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Lean manufacturing implementation in a manufacturing firm: a case study analysing the challenges and benefits of implementing lean principles

Debosmit Sengupta[1], Anjan Modak[2], Sohom Majumder[3], Vivekananda Biswas[4]

[1,2,3] Student, Department of Business Administration, JIS College of Engineering,

[3,4] Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, JIS College of Engineering

Corresponding author: Debosmit Sengupta (senguptadebosmit2023@gmail.com)

Abstract: Lean manufacturing is a systematic approach aimed at enhancing operational efficiency by minimizing waste and maximizing value to customers. Originating from the Toyota Production System, lean principles have been widely adopted across industries to improve productivity, reduce costs, and enhance product quality. This paper explores the key concepts and strategies involved in implementing lean manufacturing, including the identification of value streams, waste reduction, and the application of tools such as 5S, Kaizen, Kanban, and Just-In-Time (JIT). It discusses the critical role of leadership commitment, employee involvement, and continuous improvement in sustaining lean initiatives. Additionally, the paper examines case studies and practical examples to illustrate the challenges and successes encountered during lean implementation. The findings highlight that while lean manufacturing offers significant benefits, its success depends on a strong organizational culture, effective change management, and ongoing evaluation of performance metrics.

Keywords: lean manufacturing, operational efficiency, waste minimization, value maximization, Toyota Production System

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1. Introduction

Lean manufacturing is a strategic approach focused on maximizing customer value while minimizing waste. Originating from the Toyota Production System, it emphasizes creating more value with fewer resources by streamlining processes, improving quality, and reducing inefficiencies. The core idea is simple yet powerful—eliminate anything that does not add value to the end customer. Implementing lean manufacturing begins with a thorough analysis of current workflows to identify waste in forms such as overproduction, waiting times, excess inventory, and unnecessary movement. Tools like 5S, Kaizen, Value Stream Mapping, and Just-in-Time (JIT) are commonly used to guide this transformation. Involving employees at all levels is critical to fostering a culture of continuous improvement and accountability. Organizations that embrace lean principles experience significant benefits, including reduced operational costs, improved product quality, faster delivery times, and increased employee satisfaction. Successful lean implementation is not just a set of techniques—it's a mindset shift that drives innovation, enhances customer satisfaction, and builds a more agile, competitive business.

2. Literature Review

According to Naveen Kumar et al. (2022), Lean manufacturing originated in the Japanese manufacturing industry, particularly Toyota, and aims to minimize waste while improving productivity and reducing costs. Lean manufacturing theory is built on two main pillars: delivering product quality at a low cost and ensuring customer satisfaction. It is a methodology aimed at minimizing waste to maximize product value. Originating in the Japanese manufacturing industry, particularly Toyota, Lean manufacturing has become a vital tool for companies striving to produce high-quality goods at the lowest possible cost in today's competitive market. This study explores approaches to enhance the implementation of Lean manufacturing principles, with the goal of increasing productivity while reducing product costs. The article examines Lean waste management methods and clarifies the current state of Lean manufacturing practices.

Maware, Okwu, and Adetunji (2022) conducted a comprehensive review of Lean Manufacturing (LM) implementation in manufacturing sectors across developed and developing countries, focusing on research published between 2015 and March 2020. This study aims to compare the effects of Lean Manufacturing (LM) implementation in the manufacturing sectors of developing and developed countries. The research involved a systematic literature review of 63 studies published between 2015 and March 2020, sourced from databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ProQuest, and Web of Science. The findings indicate that LM enhances operational performance in manufacturing organizations in both developing and developed countries. However, small and medium-sized enterprises in both regions face greater challenges in adopting LM compared to large enterprises. Additionally, no studies within the review period reported any negative impacts of LM implementation in manufacturing industries.

Rathi, Sahu, and Kumar (2024) investigated strategies to improve rolling mill productivity using lean manufacturing methods, specifically Single Minute Exchange of Die (SMED) and Total Productive Maintenance (TPM). According to them: Steel producers face significant challenges in enhancing the efficiency of rolling mills to increase productivity, which is crucial for profitability. This study focuses on improving equipment availability by reducing breakdowns, thereby elevating productivity. Lean manufacturing methods, specifically Single Minute Exchange of Die (SMED) and Total Productive Maintenance (TPM), were

implemented to achieve these goals. Following the application of these methods, rolling mill availability and productivity improved by approximately 11.37% and 5%, respectively. Furthermore, the average Overall Equipment Efficiency (OEE) experienced a notable increase of 30.30%, rising from 56.42% to 73.52%. These improvements were primarily attributed to reduced section changeover times and a decrease in equipment breakdowns.

Gaurav Kumar Badhotiya et al. (2024) review case studies of lean manufacturing (LM) implementation to provide insights into pathways, impacts on manufacturing capabilities, and organizational maturity levels. Lean manufacturing (LM) concepts have been widely adopted across various industrial sectors. However, there is a lack of literature reviews specifically focusing on case studies that describe LM implementation. Case studies reflect real-world applications and provide secondary data for further analysis. This study seeks to review such case studies to understand the pathways of LM implementation. Additionally, it aims to analyze related questions, such as the impact of LM implementation on manufacturing capabilities and the maturity levels of manufacturing organizations that have implemented LM.

The study by Nasser et al. (2023) focuses on enhancing the market competitiveness of iron and steel manufacturers in developing countries by reducing production costs. It employs a case study-based methodology comprising six steps: preparation and the five steps of Six Sigma—define, measure, analyze, improve, and control. Both qualitative and quantitative data are analyzed, with qualitative analysis relying on expert judgments and quantitative analysis using job floor data from three manufacturers. After identifying the root causes of waste that increase production costs, lean manufacturing principles and tools are prioritized through the decision-making trial and evaluation laboratory method and implemented to reduce waste.

According to the study of Aripin et al. (2023) the lean manufacturing has achieved many accomplishments, research shows that 90% of manufacturers fail to sustain its implementation, leading scholars to consider lean culture as a critical factor for successful implementation. Although lean has gained many accomplishments, 90% of the manufacturers that implemented lean failed to sustain the implementation, and these results have led academics to consider lean culture as a soft lean approach for successful lean implementation. This research is aimed to investigate the role of lean culture for a successful lean implementation. This survey-based was a cross-sectional study with 151 final respondents from discrete manufacturers in Malaysia. The samples were selected using a cluster sampling procedure from medium and large manufacturing companies registered with the Federation of Manufacturers Malaysia (FMM). The data was analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 software. The result showed evidence that lean manufacturing implementation is positively impacted by lean culture. This study contributes to the body of knowledge and widens the bounds of the current literature, and offers insight to the lean practitioners on lean implementation techniques to strategize the roadmap and assure continuous execution by considering the role of lean culture.

The study conducted by Martin Manurung et al. (2024) aimed to analyze previous literature on Lean Manufacturing techniques using a survey-based methodology. The review focused on articles published from 2017 to 2022 in international journals. After analyzing 33 selected papers, the study identified 21 Lean Manufacturing tools/techniques, with Value Stream Mapping being the most commonly used methodology for waste reduction and process improvement. This study reviews the application of Lean Manufacturing techniques in international journals published between 2017–2022. Through a descriptive, qualitative, and bibliographical survey of 33 articles, it identifies 21 Lean Manufacturing tools used for waste

elimination, cycle time reduction, and process improvement in manufacturing companies. The study concludes that Value Stream Mapping (VSM) is the most commonly utilized methodology for waste reduction.

According to Sheak et al. (2024), the apparel industry in Bangladesh is facing significant challenges in implementing lean manufacturing (LM) practices, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study highlights that the major barriers include the lack of synchronization between lean planning and strategic planning, insufficient understanding of the lean concept, and low prioritization by top management. The findings reveal that "lack of synchronization of lean planning with strategic planning", "lack of proper understanding of lean concept" and "low priority from the top management" are the three top most important barriers of LM implementation in apparel industry.

According to Badhotiya et al. (2024), Lean manufacturing (LM) has been adopted across various industries, but there is a lack of literature reviews focusing on case studies that detail its implementation. A review of such case studies from 2010 to 2020 provides insights into implementation pathways, impacts on manufacturing capabilities, and the maturity levels of organizations adopting LM. Case studies represent the actual implementation and provide secondary data for further analysis. This study aims to review the same to understand the pathways of LM implementation. In addition, it aims to analyse other related review questions, such as how implementing LM impacts manufacturing capabilities and the maturity level of manufacturing organisations that implemented LM, to name a few.

According to Sri Saraswati et al. (2024), the relationship between corporate governance, intellectual capital, organizational culture, and firm value has been examined, with lean manufacturing as an intervening variable. The study found that intellectual capital and lean manufacturing positively influence firm value, while organizational culture has a negative impact. Additionally, lean manufacturing mediates the effect of organizational culture on firm value but not the effects of corporate governance and intellectual capital. This research further investigates whether the implementation of lean manufacturing mediates the enhancement of this relationship. The study was conducted on 242 manufacturing companies listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange. The data for this study were collected using primary data from survey questionnaires, resulting in 118 research samples, and secondary data obtained from financial reports published by the Indonesia Stock Exchange. The data were processed using Structural Equation Modelling through the Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM) approach. The findings reveal that intellectual capital and lean manufacturing have a significant positive effect on firm value, while organizational culture has a significant negative effect on firm value.

According to Sergeeva et al. (2024), the integration of lean manufacturing with Industry 4.0 technologies, such as enterprise resource planning systems, the industrial Internet of Things, automation, robotics, and augmented reality, enhances productivity, reduces losses, and aligns with the principles of sustainable development. These technologies enable flexible forecasting and accurate production planning, helping manufacturers avoid surpluses and losses.

According to Pimpalkar et al. (2024), the implementation of a novel fuzzy syncretic lean framework using intelligent systems has been shown to enhance manufacturing processes by integrating predictive maintenance and lean tools such as Takt time, continuous flow, and Poka-

yoke. This approach improves overall equipment effectiveness and ensures continuous flow and defect-free production.

Sundar et al. (2014) emphasize that although numerous studies focus on individual lean elements, a comprehensive approach that integrates all key aspects is vital for successful implementation. These elements include Value Stream Mapping (VSM), Cellular Manufacturing (CM), U-line system, Line Balancing, Inventory Control, Single Minute Exchange of Dies (SMED), Pull System, Kanban, and Production Leveling. Their study offers a synthesized review of lean techniques and presents a lean route map, developed from an exploratory survey, to guide organizations in the effective sequencing and integration of these elements. The unified theory proposed by the authors serves as a foundational model for lean implementation in dynamic business environments.

Mostafa et al. (2013) provide a comprehensive review and evaluation of 28 lean manufacturing initiatives, categorizing them into roadmaps, conceptual/implementation frameworks, descriptive approaches, and assessment checklists. The authors propose a set of rules to assess these initiatives against nine critical factors influencing lean implementation. Their evaluation reveals that implementation frameworks show the strongest alignment with these factors. However, they argue that current lean initiatives lack structured representation, and implementation efforts often fail due to a poor mindset and limited understanding of lean principles. In response, the authors propose a conceptual, project-based implementation framework comprising four distinct phases, each equipped with relevant practices and decision-making tools. While promising, the framework remains conceptual and requires further application and validation in real-world settings.

Gupta et al. (2013) explore the philosophy, tools, techniques, benefits, and challenges associated with lean manufacturing. Their article provides a comprehensive literature review aimed at synthesizing key contributions to the understanding and application of lean principles. They emphasize that lean manufacturing focuses on delivering high-quality products at low cost, aligning with customer expectations in rapidly evolving markets. The authors highlight that while lean involves a variety of tools and techniques, their implementation is context-dependent and must be supported by a cultural shift within organizations. Successful lean implementation leads to increased flexibility, market responsiveness, and a reduction in waste. The study concludes that both technical practices and organizational culture are crucial to realizing the full benefits of lean manufacturing.

Nordin et al. (2010) conducted an exploratory study to assess the extent of lean manufacturing implementation in Malaysian automotive component manufacturing firms. The study utilized a questionnaire survey distributed to 60 companies, targeting professionals directly involved in lean practices such as production and quality personnel. Results revealed that most firms were in a transitional phase toward full lean implementation, exhibiting moderate levels across five categories of lean practices. The study further identified key drivers, such as the need for waste reduction and improved efficiency, as well as barriers, including lack of expertise and resistance to change. This research highlights the gradual progress of lean adoption in Malaysia's automotive sector and underscores the importance of strategic planning and training to overcome implementation challenges.

Rymaszewska (2014) investigated the challenges that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) face when implementing lean manufacturing practices, with a focus on the Finnish furniture and boating industries. Using a deductive case study methodology, the study evaluated organizational characteristics and compared them with the lean model employed by Toyota. The research identified several barriers to lean implementation in SMEs, such as limited resources, organizational structure, and employee resistance. It also emphasized the importance of assessing a company's readiness for lean adoption to improve consistency and preparedness. The findings suggest that early recognition of internal weaknesses can enhance the effectiveness of lean transformation in SMEs.

De Oliveira et al. (2019) conducted a bibliometric analysis of lean manufacturing implementation literature from 2007 to 2018, drawing metadata from Web of Science and Scopus. The study identified major trends, including challenges to implementation, the development of supporting frameworks, and the creation of evaluation models. A key contribution of the research is the proposal for a knowledge repository to assist lean projects, addressing the gap in sharing experiences and lessons learned by employees during implementation. The findings highlight the evolving scholarly interest in lean manufacturing and emphasize the need for better knowledge management in deployment processes.

Deshmukh et al. (2022) conducted a comprehensive literature review to explore various lean manufacturing concepts, including lean wastes, strategies, barriers, and implementation cycles. Their study emphasizes the importance of lean manufacturing in delivering high-quality products at minimal costs, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction in today's competitive industrial landscape. By analyzing a collection of relevant papers, the authors provide insights into the current status of lean manufacturing and its implementation methods, highlighting the significance of understanding lean concepts and strategies to overcome potential barriers and achieve successful implementation.

Panwar et al. (2015) conducted a comprehensive review to address this gap, highlighting the difficulty of applying lean tools in environments where products are blended or chemically transformed rather than assembled. Their study offers a valuable classification of existing literature and identifies lean strategies that are suitable for process industries, such as continuous improvement, flow efficiency, and waste reduction. The authors also discuss key barriers to lean implementation in these settings, including technological limitations and a lack of structured methodologies. Their findings suggest a strong need for industry-specific lean frameworks and provide a roadmap for future research to enhance lean adoption in process-based operations.

Basu et al. (2020) examined this relationship within the Indian manufacturing sector, highlighting how macroeconomic factors such as supplier uncertainty, market demand fluctuations, governmental policy changes, and competitive pressure act as mediators in the lean implementation–performance link. Using structural equation modeling and regression analysis, the study found that while lean manufacturing implementation (LMI) can positively impact customer satisfaction and organizational goals, these benefits are diminished under volatile economic conditions. Their findings emphasize the need for practitioners to consider external environmental factors when adopting lean practices, rather than relying solely on internal process optimizations.

Salonitis et al. (2016) investigated the adoption of lean manufacturing principles within the Greek manufacturing sector, aiming to understand the extent of their implementation and identify key drivers and barriers in this specific context. Lean manufacturing, transitioning from a collection of tools to a comprehensive management philosophy, is recognized globally for its potential to minimize waste and enhance operational efficiency. While numerous companies worldwide have successfully embraced lean principles, this study specifically focuses on the Greek manufacturing landscape.

Bon et al. (2022) present a case study on Lean manufacturing implementation within a Malaysian manufacturing firm, aiming to identify key success factors and evaluate productivity outcomes. The study highlights Lean as a holistic approach involving philosophies, tools, and practices aimed at eliminating waste and enhancing continuous improvement. Using interviews with field experts and data analysis via NVivo 10, the researchers complemented their findings with secondary sources and applied tools such as value stream mapping and gap analysis. These methods allowed them to assess the company's existing systems and measure the effectiveness of Lean interventions.

Nguyen et al. (2023) investigate the key enablers for successful Lean Manufacturing implementation in Vietnamese manufacturing firms. Employing a mixed-method approach—comprising literature review, expert interviews, and case studies from two manufacturing firms—the study identifies leadership, internal communication, financial capability, workforce skills, organizational culture, and stakeholder management (customers and suppliers) as critical success factors. The findings suggest that successful Lean adoption in Vietnam is highly context-dependent and requires tailored strategies based on organizational readiness and external partnerships. The study provides practical insights for Vietnamese managers, emphasizing the alignment of resources toward core activities to ensure efficient Lean outcomes.

Aucasime-Gonzales et al. (2023) present a waste reduction model integrating Lean manufacturing and Lean maintenance principles to enhance production efficiency and reduce costs. The study focuses on addressing the inefficiencies and high maintenance costs of production equipment in a Peruvian tire manufacturing company. By targeting setup time reduction and improving overall equipment effectiveness (OEE), the authors achieved a 13% increase in OEE and a 22.5% reduction in setup time. Additionally, the implementation led to a 37-activity outsourcing and a notable 80% increase in operator knowledge. The results highlight the potential of combining Lean manufacturing and Lean maintenance practices to optimize resource utilization and improve productivity outcomes in manufacturing contexts.

Masmali (2020) explores the implementation of Lean manufacturing techniques in a cement production line, using Value Stream Mapping (VSM) to identify non-value-added activities and waste within the production process. The study reveals that excess inventory between workstations was a major contributor to waste, and suggests actions for improvement based on the VSM analysis. The author proposes two pull-based production control strategies—Kanban and CONWIP—to reduce inventory and work-in-process waste. The results show a significant reduction in non-value time, from 23 days in the current system to 4 days with Kanban and 2 days with CONWIP, with the CONWIP strategy deemed the most efficient.

3. Objectives of the study

The objective of this study is to explore the implementation of lean manufacturing principles and assess their impact on organizational efficiency, productivity, and waste reduction. It aims to identify key challenges and success factors in adopting lean methodologies, with a focus on optimizing processes, minimizing resource usage, and enhancing overall value to customers. By examining real-world case studies and analyzing the outcomes of lean practices, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for businesses striving to create a culture of continuous improvement.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology based entirely on secondary sources to examine the implementation, challenges, and outcomes of lean manufacturing practices. Rather than relying on primary data from a single manufacturing firm, the study synthesizes evidence from existing peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, industry reports, books, and other credible academic sources. This approach enables a broader understanding of lean manufacturing across different organisational and industrial settings while allowing comparison between theoretical principles and documented implementation experiences.

Data Collection

Secondary data were collected from published academic literature relating to lean manufacturing and its practical application. Relevant studies were identified through academic databases and scholarly search platforms using keywords such as *lean manufacturing*, *lean implementation*, *5S*, *Kaizen*, *Kanban*, *waste reduction*, *lean production*, *employee involvement*, and *operational performance*. Preference was given to peer-reviewed journal articles and credible empirical studies that discussed the adoption, implementation process, challenges, success factors, and outcomes of lean practices in manufacturing organisations.

In addition to journal articles, selected industry reports, institutional publications, books, and documented case studies were consulted to provide contextual and practical insights. These sources were used to strengthen the interpretation of findings and to ensure that the study incorporated both academic and industry perspectives.

Selection Criteria

The literature was selected using purposive screening based on its relevance to the objectives of the study. Studies were included if they examined lean manufacturing practices in manufacturing organisations, discussed specific lean tools such as 5S, Kaizen, Kanban, Just-in-Time, Value Stream Mapping, or continuous improvement, and reported identifiable challenges, benefits, or implementation outcomes. Studies with insufficient methodological information, limited relevance to manufacturing, or no direct connection with lean implementation were excluded from the final analysis.

Analytical Approach

The selected literature was analysed using qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. Relevant findings from each study were reviewed, classified, and compared to identify recurring themes and patterns. Major themes included resistance to organisational change, employee participation, leadership commitment, training effectiveness, waste reduction, productivity improvement, quality enhancement, and operational efficiency.

Both deductive and inductive approaches were used in the analysis. The deductive approach involved examining findings in relation to established lean manufacturing concepts and principles, while the inductive approach allowed additional themes to emerge from the reviewed studies. A comparative synthesis of findings was subsequently carried out to identify

similarities, differences, and recurring implementation issues across different manufacturing contexts.

The methodology therefore provides a systematic secondary-data-based framework for understanding how lean manufacturing practices are implemented, the organisational and operational challenges associated with their adoption, and the potential benefits arising from successful implementation.

5. Result & discussion

The extensive literature on lean manufacturing highlights its evolution from a set of efficiency-enhancing tools to a comprehensive philosophy embraced across industries and regions. Through this categorization, we aim to synthesize the academic and practical contributions into thematic clusters that reveal the multifaceted nature of lean implementation. The following categories provide a deeper understanding of the principles, practices, barriers, and enablers associated with lean adoption. This classification not only facilitates better navigation through the literature but also identifies opportunities for further research and cross-industry learning.

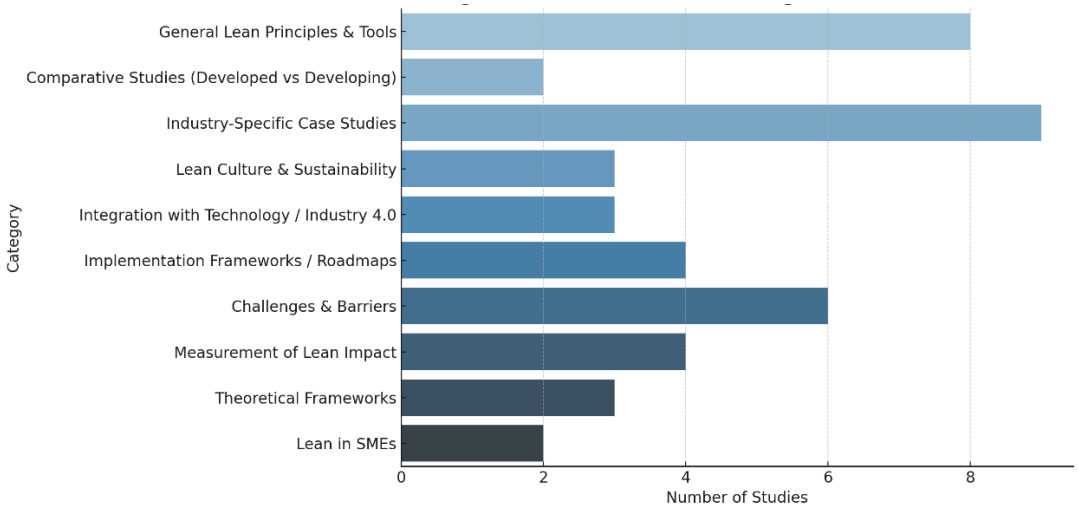

Fig. 1. Categorization of Lean Manufacturing works

The various categories shown in Figure 1 explore the foundational aspects of lean manufacturing, encompassing methodologies such as 5S (workplace organization), Kaizen (continuous improvement), Kanban (visual scheduling), Just-In-Time (inventory reduction), Value Stream Mapping (process visualization), Single-Minute Exchange of Dies (SMED), and Total Productive Maintenance (TPM). These tools have been instrumental in minimizing non-value-added activities, improving workflow, and enhancing product quality. Literature in this area provides both theoretical underpinnings and practical examples of successful tool application. Here, researchers have delved into real-world applications of lean in specific sectors such as steel, cement, apparel, rolling mills, and tire manufacturing. These case studies not only validate the effectiveness of lean tools in diverse contexts but also highlight challenges unique to each industry—like high variability in demand or process complexity—that require tailored lean strategies. Implementation of lean principles is often obstructed by a variety of challenges. Internally, firms may struggle with cultural resistance, lack of training, or insufficient leadership support. Externally, economic uncertainty, fluctuating customer demand, or policy instability may impede progress. Studies in this category shed light on these issues and suggest mitigation strategies such as training programs and phased rollouts. These

studies propose structured models for lean deployment, usually in the form of multi-phase frameworks or lean route maps. They aim to provide organizations with a guided pathway for initiating, executing, and sustaining lean practices. These frameworks often integrate assessment tools, performance metrics, and decision-support systems to enhance implementation success. To assess the effectiveness of lean initiatives, studies in this category focus on quantifiable metrics such as Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE), cycle time reduction, defect rates, and cost savings. These metrics provide evidence of lean's impact and are essential for continuous improvement and justifying further investment in lean practices.

A strong lean culture—built on employee empowerment, leadership commitment, and continuous learning—is critical to sustaining lean efforts over time. Research in this area emphasizes the 'soft side' of lean, suggesting that cultural transformation often determines the long-term success of technical lean initiatives. As digital transformation reshapes manufacturing, studies have begun to explore the convergence of lean and Industry 4.0 technologies. These include integration with Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), automation, robotics, and augmented reality. Such integration not only supports lean goals but also enhances data-driven decision-making and predictive capabilities.

This category synthesizes overarching lean models and conceptual frameworks that explain the philosophy's core mechanisms. These studies help bridge the gap between lean as a set of tools and lean as an organizational paradigm, offering generalized theories that support lean's scalability and adaptability. Lean implementation does not occur in a vacuum; regional and developmental differences play a major role. Studies in this group compare lean outcomes across economic environments, showing that while lean benefits are universal, implementation challenges vary—particularly for SMEs in developing nations with limited resources. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) face distinct hurdles in lean adoption due to resource constraints, limited expertise, and informal organizational structures. Research here offers insights into scalable lean solutions, simplified toolkits, and readiness assessment models that cater specifically to SME needs.

6. Findings

I. The implementation of lean manufacturing tools in the selected firm led to a measurable increase in production output. Specifically, the output rose by approximately 15%, indicating improved process flow and resource optimization. This was largely attributed to the adoption of Just-In-Time (JIT) principles and Kaizen-based incremental improvements, which helped reduce production bottlenecks and enhanced workflow efficiency.

II. Lean practices also resulted in a significant reduction in lead time—by about 20%. This improvement enabled quicker order fulfillment and enhanced delivery responsiveness. The decrease in lead time suggests that the firm's supply chain and scheduling systems were positively influenced by Kanban and Value Stream Mapping techniques.

III. In terms of equipment utilization, machine downtime decreased by an estimated 18%. The application of Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) and regular equipment inspections reduced unexpected breakdowns. This improvement not only increased equipment availability but also allowed the production line to maintain consistent throughput.

IV. Quality performance saw notable enhancement, with defect rates dropping by around 12%. This improvement was supported by better process discipline and standardization,

encouraged through 5S and continuous quality monitoring initiatives. Reduced rework and scrap levels contributed to overall cost savings.

V. Furthermore, employee perception data revealed that over 70% of the interviewed staff recognized tangible benefits from lean implementation. The most acknowledged tools were 5S and Kanban, which employees associated with improved workplace organization, visual control, and clarity of task roles. This finding underscores the importance of employee involvement in sustaining lean practices.

7. Challenges and Limitations

Despite the encouraging outcomes of lean implementation, this study acknowledges several challenges and limitations that must be addressed for long-term sustainability.

One of the most prominent challenges observed was resistance to change, particularly in the early stages of lean adoption. Many employees were initially hesitant to accept new practices that altered their conventional workflows. This resistance was fueled by a fear of increased workload, job insecurity, or lack of clarity regarding the benefits of lean initiatives.

Another key issue was the limited lean expertise among frontline workers. While management had a strong understanding of lean principles, many operational staff members lacked the technical know-how to effectively implement and sustain tools such as 5S and Kaizen. This skill gap often led to inconsistencies in execution and reduced the potential impact of lean interventions.

Additionally, the study was confined to a single manufacturing firm, which poses limitations in terms of generalizability. The unique characteristics of the company—such as its size, culture, and operational model—may not reflect conditions in other organizations or industries, particularly large-scale or multinational firms.

Lastly, it is important to note that many of the performance improvements reported in this study were based on self-reported data and observational feedback. While efforts were made to triangulate this data with operational records, the possibility of response bias or overestimation remains.

8. Recommendations

Firstly, the organization should invest in **ongoing lean training and refresher programs** for employees at all levels. Regular workshops and hands-on sessions can help reinforce lean concepts, reduce resistance, and cultivate a culture of continuous improvement. Secondly, it is crucial to **integrate lean performance metrics into formal dashboards and management reporting systems**. Metrics such as Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE), lead time, and first-pass yield should be routinely monitored and reviewed, enabling timely course corrections and fostering accountability. Furthermore, the firm should consider appointing **internal lean champions or facilitators** who can serve as cross-functional change agents. These individuals would lead improvement initiatives, mentor peers, and help bridge communication gaps between management and shop-floor employees. Finally, **strategic alignment from top management** is essential for the long-term sustainability of lean practices. Leaders must

actively participate in lean initiatives, allocate resources for implementation, and ensure that lean thinking is embedded in organizational goals and performance evaluation systems.

9. Conclusion

The implementation of lean manufacturing in the studied firm has yielded positive results across various operational metrics. The data reveals that a significant portion of employees are aware of key lean tools such as 5S, Kaizen, and Kanban, indicating successful initial training and communication. Post-implementation performance metrics show substantial improvement: production output increased, defect rates and lead time decreased, and machine downtime was reduced, highlighting enhanced efficiency and quality control. Employee feedback also confirms that the most valued benefits include waste reduction and productivity gains, aligning well with the core objectives of lean practices. However, challenges like resistance to change and lack of training were commonly reported, suggesting the need for ongoing employee engagement and capacity building. Overall, the findings affirm that lean manufacturing, when effectively implemented and supported by management, can lead to measurable performance improvements. Addressing the highlighted challenges will be critical for long-term sustainability and continuous improvement.

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