leaders who give priority to quality also care about the welfare of their employees as they are well aware of the crucial role played by employees towards the creation of a quality organisation. As such, they will treat employees with dignity, respect and trust, giving them more responsibility for their own work and recognising their capability to contribute to the organisation. It also means providing employees with the knowledge and tools necessary for the job and removing obstacles that may hinder performance. Leaders thus assume the role of motivators, coaches, communicators and facilitators.

f. Training

Since quality involves doing things differently from what have been done before, quality improvement efforts certainly cannot be carried out without employees being provided with the necessary skills, knowledge and trust. In this regard, training is very important as it ensures greater competence, confidence and a common understanding of quality concepts. Training increases confidence and
skills of employees which enable them to act out their roles effectively. This will foster commitment towards quality goals. Training should be geared to equip the employee with basic statistical and problem-solving tools, interpersonal communication, public relations and grievance handling skills. Training is also important for empowerment to be constructive. In a quality organisation, training is regarded as an investment necessary for improving skills and knowledge and for personal development of employees rather than as an additional cost.

g. **Innovation**

An organisation that is customer-focused cannot avoid but practise a culture of innovation and creativity in order to keep up with the changing demands of the customer and the increasing competitiveness of the environment. Innovation is achieved by constantly reviewing work processes and systems and undertaking research and development to produce better ways of doing things, find new applications for existing methods or produce new products. An innovative organisation believes that people can be creative if they are encouraged to do so. It therefore encourages experimentation for the sake of knowledge acquisition. It is open and receptive to new information. Mistakes are tolerated as part of the learning process.

h. **Employee Participation**

To succeed as a quality organisation requires total employee participation and involvement. Quality is not the responsibility of any one department or section but is the joint responsibility of every member of the organisation. This is understood and accepted by those in an environment that practises a quality culture. Employee participation ensures that employees take responsibility for quality and at the same time makes their work more meaningful. An organisation which encourages employee participation ensures that employees are able and willing to participate in matters that involve them and their work. A scenario emerges where employees feel free to give their ideas and suggestions on how to
solve problems and they take part in setting work targets, performance standards and organisational objectives. For employee participation to be effective, management has to be willing to consider solutions proposed by work teams for possible implementation. Employee participation alters the supervisor-subordinate relationship from one of dependency, fear and control to one of interdependency, trust and mutual commitment.

i. **Teamwork**

Quality improvement relies on teamwork and the synergy it produces. Every member of the organisation sees himself as part of a team sharing a common goal. With good team spirit, there is greater cooperation and a feeling of shared responsibility. There is more openness and willingness to share information. Problems are solved more easily and matters resolved without hassle. In addition, management should encourage the formation of work groups such as project teams, quality control circles, work improvement teams or quality improvement teams when the need arises. This fosters mutual respect and trust, cooperation and a feeling of harmony in the organisation. Good team spirit provides the conducive environment necessary for a quality culture to emerge.

j. **Recognition**

When people are recognised for their contribution, they feel a sense of pride in their work. Recognition is a potent form of incentive and motivation that reinforces positive behaviour. It also sends clear messages throughout the organisation regarding the acceptable behavioural norm and orientations. However management should ensure that the system of recognition instituted is one that is seen as fair and just from the perspective of the employees; otherwise, it will become a demoralising factor instead. Organisations which believe in the benefits of recognition will give due recognition to those who have contributed
towards the improvement of quality and succeeded in serving the needs of the customers. Achievements whether big or small are duly recognised as part of the overall efforts towards continuous improvement.

k. **Performance Measurement**

The commitment to produce quality outputs must be supported by a practice of measuring not only final outputs but more importantly processes to ascertain whether there is adherence to quality standards. This is also known as managing for results, the net effect of which is greater accountability. It also forms the basis for problem solving and quality improvement. Feedback must be given to those involved on how their processes are performing. Performance measurement has to be routinised as an important practice of quality management. Performance-driven focus means there is a genuine concern for not just how well the final output has conformed to standards but also the extent to which the means and processes of achieving that outcome have conformed to standards. In addition to this, customer feedback and the level of customer satisfaction are important information upon which sound decisions are made.

l. **Continuous Improvement**

There is no end to the pursuit of quality as quality standards have to be revised from time to time in response to changing customer needs. Therefore there must be commitment to a process of continuous improvement to sustain quality over time. There is no place for complacency and acceptance of the status quo. This is a useful guiding principle for staying ahead of competitors. An organisation that believes in continuous improvement accepts that there is always room for improvement and a better way of doing things. Management accepts and regards criticisms of the status quo and the ways things are done as opportunities for making improvements. Continuous improvement can be in the form of 'quantum leaps' such as technological innovations or small incremental improvements that can be carried out on a daily basis.
2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Introduction

Organisational culture is a useful concept in understanding the human dimension of organisations and how they adapt to the dictates of a changing environment. It also promotes understanding of the causes of human behaviour in organisations and has therefore gained the attention of organisational theorists, behavioural scientists and management experts. A cursory glance at the contents of any book or article boasting of the state-of-the-art techniques of management or extolling the virtues of effective leadership will point to this growing interest in the study of organisational culture. It is widely acknowledged that organisational culture (sometimes used interchangeably with 'corporate culture' although the former suggests a more generic term) is a critical determinant of organisational behaviour and hence plays an important role in influencing the performance of the organisation. For example, Peters and Waterman Jr. (1982) in their much acclaimed book, *In Search Of Excellence* have highlighted cultural traits or shared values as the single most important factor contributing to the success of 43 American companies that they studied.²

Deal and Kennedy (1982) also arrived at similar conclusions after compiling profiles of 80 organisations.³ They also discovered that culture consists of five elements, namely, the business environment, values, heroes, rites and rituals, and cultural network. The business environment is said to exert the most influence on culture while values which comprise the basic concepts and beliefs of an organisation, form the core of culture. Heroes provide the role models for employees, rites and rituals are the daily routines in the organisation, while a cultural network is the means through which values and stories are communicated throughout the organisation.
A study of more than 200 companies conducted by Kotter and Heskett (1992) also showed that culture does indeed have a strong effect on organisational performance. Merron (1994) puts culture in perspective when he talks of the need to have organisational alignment. According to him, an organisation possesses five major aspects, namely purpose, objectives, strategy, structure and culture. When these five aspects are aligned, an organisation is said to be moving in the proper direction. Though culture is the outcome of the first four aspects of purpose, objectives, strategy and structure, it is also by far the most important as it determines the extent to which those aspects are formulated.

"Culture" has in fact been the main focus of a new school of management called management by values or management by culture which has started to become popular in the 1990s. It is said to be the second most advanced level of organisational development management after such popular management concepts like management by objectives (MBO) and total quality management (TQM) and is one step away from management by automation which is the highest level of organisational development management. A value or culture-driven enterprise is one that recognises people and their characteristics as the most important driving force behind its success.

Studies on culture have also identified the important role played by leadership in shaping the culture of an organisation. In fact, there is a general consensus that corporate values are created by founders and leaders who transmit those values to other members of the organisation. Interest in the study of organisational culture started to be noticeable in the 1980s. It was then observed that every organisation possessed its own unique culture which gave the organisation its distinct character. However, attempts at explaining culture have shown that culture is by no means a straightforward or simple concept. For a start, culture has been given various descriptions and definitions. It has been described as being complex, nebulous, confusing, omnibus and even elusive. This makes a study on culture the more challenging and rewarding.
Students and practitioners of modern management theory will remember that not so long ago, strategy was deemed the key to the achievement of organisational goals. Now, with the growing emphasis on culture, it is generally accepted that strategy alone is not sufficient to guarantee success. If members of the organisation do not share the aspirations of the organisation, there would not be commitment to organisational goals. Culture supports strategy and in this respect, it is deemed vital for culture to be aligned to strategy to achieve balance and synchronisation that will steer the organisation towards the new mind-set necessary for the attainment of the vision.

Towards the end of the 1980s right up to the present moment, it was found that winning strategies of organisations which have succeeded in performing better than their competitors were those that have been leveraged on continuous quality improvement and customer satisfaction. Following the earlier argument that organisations of the 1990s have to maintain the link between strategy and culture, and the preceding statement that a quality-based strategy provides the winning edge, it is therefore logical to state categorically that organisational culture has become predominantly quality-oriented. Proof of this is in the numerous success stories that we read about which told of persistent efforts at nurturing a culture where quality is the driving force and customer satisfaction the major concern and preoccupation. We can therefore say that a good organisational culture is certainly one that has quality as its focal point and in this respect, a quality culture is really an organisational culture tailored to suit the demands of the 1990s as well as that of the next decade.

In addition to the growing interest in organisational culture, there has also been a growing interest in cross-cultural or multicultural studies which focus on the various cultural backgrounds of organisations in terms of race, religion, language etc. This interest can be traced to the rise of multinational corporations whose operations transcend national boundaries thus marking the imminent advent of globalisation. This interest also coincided with Japan's rise as a world economic superpower during the late 1970s. Management writers became interested in
establishing the differences between the Japanese management style and that of
the rest of the world and concurred that fundamentally, they are due to cultural
traits. Subsequently, the management of cultural differences or multicultural
diversity became a popular topical issue.

The ensuing sections will not cover the subject of multiculturalism but will
confine itself to organisational culture, first in its general sense and then as culture
directed toward the marketplace or what we call a quality culture.

2.2.2  Concept of Culture

Before discussing organisational culture in particular, it is pertinent to look
at the concept of culture from the perspective of the founder-thinkers of culture
namely the anthropologists and sociologists. Some quarters defined culture as
civilisation, personal attainments and the arts. These are mainly the views of
philosophers and literary proponents. However, anthropologists and sociologists
who have exercised a traditional domain over the subject of culture, defined culture
differently. Anthropologists study the general behaviour of a society and factors
which cause that behaviour, the latter being referred to as culture (Kluckhohn,
1962). As defined by Honigmann (1963) which also coincides with the common
understanding of culture today, culture is "a way of life belonging to a designated
aggregate of people." Traditionally, anthropologists are known for using
participant-observation to study the culture of whole communities or societies from
various parts of the world. They describe the features of the culture and explain
them in terms of their purpose and meaning and the functions they perform.
Meanwhile sociologists would usually employ the interview technique and empirical
data to study in greater depth the behavioural systems of parts within society. For
example, they may study the institution of marriage and may also concentrate on
specific social problems.
To dwell further on the concept of culture from the anthropologists' viewpoints, culture is said to include learned behaviour shared by a group of people which are passed from generation to generation or from some members of a group to members of other groups and which provide solutions to problems (Kluckhohn, 1962). It tells people how to behave, act and react in specific situations and helps people to predict behaviour. However, Kluckhohn pointed out that culture should not be mistaken with the act itself (behaviour) or the artifacts (products of behaviour). It is more accurate to view culture as "a way of thinking, feeling, believing" which is in fact "the patterns for doing certain things in certain ways, not the doing of them." In other words, what Kluckhohn was saying is that the meanings and underlying assumptions of behaviour is more important to the understanding of culture than the behaviour itself.

Honigmann (1954) divided culture into overt and covert culture. Overt culture refers to observable actions and material things while covert culture refers to ideas and feelings which are not directly observable. In 1963, Honigmann summed up culture as consisting of artifacts and activities, ideas and feelings which are manifested in covert and overt behaviour. To understand culture more deeply, he suggested that it is important to know the purpose and underlying meanings of these artifacts or behaviour. Besides that, it is also important to understand the assumptions for the display of such artifacts or behaviour. Honigmann also likened culture to an iceberg where the part that can be seen is the overt culture or manifest and the part that is submerged and cannot be seen is the covert culture or ideal. Overt culture includes things such as greetings, feasts, houses and ornaments while covert culture includes the motives people have for their actions, the meanings attached to those actions and artifacts, the way they understand the world and their ideals. When manifest or the way people behave in their day-to-day life does not coincide with the ideal or their values and feelings of how they should behave, a situation of contradiction may arise.
Another well known anthropologist, Margaret Mead (1955) defined culture as "a body of learned behaviour, a collection of beliefs, habits, practices and traditions shared by a group of people (a society) and successively learned by new members who enter the society."\(^{13}\)

LeVine (1973) defined culture as "an organized body of rules concerning the ways in which individuals in a population should communicate with one another, think about themselves and their environments, and behave toward one another and toward objects in their environments."\(^{14}\) These rules are recognised by all and serve to reduce the degree of variation in behavioural patterns, beliefs and values.

To summarise the viewpoints put forward by anthropologists and sociologists, it can be concluded that by and large, they looked at two aspects of culture i.e. the what of culture or its manifestations as observable behaviour and artifacts, and the why of culture or the meanings, assumptions and purposes for those manifestations.

Back in 1956, Juran had suggested that managers apply anthropologists' concept of culture to business organisations.\(^{15}\) Literature review on organisational culture shows that this has in fact taken place. Organisational theorists have adopted the concept of culture developed by anthropologists and sociologists when trying to explain human behaviour in the organisational context. However, the definitions of culture articulated by organisational theorists are so varied that there appears to be no consensus. As Beilharz (1994) puts it, "there is no generally accepted definition of culture in an organization."\(^{16}\) As criticised by Meek (1994), some social theorists use culture to "embrace all that is human within the organization."\(^{17}\)

Among the various definitions of organisational culture is that forwarded by Oakland (1993) where organisational culture is said to be "beliefs that pervade the organization about how business should be conducted, and how employees should behave and should be treated."\(^{18}\) On the other hand, Watson (1994) defined
organisational culture as "a set of meanings to be shared by all members of the organization which will define what is good and bad, right and wrong and what are the appropriate ways for members of the organization to think and behave." Organisational culture has also been described as "a mental programming, the building up of a belief system which is all the more powerful because it is built up unconsciously." Others like Elashmawi and Harris (1993) defined organisational culture as "the behavioral norms that a group of people have agreed on to survive or coexist." Yet others like Edvardsson, (1994) and Horovitz and Panak, (1993) defined organisational culture as "a form of ideology within the organization" and "the philosophy of the company, the way in which individuals communicate with one another and the way in which they work together." A broader definition was proposed by Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert Jr., 1995 who defined organisational culture as "a complex mixture of assumptions, behaviors, stories, myths, metaphors, and other ideas that fit together to define what it means to work in a particular organization."

In addition, some understood organisational culture to be in the unwritten form while others understood it to be both written and unwritten. Some understood it to be unconscious, implicit, informal or covert while others understood it to be both. For example, Nutley and Osborne (1994) defined organisational culture as "the unwritten values and meanings" while Harris and Moran (1979) felt that there are aspects of an organization's culture that are "formal, explicit and overt," just as there are dimensions that are "informal, implicit, and covert." Many also agreed with Goetsch and Davis (1995) who said that organisational culture is a nonverbal way of saying "this is how we do things here."

Edgar Schein (1985) synthesised the works of anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists to present a very comprehensive account of organisational culture. His ideas are among the most quoted by behavioural scientists. Schein divided organisational culture into three levels but only considered the third level as the "essence" of culture while the other two levels are manifestations or surface levels of the culture. The first level of culture is made up of artifacts and is the
most visible level of the culture. It includes the physical and social environment such as structures, physical lay-out, dress code and behavioural patterns. This is not the "true" culture as one cannot be sure whether the artifacts in question reflect culture. For example, behavioural regularities could be due to the influence of the environment rather than culture. The second level of culture is made up of values. Initially, it is usually the leader's espoused values which influence the choice of solutions to problems. Espoused values refer to management ideology or philosophy such as those embodied in the organisation's mission statement, vision and objectives but may not necessarily be the same as the values of members of the organisation. However once the solution works and the group recognises it, the value is transformed into a belief, and ultimately an assumption. Basic underlying assumptions form the third level of culture. Basic assumptions are values which have been so well internalised that they are taken for granted and manifested unconsciously in behaviours of employees. They are the fundamental beliefs behind all decisions and actions.

Like Schein, others have also based their classification of organisational culture on the perspective adopted by anthropologists. For example, Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert Jr. (1995) compares organisational culture to an iceberg after adapting the ideas of Herman (1984). However, as we can see from the foregoing paragraphs, the analogy of culture to an iceberg was first expounded by Honigmann (1963). The overt part of an organisation's culture is said to comprise official policies, goals, technology, structure and resources while the covert part is said to comprise of perceptions, attitudes, feelings and values.

Organisational theorists and behavioural scientists did not stop at defining culture. They proceeded to develop types of culture that can be used to describe organisations. For example, Likert classified culture into four types based on six variables. These are the traditional, classical, democratic and participative type of culture and the six variables include leadership, motivation, communication, decisions, goals and control. Deal and Kennedy (1982) also developed an organisational culture model called the Corporate Tribes Model of Organisational
Culture. This model categorised culture into four types i.e. the tough-guy/macho, work hard/play hard, bet-your-company and process type according to the degree of risk associated with the business such as amount of investment required and the speed of feedback from the environment. The tough-guy/macho type involves high risk and quick feedback, the work hard/play hard type involves low risk and quick feedback, the bet-your-company type involves high risk and slow feedback while the process type involves low risk and slow feedback. Government agencies are said to be characterised by the process type of organisational culture which emphasises adherence to rules, regulations and procedures.

Poupart and Hobbs presented five types of organisational culture. These are the father-founder culture, the bureaucratic culture, the participative culture, the professional culture and the managerial-entrepreneurial culture. In the father-founder culture, indicators of success vary according to founders of the respective business concerns. However, the organisation tends to be characterised by flexibility and adaptability. The bureaucratic culture aims for cost efficiency and is procedure-driven. It is characterised by a sense of order, predictability and rationality. The participative culture strives to achieve teamwork, cooperation and loyalty. Involvement gives rise to greater employee commitment and motivation. The professional culture aims to build expertise. The managerial-entrepreneurial culture interprets success as customer satisfaction and product innovation. Thus it is concerned with providing quality product and service.

Each of the typologies mentioned above serve as "a heuristic and sensitizing device" to help researchers focus their attention on behaviors and occurrences and to look out for commonalities and differences. They also serve as a yardstick for the measurement of conformance to desired cultural traits.

Some organisational theorists also talk of macro and micro-cultures. A macro-culture refers to the culture of the society at large or the environment while a micro-culture refers to culture of the units that make up society such as an organisation. Others talk of subcultures which are those perceived by employees
as opposed to what may be stated by top-level management. Sometimes we hear of certain sections, divisions or professions in an organisation practising their own sub-cultures which can be very different from the organisational culture.

A major difference between anthropologists and sociologists on one hand, and organisational and industrial psychologists on the other in their approach towards the study of culture is that the former do not try to change culture of the societies they studied while the latter go one step further in their research. For the organisational and industrial psychologists, a study on organisational study is never really complete without touching on the subject of culture change and how to manage this change successfully. Managing culture is in fact one of the major challenges facing managers today.

2.2.3 Organisational Culture in the Public Sector

It has been said that governments in general have not been able to conceptualise culture which is most appropriate for public sector organisations. Uttley and Hooper (1993) said that theoretically, the cultures of public sector bureaucracies differ from that of private firms and these differences are mainly in terms of organisational objectives, performance assessment and relationship with the customer.\(^3\) Public bureaucracies are said to be "inward-looking" where objectives, performance indicators and customer needs are all determined by the organisation, not by customer response while private firms are said to be customer-driven or "outward-looking".

Handy (1981) identified four types of organisational culture that can be used to describe a public organisation.\(^3\) These are the role culture, the task culture, the power culture and the personal culture. The role culture is deemed to characterise the traditional bureaucratic entity entrusted with various roles which is governed strictly by procedures, rules and regulations. The task culture emphasises performance and achievement of objectives and encourage flexibility of resource mobilisation through teams and work groups. The power culture aims to fulfil the
objectives of leaders and requires loyalty to leaders. The personal culture which can be called the professional culture promotes professionalism where the organisation is no longer seen as a source of power but as a facilitator to serve the needs of the public.

In reality, there is no shortage of information on the values and ethics that should be imbued in every civil servant. Those values and ethics that are often mentioned include greater accountability, integrity, professionalism, efficiency and effectiveness. In fact, many countries have embarked seriously on public sector reforms to improve efficiency and effectiveness. These reforms were largely driven by economic and political considerations, resulting in the adoption of a market approach. Countries which have implemented major administrative reforms include Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Australia introduced major reforms since the 1980s which have been documented in the report by the Task Force on Management Improvement, The Australian Public Service Reformed: an Evaluation of a Decade of Management Reform. These reforms saw greater decentralisation of authority, power and responsibility, and greater accountability. They also saw a departure from procedures to principles, and from task-oriented activities to results. Ongoing reforms are to be based on meeting customer needs and ensuring service quality, strong leadership and a culture of continuous improvement. Canada's public service reforms were grouped into two phases. The first phase spanned the period from the early 1980s to the early 1990s where most of the reforms were captured in Public Service 2000. The second phase started in 1993 with a major restructuring exercise of government agencies followed by the announcement of the Program Review in the Federal 1994 budget. Several principles were observed in redefining the role of government and modernising the Canadian Public Service - ensuring that reforms are carried out on a continuous basis, the changing needs
of customers form the basis of programme and service delivery, and values of the Public Service be preserved (a public service that is non-partisan and professional and imbued with integrity and service to the people).

In the case of New Zealand, the guiding principles of its reform process revolved around a concern for greater efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and customer satisfaction where the quality, quantity and cost of state activities should be determined by the purchaser’s requirements rather than the producer’s preferences. These principles were reflected in three pieces of legislation - the State Owned Enterprises Act 1986, the State Sector Act 1988 and the Public Finance Act 1989. Among the reforms introduced in the United Kingdom were the Next Step initiative of 1987 where managers were envisaged to exercise greater control over their work and where authority and responsibility are clear. Managers were also expected to be eager to maximise results and work with a sense of urgency to improve their service. Besides this, there was the Citizen’s Charter initiative of 1991 which aims to improve public services in the 1990s by giving people more choice and informing them what kind of service to expect. Meanwhile, the United States of America undertook a National Performance Review in 1993 to change the culture of the federal government to one that is devoted to serving its customers, empowering its employees and fostering excellence. This is achieved through a clear sense of mission, delegation of authority and responsibility, replacing regulations with incentives, budget-based outcomes and making customer satisfaction the measure of success.

Where in the past, public sector organisations were dominated by structural and procedural aspects, there has since been a growing awareness of the importance of cultural variables that take into cognizance effective workforce utilisation and equity. The need to promote commitment, competence and recognition has been duly acknowledged. Greater emphasis has thus been placed on incentives, participation, articulation of values, equity and ethics. David Osborne and Ted Gaebler (1993) was said to provide the blueprint for the American public sector when they talked of reinventing government to make it,
among others, more competitive, mission-driven, customer-driven, results-driven and market-oriented.

2.2.4 Concept of Quality Culture

a. Definition

The purpose of this section is to present a literature review of quality culture in terms of how it has been defined and explained. In this respect, the literature review is also conducted with the hope of identifying the main components of quality culture and the types of data collection instruments. At the outset, it can be gathered that the concept of quality culture, sometimes popularly known as total quality culture or simply TQM culture, is gaining global attention. This is caused primarily with the advent of total quality management (TQM) as the new management technology. TQM which emphasises customer satisfaction has been referred to as an organisational transformation strategy employing process improvement and worker self-management to attain quality goals. Subsumed in this is the transformation to a TQM culture.

Advocates of a quality culture are of the view that approaches and techniques alone do not guarantee quality improvement. What is more fundamental is the need for organisations to cultivate a quality culture. Many organisations have not been able to sustain their quality improvement efforts because the quality culture of the organisation has not been truly internalised. As Thomas (1992) noted, most literature on quality management tend to focus on the technical and procedural aspects without giving sufficient attention to the crucial human dimension of quality. By the human dimension of quality is meant "the assumptions, norms and practices of everyday organizational life."

In 1910, Deming developed a quality philosophy that was based on his assumption that the American people were imbued with a high level of integrity, hard work, sincerity and decency. He saw quality as a way of life. Based on
Deming’s directions, the Japanese embarked on the quality movement in 1950 and by 1968 began to use TQC as a company-wide strategy where everyone in the organisation was made responsible for quality control. This was clearly contrary to what TQC was supposed to be when it was first proposed by Feigenbaum in 1961. Deming’s broader quality philosophy requires a new organisational culture. A generation later, Philip Crosby emerged as another quality champion who is especially noted for his advocacy of a quality culture. Drawing from his experience as Vice President of the ITT Corporation where he successfully implemented quality management, Crosby calls for a "cultural revolution" to achieve quality. He maintained that "fire-fighting" must be replaced with defect prevention, quality must be recognised as the most important goal, the habit of doing things right the first time must be made a routine and the entire organisation must be involved in the effort.

Moller talks of the need for everyone in an organisation to undergo a "major cultural adjustment" if the provision of quality service to customers is the primary objective of the organisation. This is based on his conviction that it is people who are ultimately responsible for producing those goods and services. Quality culture has been given various definitions. Berry (1991) described a total quality culture as "an attitude based on trust, teamwork, objective problem solving, and shared accountability." Quality culture has also been described as the "development of a work culture that internalises the customer relationship as the only means of achieving the combined objectives of quality and business success" (Tuckman). Simply worded, a quality culture also means a culture made up of quality values and supported by tools like innovation, participation, competition, leadership and training (Hiam, 1992). In a general sense, it has also been called a "quality-supportive organizational culture" (Swiss, 1992). It is also quite commonly understood to be a culture where "quality can become a way of doing business."

A quality culture is also said to involve a certain type of behaviour including treating suppliers as customers, minimising wastage, and people converse using the same quality language (Flood, 1993). Besides this, it is also said to comprise
cultural characteristics such as open communications, empowerment, prevention, customer focus, conformance, continuous change and improvement, cooperative relations and problem solving (Pike and Barnes, 1994). One of the more comprehensive definitions was given by Ovretveit (1992) who said that "a quality culture is the context within which staff use the tools and systems of quality - it is the culture which sustains the motivation and interest to use the new techniques and which sets the norms for how staff interact with external and internal customers."

It can be summed up from the foregoing that a quality culture is a specific organisational culture of an organisation which endeavours to produce quality goods and services. In other words, a quality culture can also refer to the core values of a quality-conscious organisation. Similarly, it would not be wrong if a quality culture is taken to mean an organisational culture that is oriented towards the marketplace and has as its priority customer satisfaction. Clearly, a quality culture includes attitudes and commitment towards quality and customers, the use of quality concepts and methods and a sense of caring for employees.

Different quality experts recommend different types of quality culture for organisations. However, as Saraph and Sebastian put it aptly, the type of quality culture that is suitable for an organisation will depend on the organisation's environment and factors such as organisational size, technology and competition. Nevertheless, they observed that there is a set of universal quality values that are basic to any organisation wishing to improve quality. They grouped these values under four categories, namely, management, employee, supplier-related and customer-related values.

According to Johnson (1993), a quality culture comprises of ten characteristics which include top-down leadership, vision, customer focus, employee well-being, performance system, rewards system, communication system, roles and relationship, structure and teamwork. Troy and Schein (1993) talked about a service quality culture as a new way of perceiving competitiveness,
relationship with customers and suppliers, interaction between managers and workers, wastage, defects, and work.\textsuperscript{58} Quality values that emerged from this culture revolve around customer primacy, total commitment, unacceptability of error, employee empowerment, participative management and process improvement. Schmidt (1992) found the description of quality culture made by the Federal Quality Institute to be very helpful as it was also discussed in comparison with traditional management culture.\textsuperscript{59} According to that description, a quality culture consists of the following elements: a flatter and more flexible organisational structure, continuous improvement of systems and processes, supervisors as coaches and facilitators, mutual trust between supervisors and subordinates, teamwork, training, customer focus and decisions based on facts.

Coming back to the views of the three very renowned quality experts i.e. Deming, Juran and Crosby, they concurred that to have effective quality management, organisational culture must focus on quality. Central to this focus are principles, among which are top management commitment, customer orientation, education, training, teamwork, measurement, problem-solving and continuous improvement. All three stressed that management actions are critical in making a quality-focused culture a reality and the quest for quality a success.

Based on the common understanding of what a quality culture is, this research study will define it as a shared value system faithfully believed in and adhered to by members of an organisation which has at its core customer satisfaction and employee welfare. This shared value system will foster positive feelings of personal effectiveness among members of the organisation. It will give them a corporate identity and bind them together in a sense of unity and help them identify with the goals of the organisation thus giving rise to greater cooperation, commitment and loyalty to the organisation. What emerge will be employees who are self-managed and self-motivated. In fact, values that focus on the welfare of employees, quality service and innovation have been described by many corporations as their foundation of success.
The concept of culture as explained by Schein (1985) can be used to describe a quality culture. Schein's first two levels of culture correspond with the physical implementation of TQM. For example, TQM requires the establishment of a Steering Committee on Quality, Quality Task Force, Quality Control Circles and other types of work improvement teams. These would constitute artifacts of a quality culture. TQM also requires the formulation of a mission statement, vision, quality policy, quality slogans, and Client's Charter; use of flow charts and suggestion schemes. These would be the espoused values of a quality culture. Schein's third level of culture when extended to a quality culture refers to the quality values that have been internalised in employees causing them to be quality-conscious in conducting their everyday life in the organisation. Thus, one can discern a basic difference between TQM and a quality culture. Implementation of TQM constitutes the artifacts and espoused quality values and may not necessarily imply the existence of a quality culture. A quality culture will prevail if and when the underlying values and principles of quality are practised by the majority of members of an organisation. It is manifested in the way things actually are as opposed to the way things ought to be.

b. Quality Principles and Interpretation As Values

In order to determine what values constitute a quality culture, one has to first identify the main principles of quality. These quality principles will then be interpreted in terms of values. These values will in turn add up to become the quality culture of the organisation. Though various quality proponents have given various answers as to what constitute the principles of quality as discussed in the section above, there is no substantive differences among the various versions. As mentioned earlier, Development Administration Circular No. 1 of 1992 has recognised seven underlying principles of TQM. The study expanded on these principles and included a few other core concepts of quality to arrive at 12 major quality principles. The 12 quality principles thus identified include the following:
Customer focus
* Quality through prevention
* Zero defect
* Process emphasis
* Quality leadership
* Training
* Innovation
* Employee participation
* Teamwork
* Recognition
* Performance measurement
* Continuous improvement

Based on these quality principles, some of the values that emerge include: the willingness to serve customers hence the determination to find out their requirements and expectations and to solicit customer complaints; the abhorrence of waste and a commitment to do it right the first time and hence a preventive mindset. Other values include respect for the individual and hence empowerment of employees. A more comprehensive description is tabled in the following chapter on Research Methodology.

c. Assessment of Organisational Culture

Literature regarding organisational culture showed that very often consultants were engaged to assess organisational culture within the framework of organisational development (OD). They first observe the organisation's physical aspects, managerial ideology, overt behaviour; then interview employees; and finally identify jointly with employees the underlying principles in order to construct as accurately as possible a picture of the organisational culture. For example, the researcher observes cultural artifacts such as dress codes and conversation style and then make respondents think and provide reasons for the cultural artifacts such as why do they dressed in a certain way. Discussions are then held to probe
and unravel shared underlying assumptions. Sometimes OD change agents use action research to find out what aspects of the organisational culture need to be changed and what assistance the organisation needs to make those changes. In action research, a mixture of methods are used including observation, personal interviews, research into documents and records, questionnaires, participation, feedback of data to organisation members, exploration of data by organisation members, planning of appropriate action and implementation of appropriate action.

Sadgrove (1995) recommended the use of self-assessment quizzes to assess the quality culture at one's work place. Such quizzes when carried out at regular intervals such as twice yearly can help to ascertain the degree to which a quality culture exists at the work place.

It has also been reported that quality culture can be assessed by measuring the extent to which an organisation's systems, structure, strategy, staffing and skills support the central quality values. If the quality values of customer focus, process management and continuous improvement are reflected in these supporting elements, one can conclude that a quality culture prevails in the organisation. What such an assessment is really seeking is the prevalence of practices that are supportive of a quality culture.

Crosby (1979) devised a questionnaire consisting of "true/false" questions to assess employees' thinking on quality. Deal and Kennedy (1982) also provided a framework consisting of nine variables which can be used by any organisation to diagnose its culture. These variables include such aspects as the physical environment of the organisation, espoused values, the way customers are treated, the way office time is spent, employees' views, career advancement, contents of discussions, anecdotes and stories.

Those who defined organisational culture as meanings attached to events will study culture by using critical Incident analysis and by examining stories and myths that are told in the organisation. For example, Saal (1995) felt that the
predominant approach to studying culture is to examine stories and myths that are
told in the organisation.84

The use of checklists is also one of the methods devised to assess a quality
culture. The organisation can check against the list of variables that are deemed
representative of a quality culture to determine the extent to which its culture can
be described as a quality culture. Some organisations have used the culture gap
approach to ascertain whether there is a gap between its existing culture and the
desired culture and to rectify the gap.

O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991) devised the Organisational Culture
Profile (OCP) which consists of 54 value statements to assess the congruence
between employees' values and organisation's values.65 Respondents were asked
to answer the extent to which each of these statements is desirable as an
organisational value.

The survey instrument used by Bounds and Dewhirst consists of a
questionnaire that measures three cultural dimensions of a quality-driven
organisation.66 These dimensions are individual managerial values, organisational
culture and organisational management systems. The first dimension measures
competence and role perception, the second dimension measures values that
support a customer value strategy while the third dimension measures the authority
structure and information systems of the organisation.

After taking into consideration the various survey methods that have been
used to assess organisational culture and particularly quality culture, this study will
opt for the use of a questionnaire to find out the perception of organisational
culture, actual culture and the gap between the two. Since the aim of the study
requires respondents to be absolutely honest especially in indicating the extent to
which they actually put into practice quality values, the questionnaire technique
which ensures anonymity of respondents is deemed to be the most appropriate.
Other methods which do not guarantee anonymity may result in guarded answers.
NOTES


12. Ibid., p. 318.


44. Newt Gingrich, "Renewing American Civilization, Pillar Five: Quality as Defined by Deming" in *Quality Progress*, December 1995, p. 27.


