CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee perception of the existence of a quality culture in the organisation can be used as a measure of management commitment towards the inculcation of a quality culture. As such, it is important to the organisation that its employees perceive a quality culture to exist in the organisation. When employees are able to perceive the existence of a quality culture in the organisation, it means that they are aware of the various quality efforts undertaken by management. The creation of such awareness should therefore be one of the main thrusts of management in its efforts to develop an organisational culture that emphasises quality principles. Besides creating awareness, management has to ensure that employees understand the various quality concepts being adopted. A thorough understanding of quality concepts including the underlying philosophy and rationale for their introduction, and the essence of each of the concepts is important to ensure correct practice of the concepts. Finally, being aware of and able to understand the quality concepts are of no use to the organisation if the individuals do not put the concepts into practice. When employees practise quality concepts as a way of life, an organisation can then claim that a quality culture is truly in place.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the research findings according to the explanatory structure stated above and at the same time address the objectives of the study specified in Chapter One. It will thus endeavour to identify areas for improvement and make recommendations for the development of a quality culture. Since the respondents surveyed are representative of the civil service in terms of four characteristics - sex, academic qualifications, post and place of work - out of the six personal characteristics surveyed, the research findings can be extrapolated to the civil service.
6.1 Summary of Findings

This section will summarise the research findings and will attempt to highlight the organisation's strengths and weaknesses in terms of employee perception of the existence of a quality culture, the level of understanding of quality concepts and the extent of practice of a quality culture. The study has also captured respondents' opinion with regard to some of the pertinent implementation issues which will be used to suggest recommendations to problems highlighted by the study. These pertain to those factors which they view as important for the emergence of a quality culture, sources which they rely upon to give them information on quality aspects, and factors that have hampered their attempts at practising quality principles.

6.1.1 Perception of Existence of Quality Aspects

Research findings indicate that from the employees' viewpoint, eight out of the twelve aspects which make up a quality culture are perceived to exist in the organisation while the other four aspects are perceived to be non-existent. Those aspects which are perceived to exist in the organisation and the percentage of respondents who have that perception are customer focus (89 percent), quality through prevention (70 percent), zero defect (78 percent), process emphasis (79 percent), training (59 percent), employee participation (69 percent), teamwork (91 percent) and continuous improvement (78 percent). It can be seen that the aspects of teamwork and customer focus are exceptionally well perceived to exist in the organisation. Those aspects which are perceived to be non-existent and the percentage of respondents who have that perception are quality leadership (37 percent), innovation (47 percent), recognition (40 percent) and performance measurement (35 percent). It can be seen that quality leadership and performance measurement are the two least perceived aspects. Thus, these four quality aspects of innovation, recognition, quality leadership and performance measurement present potential areas for improvement.
6.1.2 Understanding of Quality Concepts

In terms of understanding of quality concepts, research findings show that employees in the organisation have a high level of understanding of six quality concepts and a low level of understanding of the other six concepts. Those concepts where the level of understanding is high and the percentage of respondents with that high understanding are performance measurement (98 percent), quality leadership (94 percent), training (89 percent), teamwork (88 percent), process emphasis (79 percent) and customer focus (62 percent). It is clear that the level of understanding of performance measurement, quality leadership, training and teamwork are exceptionally good. Those concepts where the level of understanding is low and the percentage of respondents with that low understanding are zero defect (45 percent), continuous improvement (41 percent), recognition (36 percent), employee participation (22 percent), quality through prevention (17 percent) and innovation (15 percent). It is clear that employee participation and innovation are the least understood of all the concepts.

6.1.3 Practice of Quality Principles

Analyses of the practice of quality principles show that out of the twelve quality principles that make up a quality culture, eight quality principles are put into practice while the other four are not. Those principles which are put into practice and the percentage of respondents practising them are customer focus (76 percent), quality through prevention (66 percent), zero defect (75 percent), process emphasis (78 percent), training (51 percent), employee participation (58 percent), teamwork (85 percent) and continuous improvement (75 percent). It can be seen that out of these, teamwork is the most widely practised principle. Those quality principles which are not put into practice and the percentage of respondents not practising them are quality leadership (33 percent), innovation (34 percent), recognition (35 percent) and performance measurement (30 percent).
6.1.4 Comparison between Perception and Understanding of Quality Concepts

The study shows that generally, the perception of the existence of a quality culture in the organisation is not related to the level of understanding of quality concepts except for one quality concept which is zero defect. This means that with the exception of zero defect, the way employees perceive the existence of quality concepts in the organisation does not have any influence on their understanding of such concepts. Where zero defect is concerned, the study shows that those who perceive it to exist tend to have a better understanding than those who don't.

6.1.5 Comparison between Understanding and Practice of a Quality Culture

The findings indicate that except for the concepts of innovation and employee participation, there is no significant relationship between the level of understanding and practice of quality concepts. Where innovation is concerned, the findings reveal that those who do not understand it tend to practise it more than those who do. The same pattern applies for employee participation. These findings suggest attempts at application of quality concepts but may not necessarily be proper application. The findings also suggest that the more employees know about the concepts, the more they tend to refrain from practising them. Their reluctance could be due to the fact that they are also well aware of the problems that may arise or the stringent requirements necessary to ensure the successful implementation of the concepts. As such they are cautious and hesitant in practising the concepts. Management should pay heed to this by taking appropriate action to ensure correct application as well as wider practice of the concepts.
Comparison of quality principles in terms of perception, understanding and practice shows that out of the twelve quality principles, six show consistency in all three aspects. Out of these, four have percentages exceeding 50 percent for all three aspects and these are customer focus, process emphasis, training and teamwork where teamwork stands out as the quality principle whose highest and lowest percentage exceed that of the other three principles. Two others have percentages less than 50 percent for all three aspects and these are innovation and recognition. The other six quality principles which show inconsistencies in the three aspects are quality through prevention, zero defect, quality leadership, employee participation, performance measurement and continuous improvement.

With regard to the comparison between perception and understanding of quality concepts, it is found that for eight of the quality principles, the percentage of respondents who perceive the existence of a quality culture in the organisation exceeds those who have a high level of understanding of quality concepts. The exceptions are process emphasis, quality leadership, training and performance measurement. With regard to the comparison between understanding and practice of quality principles, it is found that in the case of six principles, the percentage of those who have a good understanding is lower than those who practise them. These principles are customer focus, quality through prevention, zero defect, innovation, employee participation and continuous improvement. It is important to take note of these six quality principles as it may involve incorrect practice. The other principles where the percentage of those who have a good understanding is higher than that those who practise the principles are process emphasis, quality leadership, training, teamwork, recognition and performance measurement. With regard to the comparison between perception and practice, it is found that for all the principles, the percentage of those who perceive the existence of a quality culture in the organisation is close to those who practise the principles.
The research findings are therefore in line with the postulates of the theoretical model in terms of the relationship between perception and understanding where more quality aspects are perceived to exist than understood. The findings pertaining to the relationship between understanding and practice of quality principles do not fully conform with the proposal of the model as it is found that for half of the quality principles, the level of understanding is lower than the level of practice while the premise of the model is that quality principles should be well understood before they can be put into practice. This implies that some respondents are practising the principles without fully understanding them. In addition, the research findings show that the aspects of perception and practice are congruent in that quality principles are practised almost as much as they are perceived to exist, with only a slight difference which ranges from 1 to 14 percent.

6.1.7 Relative Importance of Factors Contributing to the Emergence of a Quality Culture

According to the research findings, all the 15 factors examined are perceived as important in contributing to the emergence of a quality culture. These factors are:

i. Planning and implementation strategy;
ii. Teamwork;
iii. Quality leadership;
iv. Process emphasis;
v. Continuous improvement;
vi. Employee participation;
vii. Training;
viii. Application of skills and knowledge;
ix. Quality through prevention;
x. The individual's contribution;
xi. Structure;
xii. Recognition;

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Perfomance measurement;  
Innovation; and 
Zero defect.

Out of these factors, the establishment of a planning and implementation strategy, and teamwork are relatively the two most important factors according to 88 percent of respondents.

6.1.8 Sources of Information on Quality Aspects

The findings have shown that the relative importance of the eight sources of information on quality aspects, in a descending order, are (i) courses, seminars, workshops and forums; (ii) meetings and discussions; (iii) books, journals and other reading materials; (iv) exchange of ideas with colleagues; (v) directives and letters from head of department and divisional heads; (vi) Development Administration Circulars; (vii) observation of quality implementation; and (viii) speeches and remarks by top management.

The findings have also shown that out of the eight sources of information on quality aspects, all sources except the series of Development Administration Circulars, have an influence on employee perception of the existence of a quality culture. Those who think that these sources are important in equipping them with information on quality aspects are able to perceive better the existence of a quality culture in the organisation compared to those who do not think that these sources are important. The seven sources in a descending order of the strength of their relationship with perception of the existence of quality aspects are: (i) directives and letters from head of department and divisional heads; (ii) speeches and remarks by top management; (iii) courses, seminars, workshops and forums; (iv) meetings and discussions; (v) observation of quality implementation; (vi) books, journals and other reading materials; and (vii) exchange of ideas with colleagues.
It can be inferred that these seven sources of information have been able to make employees more sensitive and aware of the quality efforts undertaken by management.

Findings also show that three out of the eight sources of information have an influence on the level of understanding of quality concepts. These sources in a descending order of the strength of their relationship with understanding are (i) meetings and discussions; (ii) books, journals and other reading materials; and (iii) exchange of ideas with colleagues. It is found that for the first two sources, the more important the source is in providing information on quality aspects, the higher the level of understanding of quality concepts while for the third source, the reverse is found to be true. It can thus be inferred that meetings, discussions, books and other reading materials have been able to increase the level of understanding of quality concepts. Another finding of the study is that the exchange of ideas with colleagues regarding quality concepts seems to have a negative influence on respondents' understanding of the concepts.

Likewise, it is also found that three out of the eight sources of information have an influence on the practice of quality principles. The more the source is important, the more likely quality principles are put into practice. These sources in a descending order of the strength of their relationship with practice are (i) directives and letters from top management; (ii) exchange of ideas with colleagues; and (iii) meetings and discussions. It can thus be inferred that these three sources have been able to provide useful guidelines for the practice of quality principles.

6.1.9 Factors which Hinder Practice of a Quality Culture

According to the research findings, out of the four problems examined - lack of skills and knowledge; lack of authority and power; unclear role and responsibilities; and impracticality of quality principals - majority of the respondents encounter two problems in trying to practise quality principles. These are the lack
of authority and power which is said to pose a problem by 62 percent of the respondents and the lack of skills and knowledge which is said to pose a problem by 58 percent of the respondents. Management should therefore address these two problems in order to enhance the development of a quality culture in the organisation.

In addition, perception of impracticality of quality principles is found to have an influence on perception of the existence of a quality culture. The more the quality principles are perceived as unsuitable for implementation, the more likely that they are not perceived to exist in the organisation. Where practice is concerned, the problem of the lack of authority and power is found to have an influence on the practice of quality principles though the relationship is of an inverse nature where the more the problem is perceived to hinder practice of quality principles, the more the principles are practised. Management has to look further into this matter to resolve the issue.

6.1.10 Reasons Cited by Respondents for Non-Implementation of Quality Principles

Respondents have also cited reasons for not practising some of the quality principles. With regard to the principle of customer focus, respondents feel that the principle is not practical as it is not always possible to satisfy all customers all the time. Even if it is possible, they question the wisdom of doing so as customer needs may be in conflict with organisational interest. They also lament on the lack of instructions from management on how to satisfy customer needs especially in the context of the department's client's charter. Where quality leadership is concerned, they feel that leaders have to be more committed to quality improvements by demonstrating their commitment. They should be role models and lead by example. In addition, the comments regarding zero defect and performance measurement indicate some misconception about the concepts. There also seems to be some concern among respondents for not being able to standardise all work processes.
Another common comment why some of the quality principles such as quality through prevention, process emphasis and continuous improvement are not practical revolves around heavy workload and shortage of staff to cope with the increasing workload. There is also allegations of favouritism and biased criteria in implementing some of the principles such as recognition, training and employee participation. The existence of a barrier between top management and others, and tendency to be loyal to own division over organisation have been cited as another reason which renders the principle of teamwork impractical. In addition, the issue of funds has also been raised as hampering the practice of principles such as innovation and continuous improvement.

6.1.11 Personal Characteristics and Understanding of Overall Quality Concepts

According to the study, whether the respondents are male or female, young or old, highly educated or otherwise, working in headquarters or branches, old-timers or new officers, do not seem to make any difference where their level of understanding of quality concepts is concerned. Implication of this finding is that any efforts by management to raise the level of understanding of quality concepts have to be implemented throughout the organisation and cannot be focused on any particular group.

6.1.12 Personal Characteristics and Practice of Overall Quality Concepts

The findings of the study show that out of the six personal characteristics studied, only sex is significantly related to the practice of quality concepts. It was further shown that more males than females practise quality concepts. One likely reason for this could be that quality concepts are quite technical in nature and generally, males tend to be more at ease with technical matters than females. Based on this finding, management should target its efforts on female employees to encourage and help more females to implement quality concepts.
6.2 Recommendations

The purpose of this section is to make recommendations to the management of the Department so that action can be taken to rectify those weaknesses identified in the research findings.

6.2.1 To Improve Employee Perception of the Existence of a Quality Culture

The findings summarised above show that majority of the employees are not able to perceive the existence of quality aspects such as the organisation's commitment towards quality leadership, innovation, recognition and performance measurement. Out of these quality aspects, quality leadership and performance measurement appear to be the least perceived to exist according to the perception of respondents. This could be due to the failure of management to demonstrate sufficient commitment towards these aspects in terms of concrete action taken. To address the issue, it is recommended that management takes the following measures:

a. Create an environment conducive to innovation by implementing the following:

i. Explain to everyone in the department the management philosophy and policy on innovation and how the individual can contribute to the effort;

ii. Institute a system of managing for innovations such as setting up a committee on innovations which is responsible, among other things, for producing guidelines on how employees can innovate, procedures for submission of innovation to management and incentives for innovations;
iii. Provide the resources necessary for carrying out innovations;

iv. Obtain and publicise examples of successful innovations from other departments in the country or other countries, especially those that can be applied to the organisation;

v. Emphasise creativity and provide training to employees in the area of creativity and innovation;

vi. Give recognition to those who have introduced or attempted to introduce innovations;

vii. Work out a system to allow for time for innovations such as on certain Saturdays or Friday afternoons;

viii. Allow room for small mistakes committed as a result of experimenting with better ways of doing a job; and

ix. Vie for the Best Innovation Award administered by MAMPU.

b. Demonstrate greater commitment towards recognition in the following ways:

i. Set up a Task Force to gather and discuss feedback especially complaints about the implementation of the current system of recognition;

ii. Ensure that members of the Task Force are made up of not only the professional and managerial group but include representatives from the support group as well. Every division and branch office at the state level should be represented as well;
iii. Discuss in depth the criteria for selection of candidates to ensure that everyone has a chance of being recognised and that the system is generally fair to everyone. Obtain a consensus on the criteria;

iv. Ensure that the system has proper guidelines for implementation and that there is no room for favouritism;

v. Be creative and ensure that the rewards are attractive; and

vi. Make the system transparent and ensure that everyone knows the criteria for selection and implementation procedures.

c. Provide the quality leadership needed to create a quality culture in the following ways:

i. Be role models for members of the organisation by exhibiting the quality values that are being emphasised and ensuring that top management conduct is consistent with these values. This means that top management should exhibit the highest level of quality-consciousness, be well-versed in quality concepts and generally practise what they preach;

ii. Assume the role of motivators, inspirers, coaches and facilitators in the implementation of quality initiatives;

iii. As suggested by respondents, make firm decisions in line with quality principles even if it means being unpopular; and

iv. Take the lead in breaking down barriers between the top and lower rungs in the organisation as this has been cited as a stumbling block in implementing teamwork.
d. Performance measurement should be clarified in terms of what it means and how performance of the organisation (and not just of the individual) is measured so that employees can see more clearly the system operating in the organisation. In addition, the following actions are necessary:

i. Ascertain what is being measured currently, how measurement is carried out and how results are presented;

ii. Involve representatives from all divisions, posts and branches in reviewing the system;

iii. Ensure that the system is clear in terms of the measures and indicators used to measure performance;

iv. Differentiate between the various levels of measurement - organisational, divisional and individual;

v. Based on the measures and indicators agreed upon, institute a system of data collection where only relevant data will be collected;

vi. Ensure that performance results are presented in a form that is meaningful and easily understood by everyone in the organisation and update information of performance achieved at regular intervals; and

vii. Ensure that everyone knows the level of organisational performance at any one time;

e. Based on the findings of the study, the Department should make greater use of the following sources of information on quality aspects to disseminate information about its quality beliefs, policies and efforts which will make employees perceive a quality culture to exist in the organisation:
i. Use directives and letters as an important mechanism to communicate quality policy and other quality matters to members of the organisation;

ii. Try to use speeches and remarks more effectively in conveying messages about organisational objectives, policy and strategies of quality aspects such as by delivering better speeches in terms of content, relevance and style and by being better speakers that can hold the attention of the audience;

iii. Ensure that more courses, seminars, workshops and forums are organised to increase the awareness of employees of the various quality aspects;

iv. Use meetings and discussions whenever possible to discuss and brainstorm on quality matters;

v. Heads of division should encourage and arrange for their staff to learn from those who have received substantial training and exposure on quality matters and who are experienced in the implementation of quality concepts. With the organisation's strong team spirit as indicated by the findings of the study, this should be achieved quite easily. Moreover, it is in line with the concept of continuous improvement and reflects a learning organisation. This can also be formalised through the adoption of the cascading principle of training where those who have been trained will train others, who in turn will do the same. Yet another concept in training which is also in line with the spirit of learning from others is understudy where those who wish to learn more about quality aspects will understudy those who are experienced in the area; and
vi. Encourage employees to read more books, journals and magazines on quality.

6.2.2 To Improve Employee Understanding of Quality Concepts

Since a good understanding of quality concepts is critical to ensure proper practice of the concepts, management should accord priority to the problem of lack of understanding of quality concepts. Quality concepts which have to be given extra attention include quality through prevention, zero defect, quality leadership, employee participation, recognition, performance measurement and continuous improvement. It is recommended that the Department takes the following actions:

a. Management should seriously consider going back to basics and start a campaign on fostering a common language on quality. A good understanding of quality concepts should be made a part of the core skills required of every member of the organisation irrespective of post, grade and place of work to enable them to do their work according to quality principles. New officers and staff who join the organisation should receive basic training towards a better understanding of these concepts. It is recommended that a task force be established to undertake the following:

i. Compile a glossary of quality concepts and terms;

ii. Organise workshops to cover all levels of the organisation starting from the top, to discuss these concepts. If necessary, the Department should bring in external resource persons well-versed in quality matters to help facilitate discussions and offer alternative viewpoints;
iii. Evaluate the level of understanding of quality concepts at regular intervals and take appropriate action where necessary;

iv. Reinforce understanding of these concepts from time to time by organising refresher courses and slowly add on new concepts that are introduced from time to time;

v. As the findings indicate that those who obtain information on quality aspects from meetings and discussions tend to have a higher level of understanding of quality aspects, management should make use of meetings and discussions to explain the concepts;

vi. As books, journals and other reading materials are found to be another important source which enhances understanding of quality concepts, management should ensure that its resource centre is well-stocked with up-to-date materials on quality matters; and

vii. Carry out periodic evaluation of employees' understanding to identify areas for corrective action.

b. Where zero defect is concerned, since findings show that the those who perceive it to exist tend to have a better understanding of the concept than those who don't, the Department should capitalise on this by improving employee perception of the concept. This can be achieved through the following ways:

i. Set standards jointly with employees and ensure that the standards are challenging yet achievable;

ii. Make known to all concerned that no waivers or deviations from standards are to be tolerated; and
iii. Provide training, resources and proper systems wherever necessary, to facilitate achievement of those standards.

6.2.3 To Ensure Wider and Correct Application of Quality Concepts

There are two main issues regarding practice of quality principles and these pertain to those principles which are not practised and those which may be incorrectly practised. To address these two main issues, the following recommendations are made:

a. As the findings show that four quality principles are not put into practice - quality leadership, innovation, recognition and performance measurement - it is recommended that management concentrates on fostering greater practice of these four principles. This can be achieved by:

i. Prepare a simple manual which caters to all levels of employees outlining the steps to be taken in order to implement these concepts;

ii. Complement the manual by demonstrating how these steps can be acted out;

iii. Explain the benefits that can be derived from the implementation of such concepts;

iv. Provide on-going consultation and support and promptly address problems that may arise; and

v. Celebrate both successful implementation and attempts at implementation of these concepts to motivate employees to sustain their efforts.
b. Since findings also show that those who rely on three sources of information on quality aspects - directives and letters, exchange of ideas with colleagues, and meetings and discussions - tend to be more willing and able to put into practice what they know about quality, it is recommended that these three sources be used more extensively to provide practical guidelines on implementation of quality principles.

c. The findings suggest that there is a possibility of incorrect application of six quality concepts - customer focus, quality through prevention, zero defect, innovation, employee participation and continuous improvement - as the percentage of those who understand these concepts is lower than the percentage of those who practise them. The possibility of incorrect application is based on the rationale that how can one practise something that one does not understand. To address the issue and ensure that employees have a thorough understanding of the concepts, it is recommended that management takes the following actions:

i. Review implementation of all quality principles particularly these six quality principles to ensure there is no misinterpretation of concepts;

ii. Find out from employees how they would define innovation and employee participation;

iii. Identify misconceptions about the concepts and how they came about; and

iv. Explain and clarify the concepts.
6.2.4 To Strengthen Factors Perceived Important for the Emergence of a Quality Culture

As the findings reveal that majority of the respondents perceive all the 15 factors to be important for the emergence of a quality culture, the Department should take steps to strengthen these factors. Of all the 15 factors, two factors - planning and implementation strategy and teamwork - are perceived to be the most important. Towards this end, it is recommended that management undertakes the following measures:

a. Ensure effective planning and good implementation strategies to facilitate the emergence of a quality culture. Do this through the following actions:

i. Review the planning and implementation strategy and match it against performance to ascertain any weaknesses;

ii. Use a good strategic planning tool such as the SWOT analysis (based on the organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) to draw up an appropriate strategic plan for implementation.

iii. Involve employees in this exercise to harness commitment;

iv. Subject the plan and implementation strategy to stringent monitoring and periodic assessment; and

v. Make changes and improvements if necessary.

b. Create the environment for teamwork to flourish through the following actions:
i. Explain to employees the importance of teamwork and synergy and how organisational goals can be achieved when everyone work as a team;

ii. Encourage formation of work teams;

iii. Recognise team performance over individual performance; and

iv. Organise recreational and social events that can foster team spirit;

6.2.5 To Overcome Obstacles to the Practice of a Quality Culture

The findings show that out of the four possible obstacles to the practice of a quality culture, the lack of authority and power, and the lack of skills and knowledge pose the biggest obstacles. This being the case, the following actions are recommended:

a. Where possible, give more power and authority to employees to enable them to deliver quality service and handle grievances effectively. This can be achieved through the following ways:

i. Ensure employees know what empowerment means and their role and responsibility in an empowered situation;

ii. Ensure employees want to be empowered;

iii. Where empowerment is desired, empower employees to provide quality service without requiring them to refer to their immediate superiors on every matter;
iv. Ensure employees have the necessary skills and resources to shoulder the added power and authority; and

v. Monitor closely all the empowered situations to identify weaknesses and take immediate remedial action.

b. Provide employees with the skills and knowledge required to implement quality principles. This is necessary as the implementation of quality principles involves doing things differently from the past. Action needed include:

i. Provide skills and knowledge in the area of output and process measurement and control. Among others, this covers knowledge of problem-solving tools, statistical process control, data analysis and presentation; and

ii. Provide knowledge on the underlying philosophies, models, theories and concepts of quality.

6.2.6 To Improve Perception of Practicality of Quality Principles

When respondents were asked why they think some of the quality principles are not suitable for implementation, several reasons emerged. In addition, it was also discovered that the more quality principles are perceived as unsuitable for implementation, the more unlikely that they are perceived to exist in the organisation. To address these two aspects, the following are recommended:

a. Management should take note of the comments given by the respondents as to why they think that the quality principles are not practical. This is contained in Chapter Four, section 4.4 of the report. Based on the comments, it is recommended that management takes the following actions:
i. Provide the quality vision for the organisation so that all members of the organisation share a common goal on quality and this may help to promote organisational interest which will in turn build team spirit. This will address the complaint that divisional interest sometimes precedes organisational interest;

ii. Help employees to prioritise their work so that customer satisfaction becomes their top priority;

iii. Adopt a hands-on approach to instil a quality culture in the organisation by getting involved directly in quality improvement activities especially in understanding the problems that arise. This will prove to employees that management is really committed to quality and will thus address the complaint that leaders are not committed;

iv. Put in place all the systems which support a quality work culture such as a fair and equitable recognition system, equal training opportunities for all, a good innovation system and a good performance measurement system;

v. Explain in detail the quality standards pledged in the department's client's charter and how it can be achieved to address respondents' complaints of not knowing how to implement the charter;

vi. Ensure that those in the branch office at the state level and those in the lower levels of the organisation are treated fairly in terms of training and recognition since unfair treatment has been perceived by respondents as one of the problems faced; and
vii. Clarify the misconception about zero defect and performance measurement and address the complaint of heavy workload and staff shortage through redeployment.

b. To overcome the negative impression that some quality principles are not suitable for implementation, management should make more effort to convince members of the organisation regarding the practicality of quality principles. This can be achieved in the following ways:

i. Build up a resource centre and collect success quality stories from all sources especially organisations of similar set-ups or organisations in the same industry and disseminate these stories to members of the organisation to show that quality principles can be successfully implemented; and

ii. Benchmark or set goals based on the experiences of similar organisations so that the members are convinced that the quality goals are attainable.

6.2.7 Target Groups for Corrective Action

The study reveals that male employees tend to practise quality principles more than female employees. Based on this finding, management should focus more attention and efforts on female employees to help them incorporate quality principles into their daily routine. The following measures are recommended:

i. Obtain feedback from female employees, formally and informally, regarding the implementation of quality principles;

ii. Make a comparison of work habits and practices between male and female employees and ascertain the similarities and differences;
iii. Identify areas for improvement;

iv. Assist in implementation and provide on-going advice and support; and

v. Carry out evaluation of quality efforts at regular intervals and take corrective action where necessary.

6.3 Conclusions

Overall, the study shows a positive situation regarding most of the aspects studied - perception of existence, understanding and practice of a quality culture in the Department of Environment. The findings ascertain that the declared culture of the Department of Environment is a culture that emphasises quality principles. The findings also show that the actual culture as practised by members of the department is consistent with what has been declared by the organisation. At this juncture, it can therefore be concluded that both the declared culture and the actual work culture of the department are the same. However, the analysis shows that the overall understanding of quality concepts among employees is of an average level. Thus, the practice of a quality culture when juxtaposed with the level of understanding leads one to conclude that the individuals in the department attempt to apply quality concepts without adequate understanding of the concepts.

The implication of this finding is that the desired results of a quality culture will not be fully achieved without the concomitant element of adequate understanding of quality concepts. This could constitute a major tool in the monitoring of quality practice. Setting aside wilful disregard and bad intentions, ineffectiveness in the delivery of goods in the public sector may be directly attributable to the lack of knowledge and inadequate understanding of quality concepts. This would mean that remedial steps could be tailored and immediately instituted to rectify organisational deficiencies in the effective implementation of quality principles.