

Lean Manufacturing: Can it be Applied Successfully within the Higher Education Sector?

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present the findings of a research project which aims to determine if and how lean manufacturing principles can be applied to the Higher Education sector. The research is based on a comparative qualitative analysis of literature and semi-structured interviews with those involved in lean implementation across a number of sectors including Higher Education. It is shown that while lean projects can be successful at a local level, a more strategic approach is required to ensure a culture for continuous improvement and full implementation of lean principles is achieved. Furthermore, critical success factors are identified at all levels of implementation. The practical implication of this work is to provide a framework which will help in the planning and implementation stages of applying lean manufacturing to the Higher Education Sector. The value of the work which this paper conveys is the presentation of a framework, informed by best practice and lessons learned in implementing lean manufacturing and which can be applied to the higher education sector.

Keywords: Lean practices, best practice, higher education.

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