

Article Abstract

Title:	The use of continuous improvement techniques: A survey-based study of current practices
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Abstract:	Today, the long-term health of any organization depends on their commitment to continuous improvement. Prior research has focused mainly on the effect of continuous improvement practices on performance. In contrast, this research collected data through a survey administered across multiple industries throughout the U.S. and identified the continuous improvement techniques (i.e., lean and quality improvement methods) that practitioners have successfully implemented within their organizations. It also examined the perceived effectiveness and the challenges/reasons for failure associated with these techniques, as well as determined whether implementation and effectiveness differ between types of operations (i.e., manufacturing versus service). Hence, this research provides a starting point for deploying lean and/or quality initiatives throughout an organization. It also provides guidance for practitioners about what tools are effective in a given situation and what problems they should try to anticipate/overcome when implementing continuous improvement techniques.
Keywords:	Continuous improvement methods, lean, quality management, Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, Six Sigma, Toyota Production System (TPS)