

Review

A Review of the Literature on Lean Leadership Practices

Gregory, PhD*

Department of Artificial Intelligence, Washington, DC, USA

Corresponding author*Gregory, PhD**

Department of Artificial Intelligence, Washington, DC, USA

Article information**Received:** March 26th, 2023; **Revised:** June 10th, 2023; **Accepted:** June 20th, 2023; **Published:** July 5th, 2023**Cite this article**Fant. A review of the literature on lean leadership practices. *lts*. 2023; 1(1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.70705/ppp.lts.2023.v01.i01.pp1-2>**ABSTRACT**

A literature review on lean leadership approaches is presented in this work. We start with a short literature review on lean history and origins, then move on to a brief introduction to lean principles, building blocks, and prominent implementation frameworks. Finally, we review the scarce literature on lean leadership, breaking it down into tools, practices, attributes, and frameworks. For businesses planning to implement a lean business system, there is a lack of a comprehensive and actionable leadership model in the existing literature. The need of a well crafted, evidence-based leadership paradigm is highlighted by this review. Additionally, it delves into the need of creating fresh lean tools for leadership or modifying current lean tools to handle leadership responsibilities.

Keywords

Topics covered include; Lean management; Lean culture; Lean leadership; Lean failure; Lean success; Lean culture as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

Everything about a growing company is certain to becoming more complicated and harder to manage, from the internal workings of the company to the nature and variety of its goods to the connections it has with its customers. Typically, an organization's adaptability and performance are negatively affected by its complexity, leading to a point when it becomes unsustainable. Proficient and astute company executives see the need for change or improvement projects early on. Despite this critical necessity, the data show that it is often disregarded until a major catastrophe occurs. Many new change management strategies have emerged and been put into use throughout the years. Famous modern change approaches like TQM, Six Sigma, and lean were all codified and recorded during the scientific management period following in the 1880s. All of these approaches have been successful to varying degrees, but they are either vague when it comes to generalizing their results or are only applicable to specific improvement initiatives at certain times.

From its humble beginnings as "lean manufacturing" in the manufacturing sector, one of the most well-known and respected change approaches, "lean" has expanded into a system-wide approach to continuous improvement. In modern parlance, this is known as lean management or lean thinking. Because it is an all-encompassing and ever-evolving approach for transformation, lean thinking affects every facet and function of a company. Hence, lean

is more than simply a list of separate improvement initiatives, unlike other change techniques. However, the desired effects have not been delivered by lean to the same extent as anticipated.

Not only have pioneers of lean, like Toyota, and some of its successors, like Wire Mold, been able to reap astonishing benefits from adopting lean as their change strategy, but they have also been able to sustain these benefits over long periods of time, proving that their success was not an accident. While there are a few of notable exceptions, most lean transformation initiatives either completely bomb or fall well short of objectives. According to a 2007 study by Industry Week, only 2% of lean initiatives really achieved their goals. In reality, most firms either fail during the first deployment or are unable to maintain the advantages of using lean concepts and technologies, despite how easy they appear.

METHODOLOGY

Google Scholar, IEEE Xplore, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Emerald, and Engineering Village were the seven primary database search engines used for literature searches.

In the beginning, 86 documents and after doing the searches After a brief evaluation, 48 articles were chosen for further consideration based on their relevance and usefulness. In addition to the articles that made the cut, this literature review also makes use of fifteen books that were deemed to offer pertinent material.

CONCLUSIONS

The academic emphasis has been on Toyota Production System (TPS), often called “lean,” for over 25 years now, thanks to Womack and Jones. There are many books, articles, and papers that attempt to define lean or provide a fast prescription for lean, but the more nuanced parts of lean, such as the principles of respect for people, lean culture, leadership needs, and change management, are seldom addressed. Unfortunately, there has been a plethora of study on the causes of difficulties due to the poor success rate of lean attempts. The identified failure reasons and obstacles show the presence of the same issue in the sector, which is dominated by the human-related and intangible parts of lean. Leadership that has the greatest possible impact on every facet of human life is one of the most pressing issues in this area. Nevertheless, this literature study shows that academicians and lean writers have not paid enough attention to the need of lean leadership, which is problematic given the scarcity of resources on the issue.

REFERENCES

1. Pyzdek T. *The Six Sigma Handbook: An All-Inclusive Resource for Six Sigma Practitioners, Advanced Practitioners, and Managers of All Perlevels I worked for McGraw-Hill*. 2003
2. Emiliani ML, Emiliani M. Music as a framework to better understand lean leadership. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. 2013; 34: 407-426. doi: [10.1108/LODJ-11-0088](https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-11-0088)
3. Taylor A, Taylor M, McSweeney A. Seeking a deeper understanding of lean system performance and survival. *International Journal of Production Research*. 2013; 51(6):700-6630.
4. Samuel D, Found P, Williams SJ. Examined the impact of publishing *The Machine That Changed the World* on management theory and practice. Celebrating Lean Literature’s 25th Anniversary. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*. 2015; 35(4): 1386-1407.
5. This is according to Parkes. *Management*. 2015; 19: 106-121.
6. Holm. *Frontiers in Leadership Research* titled “Leadership for Lean Operations.” 2010; 4.
7. Emiliani ML, Stec DJ. “Leaders Lost in Transformation”. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*. 2005; 26: 370-387.
8. Dombrowski U, Mielke T. Lean leadership: Foundational principles and their application. *Procedia CIRP*. 2013; 7: 569-574.
9. Poksinska B, Swartling D, Drotz E. The daily work of lean leaders—lessons from manufacturing and healthcare. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*. 2013; 24: 886-898. doi: [10.1080/14783363.2013.791098](https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2013.791098)