

SUCCESS FACTORS OF LEAN MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Lean management is a management approach adapted from the lean manufacturing concept which focuses on waste elimination and continuous improvement. While the manufacturing sector has widely implemented lean in their operation, the application of lean in the service sector is still new. Public service organizations chose to apply lean management in order to cope with the need to improve performance while reducing costs. However, most transformational efforts failed because of public organizations did not focus on the right element. The objective of this study is to investigate the success factor of lean implementation in public service organizations. The interview was conducted at five public organizations that have received recognition of excellence practices in lean management by Malaysia Productivity Corporation. The data were analyzed using Atlas.ti software. From the analysis, seven success factors have been identified which are; management commitment, communication, employee involvement, culture, knowledge, teamwork and organization readiness. The factors mentioned should be incorporated in the change program and should be well managed by the management of public service organizations to gain success and ensure sustainability of lean management implementation.

Keywords: *Lean management, success factors, public services, malaysia, qualitative*

INTRODUCTION

Lean management is a management approach adapted from the lean manufacturing concept. Japanese have been practicing three basic ideas of lean manufacturing, which are elimination of waste, cost reduction and employee empowerment (Ohno, 1988). The objectives of lean are to reduce human effort, inventory, time, space and cost in order to produce the high-quality product to fulfill the customer demand (Chauhan and Singh, 2012). Shah and Ward (2007) define lean as “an integrated socio-technical system whose main objective is to eliminate waste by concurrently reducing or minimizing supplier, customer, and internal variability.” The focus of lean manufacturing that has been implemented by Japanese is to eliminate waste, optimize resources, and fulfill customer requirement.

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In implementing lean, there are two important values in the philosophy which are; respect for people and continuous improvement. People are believed to be the key for successful lean implementation because lean is not about the tools and technique, but it is in the heart and the mind of the people that play the role to implement it. The right lean culture should be developed within the whole organization before the implementation so that all people support and are involved in implementation. Thus, it can be concluded that the lean philosophies are based on three important aspects which are; waste removal, resource optimization and establishment of right culture in order to continuously improve and satisfying customer's need.

From the manufacturing context, the use of lean concept has been widened into the service context. During 20th century, public service sectors have also applied and used tools from lean manufacturing in their operation (Seddon and Donovan, 2010). Besides handling commercial products, lean service has shifted into handling patients in healthcare (Piercy and Rich, 2009a, 2009b). Although the lean approach in service context has been applied over several years, mostly it has been applied in the service organization that involve physical product as in retail supply chain and healthcare, thus, less application is proven in pure-service environment (Piercy and Rich, 2009b). There are several factors that drive service sector to apply lean principles in their operation which are; the increased demands for cost reduction, improving quality of services delivered, resource utilization and improving service productivity (Piercy and Rich, 2009a, 2009b; Radnor and Osborne, 2013). In order to cope with the need to improve performance while reducing costs, government agencies around the world discovered to use lean management practices, which are mostly used in private organization (Gebre, Hallman, Minukas, and O'Brien, 2012). However, Radnor and Osborne (2013) revealed the reality of successful implementation in public service is just one easy success but lack sustainability. Based on McKinsey public sector transformational change survey done on 974 public sector leader, only 39% achieved full impacts from the transformation efforts (Gebre *et al.*, 2012). Most transformational change efforts failed because of public organizations did not focus on the right element. Capabilities and Culture have been identified as the most important drivers for successful public service transformation that should be focused on the most (Gebre *et al.*, 2012).

Several researchers have done studies on lean in few areas of service sectors such as in municipality service (Arlbjørn, Freytag, & de Haas, 2011; Tang, Miao, and Xi, 2010), financial service (Piercy and Rich, 2009b), airport (Almehareb & Graham-Jones, 2010), hotel (Vlachos and Bogdanovic, 2013) and healthcare (Chan, 2012; Shazali, Habidin, Ali, Khaidir, and Jamaludin, 2013). Those studies are only focusing on application of lean practices or improvement techniques in certain service sectors and the suitability of lean adoption on the sectors involved and not focusing on success factor of lean management implementation in service sectors especially in public service organizations. Thus, the objective of this study is to investigate the success factor of lean implementation in public service organizations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many factors that could contribute to the successful change into lean initiative. Change initiative will not work if it is being implemented by an order or force from top management without any warning and with expectations that the middle managers will make it work (Brisson-Banks, 2010). In order to be able to direct the implementation in the organization, the leader must have the self-motivation to manage the change which is necessary to move the system forward (Almehareb and Graham-Jones, 2010). According to Waterman and McCue (2012), a shift in behavior towards openness to accept change is a must but difficult to achieve in the large organization that has their own seated culture especially among senior level. Cultural and resistance issues have to be dealt with and addressed during the early lean journey. Boyle *et al.* (2011) found that in a number of cases plant managers were “let go” due to their resistance to lean and their inability to lead the cultural changes required for lean. Managers will be expected to lead the change needed for lean success, and therefore, their knowledge of lean and commitment to it will influence how well an innovating culture enables lean success (Boyle *et al.*, 2011). The communication that is not clearly given and does not occur consistently will contribute to a failure in changing to lean (Nordin, Deros, Wahab, and Rahman, 2012). Effective communication system can engage the staff to participate in change initiative (Chan, 2012). From the literature, four factors have been identified to have influence on lean implementation which are; management commitment, lean knowledge, lean culture and communication. These factors are explained as the follows.

Management Commitment

A success or a failure in implementing lean depends on the actions by the managers (Malmbrandt and Ahlstrom, 2013). Managers should commit and get involved along the change process instead of mandating from the top (Brisson-Banks, 2010). Firstly, the manager itself has to accept change. It is often said that major change is impossible unless the head of the organization is an active supporter (Kotter, 2007). There was a belief that the reason for some managers blocking change was because they already felt they were doing a good job and therefore, there was no need for change (Massey and Williams, 2006). Lean commitment is captured by providing training for the employees, ensuring a sufficient number of employees are available to undertake lean improvement activities, providing employees time for learning and testing new techniques and processes (i.e. learning and testing), committing the necessary monetary investments, and providing active supervisory management support (Boyle *et al.*, 2011). The commitment from top management is an essential factor in any change initiative especially in lean due the philosophy of lean itself which focuses on respect for people.

It is important for the top management to get a clear knowledge about lean so that they know why they need to change into lean and thus can give full commitment and can provide essential support for the change program. Thus, the next factor to be reviewed is Lean Knowledge.

Lean Knowledge

Lean knowledge must be disseminated and understood by not only the top management, but also by all the employees. Dombrowski, Mielke, and Engel (2012) identified that lack of lean knowledge is one of the root causes that hinder the implementation. Lean knowledge is a basic requirement which should be transferred across organization at the earliest stage (phase 0) before the implementation; and if the knowledge is not enough, the dissemination of knowledge should be continued in preparation phase (phase 1) to teach them to become a lean thinker (Anvari, Zulkifli, Yusuff, Hojjati, and Ismail, 2010). For a successful lean implementation, knowledge and labor cannot be separated (Dombrowski *et al.*, 2012). The knowledge on lean tools and techniques should also be provided to avoid ineffectiveness and selection of wrong tools during the transformation process (Audenino, 2012; Mostafa *et al.*, 2013). Leader should have the right skills in managing change and have necessary knowledge in lean so that they can promote the skills and enhance their worker's knowledge in lean implementation. By providing the lean knowledge, everyone in the organization will understand the essence of lean in term of the concept and principle, know why they need to change into lean and understand on how lean could help in improving their work and make their operation become easier by the help of tools and techniques provided. Before narrowing into the training on tools and techniques, the lean knowledge given should focus on the philosophy and principle of lean that should be understood in order to develop the lean culture in the organizations. The third factor which is Lean Culture is discussed next.

Lean Culture

Lean culture is the culture that is based on the lean principle which is to continuously improve and respect other people. The culture is important for a successful implementation of lean (Ahmad, 2013; Bhasin, 2013; Brisson-Banks, 2010). The focus on creating the right culture should be given to increase the chance to implement lean successfully (Ahmad, 2013). According to Liker and Hoseus (2008), to develop and sustain lean implementation depends on 80% of culture and 20% of the technical aspects. A continuous lean implementation can be obtained by shaping a complete lean culture (Ahmad, 2013). Organization should understand and refer to Toyota culture, which focuses on people as the first step before they want to implement lean. It is important to give attention to people since they are the one who move the lean implementation. According to Ahmad (2013), other type of culture such as organizational culture, national culture and work culture have to fit with one lean culture that will drive the lean transformation. The lean culture must be embedded within minds, hearts and hands of all people in organization (Ahmad, 2013). Organizational culture is the behavior played by a group of people in the organization. It will be hard to change the culture and leave the old values that had embedded in their behavior (Woodall, 2006). According to Bhasin (2012), there exists a need to recognize that ultimately the best people to deliver any cultural change are the internal staff. The leaders have to understand the culture in their organization to help them identify the appropriate way to lead the employees (Brisson-Banks, 2010).

All the above factors which are commitment, knowledge and culture require to be disseminated through communication. Thus, the next part discusses the fourth or last factor which is communication.

Communication

The change that needs to be introduced requires an effective communication from the top management to the employees. The implementation of lean will become a failure if the top management failed to communicate and transfer the need of change to everyone in the organization (Damrath, 2012). Effective communication is one of the success factors for lean that should not be implemented in certain phases during implementation because communication is viewed as a continuous process which occurs along implementation stages from the initial planning stage towards the end (Nordin *et al.*, 2012). Hanson (2013) suggested that the communication breakdown should be minimized using comprehensive communication plan before and throughout the change management process. According to Revelle (2010), one of the main purposes of communication is to provide direction in which includes giving an instruction and information to the employees and also customer. Communication can be either verbal or non-verbal. Toyota uses a simple visual format as an example of non-verbal communication method to communicate the most relevant information in document (Liker and Morgan, 2006). The mode of communication used will affect the effectiveness of the message conveyed. Many things should be considered in choosing any form of communication such as the complexity of the message (either to use written, oral or both), abilities of the receiver (physical limitation and language barrier) and cultural aspect (in-person vs distance communication) (Revelle, 2010). Without a clear communication the process of change can contribute to the misunderstanding of the need of change by not receiving the right information and support which is required along the change process. Furthermore, the lean knowledge and the lean culture that should be understood and developed will also fail to be disseminated without an effective communication. In addition, the benefits from lean implementation that is not been communicated back to the employees is useless if only the top management knows it and is not been used to motivate the employees. Since communication is important in ensuring the knowledge and information is clearly given, the manager should also focus on the communication aspect which should be continuously managed along the implementation process.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study is a qualitative research using the case study approach. Qualitative research is concerned with exploration of phenomena from perspective of research participant using the interpretative approach (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, and Ormston, 2013). Case study is for in-depth understanding of an issue in a case or multiple cases (such as event, program, or activity) in which can be obtained using multiple forms of data collection (interview, observation, document review) and analyzed by describing the themes (Creswell *et al.*, 2007). Thus the qualitative research using case study is suitable to understand the factors that contribute to the success of those organizations in applying lean management. The data collection method used in this study is interview and document review.

"Triangulation occurs when multiple sources from different data collection methods support the same conclusion or at least, do not contradict it" (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The use of various data collection method is for the triangulation purpose to strengthen the finding and enhance validity. A semi-structured interview protocol was used to guide the interview session in every organization.

Sampling

The study population is public service organizations in Malaysia. Using purposive sampling technique, the organizations that fulfill the criteria will be chosen as the sample based on their willingness to participate in the study. The type of purposive sampling technique that will be used is criterion sampling where the case that meet the predetermine criteria is picked (Patton, 1990). The predetermine criteria is the public service organizations that have been implementing the lean concept in their operation and still sustain the implementation, and have certified by Malaysia Productivity Corporation that the organizations had demonstrated excellent practices in Lean Management. The number of samples is five organizations. This is due to only five government organizations in Malaysia that fulfill the predetermined criteria which is the public organizations that have received lean recognition from MPC for the excellent practices in Lean Management. The five organizations are labeled as; Case A, Case B, Case C, Case D and Case E. The participant of the study is the manager and the project leader for lean. The manager is denoted with P1 and the Project Leader is P2.

Techniques of Data Analysis

After the data collection process, the data was prepared for the analysis by transcribing all the words from the digital recorder and all the unnecessary words such as any interruption during the interview session have been removed. The data that have been transcribed is coded by locating text segment and assign a code to label them. The data were analyzed and organized using qualitative computer software package named Atlas.ti. Atlas.ti is one of the qualitative data analysis software which can easily process and categorize the codes according to the theme in the visual form and network for the interpretation purpose.

DATA ANALYSIS

Seven codes have been identified as the success factor which are 'Employee involvement', 'Knowledge', 'Management Commitment', 'Communication', 'Culture', 'Teamwork' and 'Organization readiness' as shown in the network view in Figure 1. Four out of the seven factors which are management commitment, knowledge, culture and communication were obtained from deductive coding while three new factors which are employee involvement, teamwork and organization readiness were emerging from the inductive coding. The total number of quotations related to this theme is 38. The number of quotations quoted for each code is shown in Table 1.

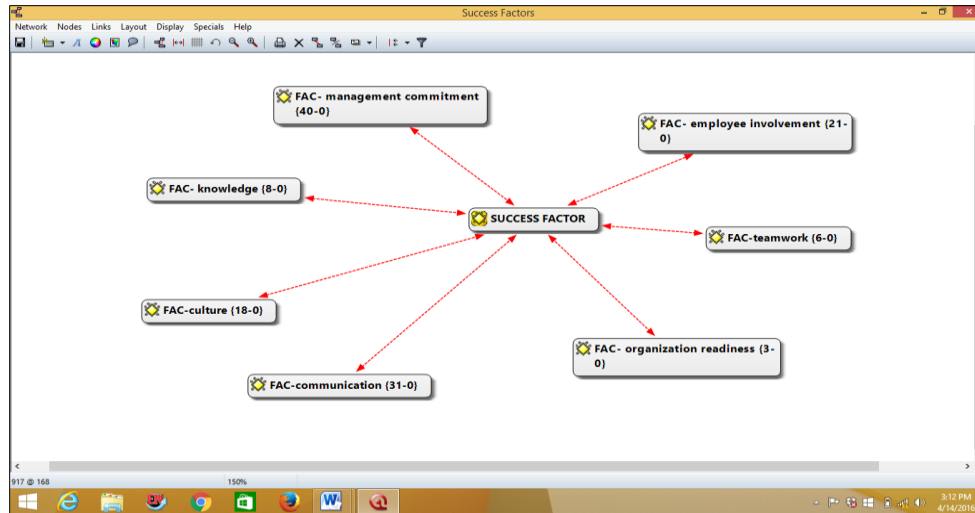


Figure 1
Network view for Success Factor

Table 1
Number of quotations for theme ‘Success Factor’

Codes	Number of quotations
Management Commitment	40
Communication	31
Employee involvement	21
Culture	18
Knowledge	8
Teamwork	6
Organization readiness	3
Total	127

The number of quotations for each code can be displayed according to each case as shown in Figure 2.

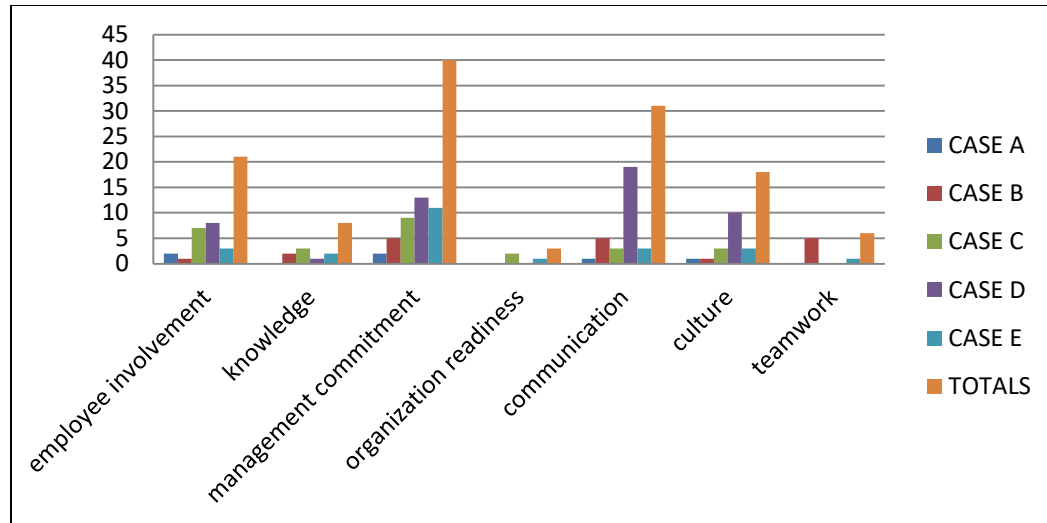


Figure 2
Success Factors by Organizations.

As shown in Figure 3, the quotations regarding the success factors are separated into two; which is P1 that represents the quotation from the managers/lean secretariat and P2 representing the project leaders. Among the seven factors, there is only one factor that was mentioned by the managers which is organization readiness. As the managers, they know about the organization better and thought that the organization readiness is important to implement lean. The highest difference in term of number of quotations mentioned by the P2 compared to P1 is regarding the factor of ‘employee involvement’. This may be due to the status of project leaders as the implementer. They were directly involved in implementing lean and closely worked with the employees.

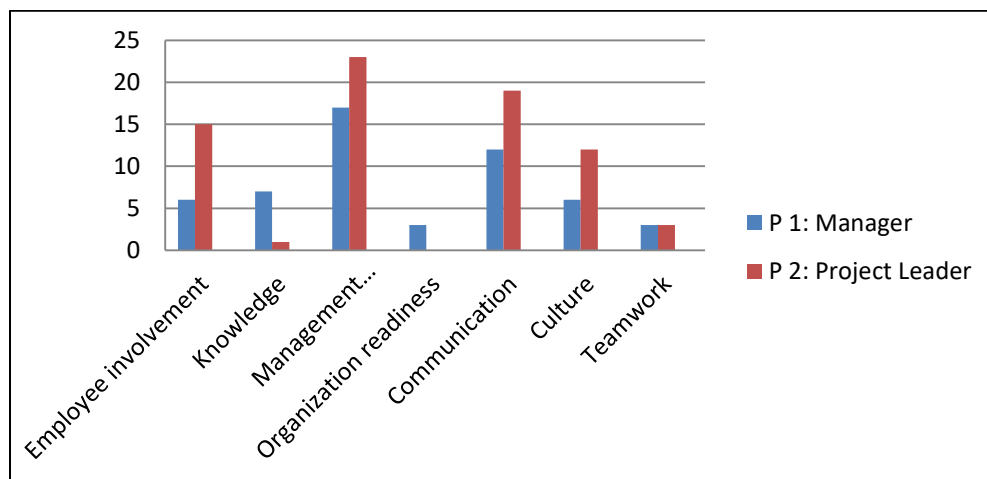


Figure 3
Success Factors by Participants

The comparison between the quotations of Participant 1 and Participant 2 can also be separated by each case as shown in Figure 4 below:

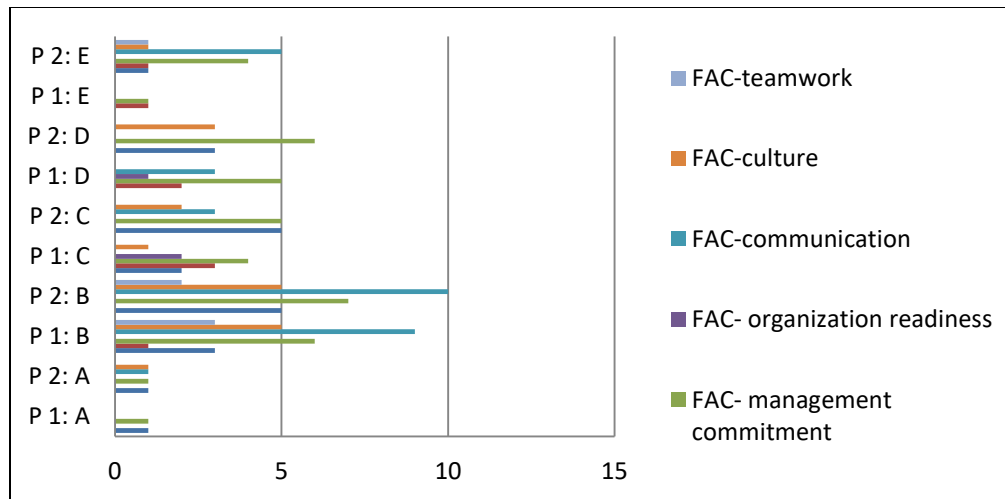


Figure 4
Success factors, by participants in every organization

From Figure 4, the number of quotations stated by P1 (manager) and P2 (project leader) regarding the success factors can be compared within each organization. The ‘management commitment’ is a factor that was stated by all P1(manager) in every organization while the factor ‘employee involvement’ was mentioned by the P2 (project leader) of all five organizations. As the employees, the project leaders believed that employee involvement is the factor that contributes to the success. However, the project leaders also acknowledged that ‘management commitment’ is one of the success factors which can be seen in the P2 quotations for all five organizations.

The next sections discuss each of the seven factors that have been identified from the interviews and data analysis.

DISCUSSION

Management Commitment

All cases mentioned that the management commitment is the success factor for lean implementation in their organization. Most of them stated that the management commitment is the main success factor as in the following quotation:

“..The main success factor of lean in this organization is the commitment from the top management. Datuk, as the leader, his leadership is being brought not only by words.”(Case D,P1)

From the interviews, the management commitment was shown through their direct involvement, providing resources, support, and giving instructions. The important factor for adopting lean in service is the commitment from management and support in terms of time and resources (Malmbrandt & Ahlstrom, 2013). The following comment reflects the importance of commitment by the top management:

“The first thing is; the top management must have strong commitment. Not just lead commitment by only talk but not do it. The top commitment is needed because it involve policy, the change in rules and involve money allocation. If the top management is not dare to allocate money and change the regulation, so it cannot be done(lean implementation). The top commitment is important.” (Case D, P1).

The management directly involves in lean by attending the lean workshop, monitor, discuss and approve the lean project. The commitment from the top manager of case C can be seen in the following quotation:

“..Everyone involves. The Director is also in the group. So when we propose to him, he can makes decision on the spot.” (Case C, P2)

Besides, the manager also meets the staff and gives moral support to motivate the staff. The management also provides resources needed, especially in term of knowledge and money by providing the training and hiring the consultant to help the staff understand lean and guide them on starting the lean projects. The commitments by the top management obviously seen and therefore can contribute to the willingness of the staffs to involve in lean initiative.

Communication

From the interviews, it can be seen that communication is an important factor that can contribute to the success of lean implementation. Good communication among the management and employees can be found in all 5 organizations. The communications ensure that the objective, order, ideas, support, and knowledge can be disseminated well within the organization. As described by one of the project leaders in Case B:

“.. Once we got the project and have the improvement, we will show to him. He will give comments and he will go directly to those related to the process and inform them. He informs on what are we doing, what need to be done. He by himself will communicate to other staff.”

Two way communications found to be occurred, in which can be divided into two which are; ‘Two way communications between management and staffs’ and ‘Two way communication between Project Leader and staff. As mentioned by the manager of Case D:

“.. We have the presentation. The meeting is another thing. We do the project presentation so that everybody else could see it. If they have questions they can ask. For example ‘ how did your project achieve this?’. So if the staff does not understand, the other staff can help. So the communication move in two ways. Two way communication. Bottom up and top down. There is no problem.” (Case D, P1)

The purposes of communication between the management and the staffs can be classified into 4 purposes which are; to get the approval for their project, to express ideas and suggestions, to communicate thought and vision, and to provide support and motivation. This purpose is supported by Chan (2012) which stated that the vision of an organization and continuous information about the improvement progress should be communicated to the whole organization because communication is one of the key activities to sustain

change. Through communication, the staff realized that the management can tolerate with them and this will increase their willingness to follow the orders given by the management. Besides, the top management communicates its vision and thought to his staff. From here, the staff will get the ideas and work for the improvement. They also provide support and motivate the staff through communication. The project leader communicates with the staff during the process. The project leader works closely with the team members. The staff feel free to ask and discuss with their project leader. Although the project leaders mostly have higher grade and knowledge, they always discuss with their staff to get them involved in solving the issue. Besides, the project leader also communicates with the top management to solve the issue that they face and to report their progress.

Knowledge

Misunderstanding of the lean concept may lead to the resistance from the employees. Thus the management must ensure that the employees get enough lean knowledge and the benefits of lean should be shown to them so that they understand and can accept it. It is important to provide the lean knowledge so that the staff are clear and understand what to be done and how to do it. The importance of knowledge to the success of lean is highlighted by participant 1 of Case E and Case D:

“.. The other success factor is.. staff are clear and understand what to do. We have to understand the knowledge of lean. Once we understand, then we can do it. If we do not understand, it's hard to do it.” (Case E, P1)

“.. Lean gives a very good impact to the organization if they understand, feel and implement..the understanding/knowledge..means we have to look at the scenario that we have, our condition and the level of their understanding (Case D, P1)

The organizations' experience some resistance at the beginning, but after they get the knowledge and see the impact and the benefit, they are ready to give commitment to implement it. As also mentioned by Mostafa, Dumraka, and Soltan (2013), the lean knowledge, benefits and the need of implementing lean should be transferred to enhance understanding during the first phase of lean transformation. Besides the new lean knowledge given before the implementation, the existing knowledge especially related to management and quality has also contributed to the success as stated by Participant 1 from case C and D. They mentioned that the existing knowledge in management and in quality that they have made them ever ready to accept lean initiative.

Culture

All cases mentioned experience about the existence of the lean culture in their organization, in which they could ensure the success and sustainability of lean implementation. They believed that the culture has been developed when their staff understood lean well and strive to do continuous improvement for the organization. The existence of lean culture is proven by the action of the staff that are able to provide the suggestions to eliminate waste, come out with the relevant issue for the lean project and

continuously improve their existing work. As described by the project leaders of Case B and Case C.

“..The most important part is lean need to be cultivated. We cultivate it and once it has become the culture, every time we see things are cluttered such as ‘ oh, there are so many processes’, then we find a way to solve it. Even at the lower level staff, if they don’t want their desk to be cluttered, they can apply 5s concept in their work. So that they can easily access, easy to understand, the flow is not stagnant in one place or people involve doesn’t have to move back and forth. They always think that we have to eliminate this (waste). We have to make it easy. As long as the way we do is to simplify work. Our target achieved and it is simple.” (Case C, P2)

“..There is thing that all these times they do it this way. Normally they do it that way. But when they see that it can be done using a new way instead of that old way, they will tell us. And we say ‘ok, you can change it, just do anything that could make your work easier’. Previously the job is performed by other staff and now when he/she do it, an easier way to perform it has been found,” (Case B,P2)

Lean culture has been developed within the organization when everyone understands the goal and purpose of lean improvement and gives full participation in reducing waste (Ahmad, 2013). Without the lean culture, the implementation will end once the project ends. Thus the lean culture is important for the successful lean implementation so that the improvement will be done continuously.

Employee involvement

The employee involvement factor is the factor that is addressed together with the management commitment factor by all five organizations. As mentioned by the manager of Case A:

“..Other factor would be the staff itself, their involvement.”(Case A, P1)

These two factors seem to complement each other. Employee involvement is triggered by the commitment shown by the management. Angelis, Conti, Cooper, and Gill (2011) found that task support from the employees could occur due to the existence of support from management. The employees’ involvement is important in ensuring that the implementation of lean moves and sustain. As highlighted by the project leader of Case D:

“.. If we make the program but staff are not involved, we couldn’t make it. All of them involve and gave full cooperation.” (Case D, P2)

The employees involve and commit with their lean project. They don’t mind to use their own money for the small things such as to buy the papers used in presenting their project. They are also willing to share ideas and discuss with their project leader and manager to find the suitable project to be ‘lean’. To ensure involvement from all staff, they were asked to come out with different lean projects associated with their work process. So there will be different groups with their own projects. For the staff who were not be directly involved to find solution for the lean project, they were still informed about the new work process to be followed after the lean improvement. They are also aware about lean management and willing to be indirectly involved.

Teamwork

Involvement of everyone in the organization in teamwork is required to implement change (Brisson-Banks, 2010). The participants from Case B mentioned about teamwork. They stressed on the importance of having the same thought, united and work as a team. Their management and project leader were concerned on developing and building a great teamwork among their staff. As described in the following quotations from Case B:

“..In one group we combine different levels of staffs’ grade including staff with grade17. Sometimes N11 also involve. So I think that is important in lean. Lean is about we work as a team. In the work process, the lower grade staffs such as the file finder, PRA or PAP also involved.” (Case B,P1)

“.. For the change management is we work as the team. If only us who work for it, top down, top down, it will last shortly, not sustain.” (Case B,P1)

They do not differentiate the staff by their grade/ level or their seniority. Everyone must share the same vision to continue working together in improving their work for a successful lean implementation in their organization. They believe that the officers and the staff need to become one in which means than everyone share the same thought and objective. Besides, they also stressed the importance of good bonding among the staff; whether they are younger or older. They conducted the team building sessions and frequently met in informal discussion to improve their teamwork.

Organization readiness

The readiness of the organization to implement lean is believed to contribute to the successful lean implementation in Case A, C and D as in the following quotations:

“..I think the second is, organization readiness as a whole. Because before we have lean, we already have the quality culture. We grew the quality culture from time to time. So when we introduced lean, it just continues. It is not totally a new thing. The quality culture is already moving. This makes the lean movement easily happen in this organization. We already have the track.” (Case D,P1)

“..We, as the learning organization, we have already applied and implement other quality instruments. We have already used to it before lean come. So when a new thing comes, it becomes easy.” (Case C,P1)

“..Since 90’s , we are very quality conscious. We have a high quality image. So we have to control the image. We have won many awards. Last year we won RM100k. The money is used for the development of the organization. We make a lot of innovation.” (Case A,P1)

It is important to develop an organization readiness before implementing lean initiative so that the organization understands and is well prepared for the implementation process (Jiju, Netasha, Cullen, & Kumar, 2012). These organizations were ready to accept lean since they were already familiar with other quality improvement tools. Their management is really conscious of making improvement in the organization and able to provide necessary resources such as money allocation and trainings in order to successfully implement lean management in their organization.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis, seven success factors have been identified which are; management commitment, communication, employee involvement, culture, knowledge, teamwork and organization readiness. The top management that commits to the lean initiative by providing support and also is involved together with the employees along the implementation, will provide a sense of secure, care and responsibility to the workers. From the commitment shown, the employees will feel that their top management respects them and values their work. Thus, they will think that they are part of the organization and will always make improvement for the organization and support the change initiative. Besides, it is vital to ensure that the lean knowledge is clearly disseminated to the whole organization during the transition so that they will understand and accept the change and can be actively involved in the implementation process. The development of lean culture will ensure the change into lean become successful when everyone in the organization strives to do improvement for the organization continuously such as by finding wastes and eliminate it, respect the customers and always providing the best service for them. Therefore, it is important to manage all cultural aspects and ensure that the lean culture will be developed within an organization for a successful change into lean. The successful implementation also depends on the involvement of the employees and the ability to work as a team so that can work together in doing improvement for their organization. The lean projects could not be completed alone without teamwork. Furthermore, the public service can successfully implement lean management when their organizations are ready to accept transformation and provide necessary resources. These factors are believed to contribute to the successful lean implementation in the public service organizations in Malaysia. Thus, the factors mentioned should be incorporated in the change program and should be well managed to gain success and ensure sustainability of lean management implementation especially in public service organizations.

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