Abstract

The Lean approach has been widely and successfully applied in the manufacturing, but it has been a challenge to transition this program into knowledge work-based operations. In our paper, we develop our research model that discuss and analyze the principles, challenges, and benefits of implementing the Lean strategy in knowledge work. Our paper answers questions about whether Lean is an applicable path to realizing the competitive business potential in knowledge work.

Lean management or lean strategy is a concept that gained momentum and popularity in the 2000's. Most companies became aware of Lean given the acclaimed success that Toyota had with implementing it into their organization. Our paper examines whether Lean strategies can be used to gain competitiveness in knowledge work by examining a number of ideas such as: benefits and challenges of Lean, whether Lean can be adopted by industries that rely on knowledge work to gain a competitive advantage, and the leadership needed for successful implementation of Lean in knowledge work. Our paper helps reveal that Lean is not only geared towards manufacturing industries, but it can also be applied to various industries given that certain conditions are met. According to Staats and Upton (2009), the collection of ideas that are termed Lean are based on the following principles "relentless attention to detail, commitment to data-driven experimentation, and charging workers with the ongoing task of increasing efficiency and eliminating waste in their jobs". The concepts of Lean as shown in our research model, Figure 1, can help businesses explore what customers find valuable. This knowledge then allows entities to improve and enhance their value creating processes by cutting out waste and perfecting operations, so that the service flows effectively and efficiently (Elias, 2016).

References
