

# THE EMPOWERMENT OF VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS (SMK) BASED TOTAL QUALITY CONCEPT

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## Abstract

Empowering is one of the main functions of management, like, planning, organizing, controlling and other functions of management. In vocational high school, this implies that empowerment is a continuous and connected duty and responsibility of the headmaster.

Total quality management in educational field is a continuous or connected improvement process conducted by the headmaster in order to achieve the qualified schools. The headmaster as the highest management plays an important role in the implementation of total quality management (TQM) in the school. The concept of qualified school is a concept that needs to be considered by the headmaster. The headmaster needs to understand TQM as a philosophy, a method, a technique, and a management strategy to improve the quality of the school, because the performance of school organization is always assessed by the society nowadays. The headmaster and teachers needs to understand the society's expectations towards the school. It is related to how to create an effective school in order to achieve the expectations of the society as the customer of education.

**Keywords:** SMK and Quality concept

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## 1. Introduction

Globalization leads to the tight competition among several fields that previously can be protected by the country regulation. This condition requires all organizations or institutions to be able to make qualified products. One of the forms of organization is an educational institution which also has tighter challenge and competition. By the rapid environment changes and the development of science and informational technology, a sensitivity of the educational institution in responding the upcoming changes is required in order to be existent in the global competition. That is why only the flexible and adaptive educational institutions which can compete in a tight global competition.

Vocational high school (SMK) as one of vocational education institution aims at preparing students to enter the workplace and developing professional attitude, that is preparing students in order to be able to choose their carriers, to compete and to develop themselves in order to achieve a better life. Furthermore, all efforts are needed to improve the competitiveness of the alumnus and other academic products. They can be achieved through the improvement of education quality. In order to achieve the education quality, Total Quality Management (TQM) is needed as a concept containing of good values for developing the organization in all fields. TQM has been widely adopted in several fields, especially, in business and economics, but values existed in quality

management can be implemented in educational field, such as at school.

The dynamics of organization can be seen from the creativity and initiative of people around it. If a certain vocational high school and human resources in the school expect a better performance quality, they should find out the way to benefit creativity and initiative potential in the human resources. The ways to benefit the potentials are basically actions of empowering by activities to improve the ability through the improvements of science and skills, to give authority or opportunity to initiate, to create, and to give motivation in order to participate in achieving a more qualified school performance.

## 2. Vocational High School Empowerment

From the organization's point of view, empowerment is a process to support the employees in determining the goals of their works and to give bigger authority to do decision making in their work range. The goal of empowerment is focused on the improvement of involvement (job-involvement) and employees' work satisfaction to improve the quality of outcomes and services [3].

Nowadays, the empowering concept is developed wider, by the development of empowering concepts that based on the human resources' point of views. [8], Wallace and Zeffane (2001) state that in fact empowerment is the development of creating a positive "can do" mentality among employees. This mentality of

“can do” comes from the self-beliefs of the employees in their abilities to do their works (self-efficacy). It is created through the process of developing employees’ competences, giving supports and persuasions continuously, as well as emotional and modeling supports from the leaders in their daily activities.

Besides that, it has been stated that empowerment is an activity focused on giving authority (liberating), not controlling, to the employees to actualize their energy and to balance (balancing) the achievement of the employees’ personal goals (self-development, welfare, etc.) and goals determined by the organization (productivity, efficiency, profitability, etc.).

In line with those concepts, [2] states that employees’ empowerment (individual empowerment) is giving opportunities and supports to the employees to empower their talents, skills, resources, and experiences to accomplish their works on time. The results of the implementation of the concept in several companies are the improvements of the efficiency and quality in production and services.

Schools need to do some efforts to improve the abilities of people around it, because improving the abilities is an empowerment action. It aims at developing the creativity and initiative of the people to try new ways in their works, so that they can give improvement and progress. In implementing TQM, institutionalizing the educational programs and trainings is an absolute decision.

According to Abraham Maslow, humans’ needs can be categorized hierarchically into five categories. They are physiology, safety, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs. For lower employees, the important needs may refer to physiology needs (food, clothing, housing, etc.) and safety (saving, etc.) in which they can be bought by using money in the modern life. Furthermore, duties which can give them money will be accomplished better, including duties to improve the performance quality. For middle-upper employees, the important needs are not physiology and safety anymore, but social, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs. The fulfillment or satisfaction of needs is not by using money but by using ability or self-achievement. Moreover, anything which can motivate these people can directly or indirectly improve their self-esteem. In this case, the discussion is focused on the importance of giving recognition and appreciation to people in order to do some effort to improve their performance quality. By recognizing and appreciating the contributions of the people in order to improve the quality of the school in which they are working, they feel their self-esteem will improve, and it makes them feel their efforts to fulfill their social needs will be easy. In order to

encourage people to improve their performance quality by implementing appreciation system suited to the needs of each group of individuals. Here, the emphasis should be put on the concept that appreciation is not always in the forms of money or material. Recognition and appreciation in public can motivate people to do better.

In order to encourage people to improve the quality (based on self-willingness), the people should get opportunity to act. The opportunity can be in the form of invitation from the leader or other people around them, or freedom to participate, the availability of the facilities to improve the quality, or in the form of authority to participate. Giving authority to everybody to improve their own performance quality is important to encourage their participation in improving the school quality. According to Margono, participation in an organization can be seen in the following chart.

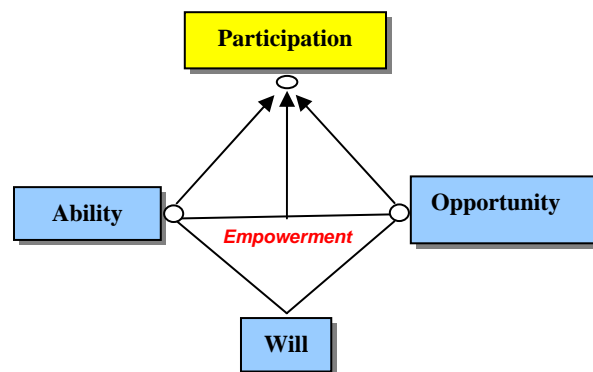


Figure 1. The Components of Empowerment

The figure above explains how participation can appear in an organization, it happens due to some factors, such as, ability, will, and opportunity. In school empowerment, it always needs to do some efforts related to how to create those three factors in everybody. The successful empowerment effort will change the work atmosphere, spirit of work, and cooperation spirit, in which they can create more qualified performance.

The human resources, such as, teachers and employees, including: technician, laboratory keeper, librarian, administration staff, receptionist, phone operator, cleaning staff, security, etc. are a team which is responsible about the overall school components in order to work better. The empowering team will cooperate to improve their performance continuously and achieve high productivity and quality levels. After the empowerment, the vocational high school will be structured well, so that people feel that they can achieve the results based on their expectations, they know what to do; not merely can do what they are asked to do and they get appreciations for what they have done.

### 3. Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management in educational field has grown since 1990s, especially after the publication of Total Quality Management in Education, written by Edward Sallis. The quality of education can be seen from two main points: focusing on educational process and educational outcome. Educational process can be referred to as qualified one, if the all of the educational components involve in the process. Educational process factors include some inputs, such as, materials, methodologies, school facilities, administration and infrastructure supports, other resources, and conducive atmosphere creation. While, education quality in the educational outcome context focuses on the headmaster's achievement in particular period.

[5] differentiates education quality into two; absolute and relative. According to absolute concept, something can be referred to as a qualified one if it fulfills the highest and the most perfect standard. It means that there is nothing better than the thing. If it is implemented in educational field, the absolute quality concept is elitist, because there are only few educational institutions which are able to offer the highest quality to the students and only few students who are able to pay for. In relative concept, a quality means fulfilling of the determined specifications and fitting for their purpose. Sallis states that a quality in relative concept is related to producer, so that the quality means the suitability of customers' specifications. In educational context, the quality in relative concept is especially related to the satisfaction of the customers. The customers or educational services consist of some components. There are at least four components [6] as follows.

Students, they can be called as primary clients or customers (primary external customers). Those who directly receive the benefits of educational services from the institution.

Clients related to people who send them to the educational institution,. They are parents or institutions in which they works, and they are called as secondary customers (secondary external customers).

Tertiary customers, those are the employments. They can be the government or the society who use the outcomes of the education (tertiary external customers).

Other customers, those who come from internal institutions; they are teachers, educational institution administration staff, and the leaders of educational institutions (internal customers). Though they are involved in the service process, they also include customers, if they are seen from the management relation. They concern with the improvement of the institutions, because the more advanced and qualified institutions the more

benefits they will get from them, both in pride and financial.

Based on those explanations, [7] adds that Total Quality Management has some characteristics as follows.

The focus on the customers. The customers are not only outside parties as the services buyers or products from the organization, but also the internal customers, who interact in one service to another in the organization.

The attention towards the development activities continuously. TQM has a commitment to never say satisfy with a certain quality. The expected quality is not only "good" but also "very good". An organization has a philosophy that a quality can always be improved.

The focus on the process. TQM focuses on the work process to create goods and services, so that the continuous development should be done.

The quality development in overall organization. TQM uses wide definitions of quality. It is not only related to the products and the final services, but also how the organization conducts the sending process, receiving complains, and dealing with complains politely.

Accurate measurement. TQM uses statistical technique to measure every important variable in the organization activities. It is conducted through comparing activities by using different standards or through benchmark activities to identify the problems, to find out the sources of the problems and to solve causes the problems.

Empowerment of the human resources. TQM places human as something that should be develop in order to develop the process. Team work should be developed in order to find and solve the problems in the organization.

It has been know that in relation to the process, TQM is based on the Deming's cycle called as PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act). The cycle can be seen from this following figure.



Figure 2. The PDCA Cycle from Edward Demings

All of the activities should be based on plan. Then a test should be done (Do) to avoid fatal errors. It is because one of TQM principals is emphasizing on the preventing actions than solving the problems. Data which is resulted from the

checking process (Check) will be used as the basis to make modifications. The results of the modifications will be used as the basis of the management process implementation (Act). The process is repeated, so that there is always a development process based evaluation and assessment results.

[4] explains that to achieve the educational quality, approach is needed, such as, the importance of mindset changing emphasize and empowerment of the stakeholders and institutions in educational field components, application of technology supporting the educational management system, and other strategic choices, so that, all of them can give supports in order to create good governance especially in educational field.

#### 4. The Empowerment of Vocational High School Based on Total Quality Concept

Every organization that wants to defend their existence by having those above characteristics is required to do some basic management change transformations. The history of Japan related to the growth of its industry after its lose in World War II, has proved that management system known as Total Quality Management/ Manajemen Mutu Terpadu (MMT) has encouraged Japan from the shattered country as the result of the war to be a country that is able to compete with other leading countries. Here is an effort of empowering the vocational high school based on total quality concept in order to improve the school to be qualified school that produce qualified and competitive employees in the global era.

[1], there are key components in the implementation of TQM in education as follows.

1. Getting the supports from all of the components in the school in a supervision chain.
2. The quality should be determined by the customers of the school.
3. The attention should be empasized on every process by continuously giving the idea of the improvement of school quality.
4. The school achievement should be achieved by understanding the vision, not by forcing the school regulations.
5. The school should produce students who have knowledge, skills, wise attitudes, having character and having emotional maturity.

#### 5. Conclusion

- 1 TQM is a movement based on human works in an organization or institution by always trying to achieve the best systematically, consistently, and continuously.
- 2 The implementation of TQM is the key point for every SMK to overcome the tighter

competition. The key components of the implementation of TQM at school are: getting supports from all of the school components, the quality should be determined by customers, the improvement of the school quality should be emphasized in every process continuously based on the vision understanding, and the school should produce students who have knowledge, skills, wise attitudes, having character and having emotional maturity.

#### 6. Suggestions

- 1 Schools should start to implement Total Quality Management to improve the quality of education in Indonesia.
- 2 In the implementation of TQM at schools, it should be implemented truly, so that the expected results can be achieved.
- 3 In the implementation of TQM at schools, some principals, requirements and four TQM philosophies should be considered, so that the implementation will be successful.

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