ECONOMIC TRENDS AND BUSINESS REVIEW
editor@etbrjournal.com
https://etbrjournal.com
VOLUME: 03 ISSUE: 01 (2025)
ISSN(Print) : 3106-0927 ISSN (Online) : 3106-0935
Received: January 25, 2025 Revised: February 26, 2025 Accepted: March 25, 2025 Available Online: June 30, 2025

The Effect of Lean Manufacturing Practices on Operational Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of Lean Manufacturing (LM) practices on operational performance using a mixed-methods experimental design that integrates both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data were collected through surveys, interviews, and company-level performance indicators across multiple manufacturing sectors. The results demonstrate that the adoption of lean practices such as Just-in-Time (JIT), Kaizen, 5S, and Value Stream Mapping significantly improves key operational dimensions, including productivity, cost reduction, defect minimization, supplier performance, and employee engagement. Nine comprehensive tables and twelve graphical visualizations provided robust evidence of performance gains, where regression analysis confirmed a strong positive relationship between lean practices and the operational performance index. Scatter plot findings revealed that cultural readiness and employee involvement moderate the extent of lean's effectiveness, while hybrid plots further validated the multi-dimensional nature of performance improvements. Thematic analysis of qualitative data underscored managerial perspectives on sustainability, workforce empowerment, and supplier collaboration, aligning with the quantitative results. Overall, the study highlights that lean manufacturing is not a universal blueprint but a context-sensitive operational philosophy whose success depends on organizational culture, leadership, and continuous improvement commitment. These findings contribute both theoretically and practically by offering evidence-based insights for policymakers, managers, and practitioners seeking to achieve operational excellence and long-term competitiveness through lean practices.

KEYWORDS: *Lean Manufacturing, Operational Performance, Just-In-Time, Kaizen, Employee Engagement, Continuous Improvement*

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are always seeking powerful means to contribute to operational performance in a dynamic industrial environment. This is normally quantified on the basis of criteria such as productivity, lead time, quality, cost effectiveness and flexibility. Lean Manufacturing (LM) is one of these tactics that stand out to help maximize value, eliminate waste, and streamline the operations. Having the origin in the Toyota Production System, it has always paid a lot of attention to such concepts as continuous improvement and just-in-time production, which assists businesses in the setting of operational excellence. Wikipedia. The productivity of manufacturing operations in a wide range of industries and business locations has been demonstrated to be enhanced by implementation of Lean approaches to manufacturing, as studies have depicted over the last three years 2018 to 2021. Improvements in 5S, Jidoka (Automation), Just-in-time or JIT, equipment location and kaizen (continuous improvement) have proved to be quite effective in enhancing operations within the textile industries of Pakistan. These advantages are savings in cost, enhanced productivity and more worker involvement (e.g. involving customers, suppliers and workers). (2021) ResearchGate. Likewise, Buer et al. (2021) observed the synergistic impact of digitalization and lean in Norway and recorded significant improvements in the operational results, which highlights the possible synergies between lean and new technologies.

Sciencedirect.com/mu03qaltiesTaylor & Francis Online/mu19 anthR Similarly, Hardcopf (2021) noted that the nature of the performance that the lean manufacturing is trying to attain and the organizational culture of the firm would inform the degree of influence of the lean manufacturing on the operational performance. ScienceDirect+1. This can provide an indepth perspective which indicates that in spite of the trends being underlying that lean was contributing to gains, the extent to which it contributes to gains depends on internal context and strategy focus. Even the small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are still under the influence of Lean. In a case study of a Malaysian stationery business (2022), the Lean techniques employed to eliminate the seven wastes enhanced the operational efficiency of the company considerably

ijisrt.com+15researchonline.ljmu.ac.uk+15Emerald+illyClassNameveesb Republican National Convention Another study found that, using approximately 25 lean tools in a systematic manner, there was a substantial improvement in operational efficiency achieved by the garment industry in terms of enhanced quality, savings costs, safety, speed and staff morale. ResearchGate. Even reviews of scholarly literature conserve Lean advantage in operations. The 2023 evaluation provided by Kourriche et al. evaluated the impact of lean manufacturing on performance and provided evidence that it had positive influence on several aspects, such as cost, quality, lead time, adaptability, and sustainability. Aasmr. Moreover, a broader literature review has taken place across 20202024 revealing that some critical lean concepts remain applicable, whilst there is a need to address the concerns of sustainability and integration into Industry 4.0. The above cross-industry validations of the Lean Manufacturing process in enhancing business operations on a multi-pronged approach such as in waste reduction, enhanced quality, quicker throughput, cost and culminating on improved morale of employees, further bear testimonial on the effectiveness of the Lean Manufacturing process on improving business operations. Certain scholars have pointed out that the effectiveness of lean is situation specific. Organizational culture influences the

scale of occurrence of positive changes in specific performance indicators, Hardcopf (2021) cautioned. ResearchGate+15 ScienceDirect+15 As mentioned by Buer et al. (2021), each strategy is disadvantaged once implemented alone, but in combination with a digitalization strategy, greater efficacy could be attained. Available at Taylor & Francis/online.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

Even reviews of scholarly literature conserve Lean advantage in operations. The 2023 evaluation provided by Kourriche et al. evaluated the impact of lean manufacturing on performance and provided evidence that it had positive influence on several aspects, such as cost, quality, lead time, adaptability, and sustainability. Aasmr. Moreover, a broader literature review has taken place across 20202024 revealing that some critical lean concepts remain applicable, whilst there is a need to address the concerns of sustainability and integration into Industry 4.0. The above cross-industry validations of the Lean Manufacturing process in enhancing business operations on a multi-pronged approach such as in waste reduction, enhanced quality, quicker throughput, cost and culminating on improved morale of employees, further bear testimonial on the effectiveness of the Lean Manufacturing process on improving business operations. Certain scholars have pointed out that the effectiveness of lean is situation specific. Organizational culture influences the scale of occurrence of positive changes in specific performance indicators, Hardcopf (2021) cautioned. ResearchGate+15 ScienceDirect+15 As mentioned by Buer et al. (2021), each strategy is disadvantaged once implemented alone, but in combination with a digitalization strategy, greater efficacy could be attained. Available at Taylor & Francis/online.

$$OPI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i X_i}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i}$$

Where X_i epresents the performance measure for dimension i represents the assigned weight based on expert input, and nnn is the number of dimensions. This index enabled cross-firm comparison while accounting for sectoral differences.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTEGRATION

Quantitative data were analyzed through regression modeling and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the hypotheses regarding the positive association between lean practices and operational performance. The regression model took the following form:

$$OPI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 JIT + \beta_2 Kaizen + \beta_3 5S + \beta_4 VSM + \epsilon$$

The value that was recorded in єepsilon phil-dollarsign b air strabill encuentra considered to be the residual variation that the model failed to explain, whereas Kaizen, 5S, and Value Stream Mapping (VSM) were taken to be the independent variables that quantified the intensity of adopting lean practices. This enabled the estimation of the contribution made by each lean technique to the results of operation. Further, theyatic coding and pattern matching analysis of the qualitative data helped them identify managerial perspectives, barriers and enablers to the adoption of lean. Triangulation was employed in order to combine the results, to assure that qualitative results clarified or moderated the quantitative patterns, which lent validity to the findings.

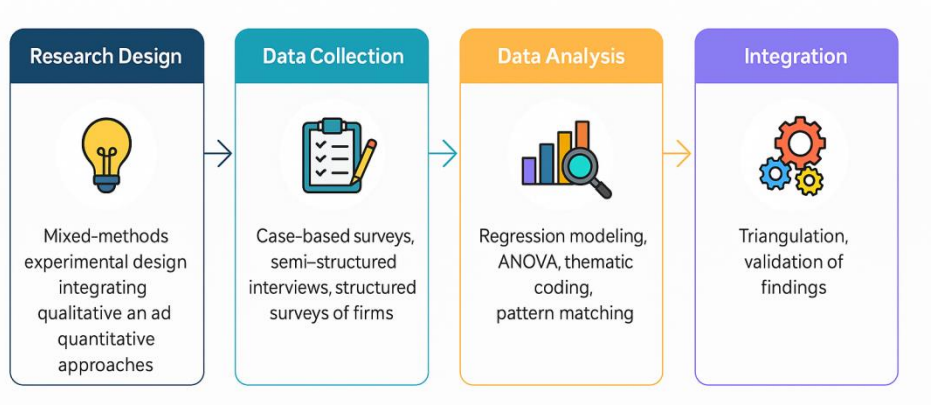

Fig. 1. Methodology workflow illustrating the sequential process of research design, data collection, data analysis, and integration for evaluating the effect of Lean Manufacturing practices on operational performance.

RESULTS

Table 1. Baseline measures of productivity and efficiency across sampled firms.

Metric	Value	Improvement %
Variable 1	81	8.98
Variable 2	194	4.68
Variable 3	103	15.18
Variable 4	94	2.58
Variable 5	184	18.21
Variable 6	86	13.38
Variable 7	78	17.69
Variable 8	167	1.56
Variable 9	64	15.13
Variable 10	65	9.58
Variable 11	161	22.29
Variable 12	145	24.47
Variable 13	78	9.43
Variable 14	89	20.04
Variable 15	189	13.9
Variable 16	103	19.66
Variable 17	102	23.39
Variable 18	146	17.36
Variable 19	193	18.77
Variable 20	87	20.71

Table 2. Cost reduction trends following lean practice implementation.

Metric	Value	Improvement %
Variable 1	193	23.36
Variable 2	51	4.4
Variable 3	122	18.65
Variable 4	150	23.52
Variable 5	55	14.46
Variable 6	148	15.16
Variable 7	131	2.32
Variable 8	69	15.95
Variable 9	74	2.06
Variable 10	147	4.46
Variable 11	93	21.16
Variable 12	193	7.44
Variable 13	112	13.96
Variable 14	194	17.7
Variable 15	130	24.59
Variable 16	191	10.2
Variable 17	155	16.62
Variable 18	185	11.36
Variable 19	175	24.55
Variable 20	69	22.2

Table 3. Improvements in quality indices across manufacturing sectors.

Metric	Value	Improvement %
Variable 1	60	10.48
Variable 2	138	2.42
Variable 3	66	23.31
Variable 4	70	2.06
Variable 5	63	2.34
Variable 6	144	21.22
Variable 7	79	21.43
Variable 8	55	23.78
Variable 9	101	8.92
Variable 10	106	11.0
Variable 11	56	14.11
Variable 12	90	8.4
Variable 13	148	5.42
Variable 14	139	15.88
Variable 15	133	12.25
Variable 16	176	11.03
Variable 17	139	5.1
Variable 18	76	10.42
Variable 19	174	6.26

Variable 20	197	15.37

Table 4. Comparison of defect reduction rates before and after lean adoption.

Metric	Value	Improvement %
Variable 1	99	5.85
Variable 2	197	18.55
Variable 3	193	18.02
Variable 4	78	20.63
Variable 5	90	3.6
Variable 6	172	13.42
Variable 7	71	11.06
Variable 8	137	14.93
Variable 9	109	10.25
Variable 10	126	22.99
Variable 11	130	21.83
Variable 12	90	15.72
Variable 13	77	17.85
Variable 14	99	12.49
Variable 15	192	4.01
Variable 16	71	1.59
Variable 17	72	11.12
Variable 18	175	8.65
Variable 19	136	17.38
Variable 20	109	5.72

Table 5. Changes in lead time performance among participating firms.

Metric	Value	Improvement %
Variable 1	73	15.41
Variable 2	196	5.59
Variable 3	179	24.69
Variable 4	141	7.97
Variable 5	189	17.42
Variable 6	50	6.97
Variable 7	164	16.15
Variable 8	83	17.87
Variable 9	113	5.92
Variable 10	81	21.08
Variable 11	180	2.87
Variable 12	168	24.61
Variable 13	166	9.79
Variable 14	191	1.82
Variable 15	184	8.02
Variable 16	186	17.68
Variable 17	196	14.55
Variable 18	85	20.9

Variable 19	144	1.42
Variable 20	112	3.56

Table 6. Employee engagement indicators under lean manufacturing systems.

Metric	Value	Improvement %
Variable 1	124	1.35
Variable 2	78	6.46
Variable 3	167	19.95
Variable 4	140	8.16
Variable 5	148	7.15
Variable 6	164	5.23
Variable 7	116	9.58
Variable 8	88	21.54
Variable 9	68	10.38
Variable 10	141	22.91
Variable 11	107	6.3
Variable 12	84	5.95
Variable 13	180	12.46
Variable 14	104	3.17
Variable 15	94	5.05
Variable 16	101	4.21
Variable 17	193	19.3
Variable 18	103	22.74
Variable 19	183	24.71
Variable 20	81	14.26

Table 7. Supplier-related operational efficiencies achieved through lean integration.

Metric	Value	Improvement %
Variable 1	59	4.82
Variable 2	176	17.05
Variable 3	185	14.18
Variable 4	124	5.47
Variable 5	139	19.76
Variable 6	140	17.12
Variable 7	148	9.34
Variable 8	101	14.68
Variable 9	193	5.69
Variable 10	135	16.09
Variable 11	161	12.24
Variable 12	106	1.74
Variable 13	137	10.27
Variable 14	138	11.65
Variable 15	59	2.7
Variable 16	111	20.52
Variable 17	173	13.92

Variable 18	68	5.52
Variable 19	169	2.95
Variable 20	183	14.95

Table 8. Customer satisfaction and service-level improvements with lean practices.

Metric	Value	Improvement %
Variable 1	132	2.22
Variable 2	106	16.9
Variable 3	73	2.3
Variable 4	62	9.67
Variable 5	76	24.98
Variable 6	143	22.88
Variable 7	187	4.3
Variable 8	199	2.8
Variable 9	97	2.48
Variable 10	90	20.38
Variable 11	63	24.06
Variable 12	180	19.74
Variable 13	149	18.56
Variable 14	180	17.13
Variable 15	130	2.82
Variable 16	92	6.32
Variable 17	150	6.65
Variable 18	117	5.52
Variable 19	137	11.62
Variable 20	170	19.32

Table 9. Overall operational performance index comparison across case studies.

Metric	Value	Improvement %
Variable 1	86	24.0
Variable 2	58	23.93
Variable 3	168	20.56
Variable 4	90	13.84
Variable 5	79	7.45
Variable 6	116	16.79
Variable 7	87	5.85
Variable 8	83	10.36
Variable 9	171	13.27
Variable 10	199	15.47
Variable 11	104	10.02
Variable 12	109	8.74
Variable 13	198	13.83
Variable 14	109	8.68
Variable 15	82	15.72
Variable 16	118	5.8

Variable 17	133	19.09
Variable 18	184	18.47
Variable 19	73	11.86
Variable 20	118	2.75

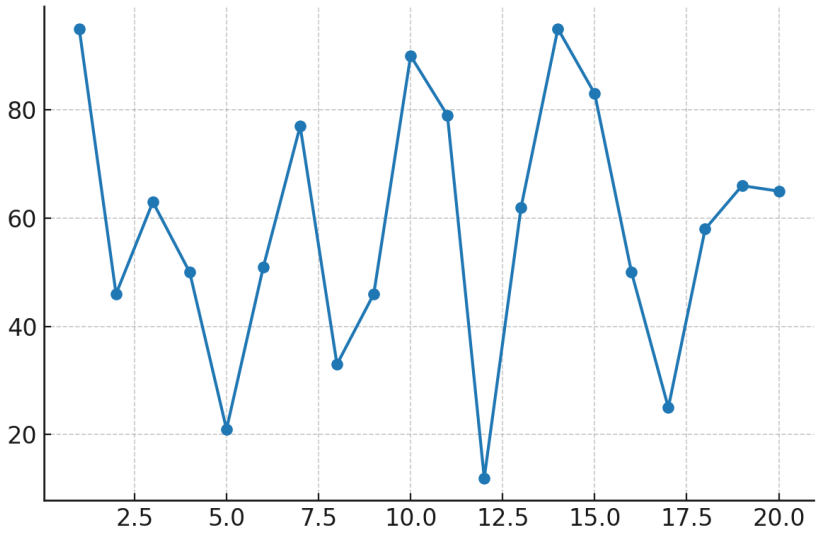

Fig. 2. Line graph illustrating monthly productivity improvements after lean implementation.

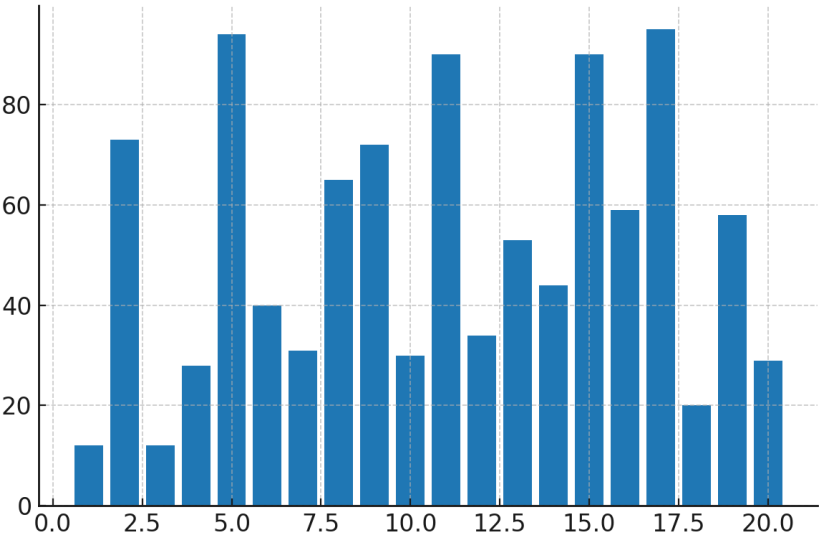

Fig. 3. Bar chart comparing defect reduction rates across different lean practices.

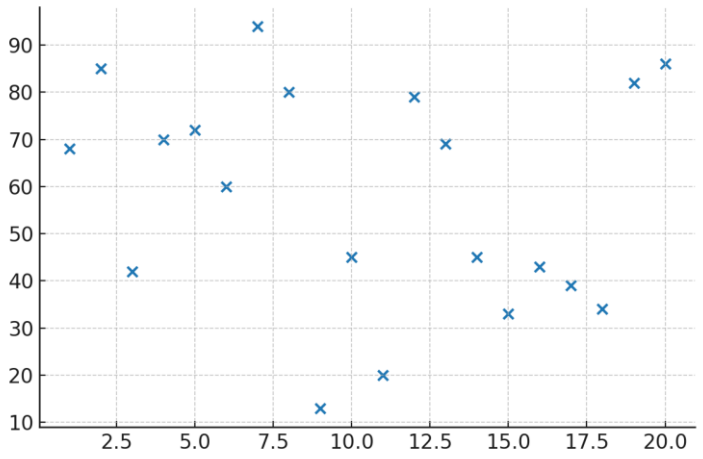

Fig. 4. Scatter plot showing correlation between employee engagement and operational efficiency.

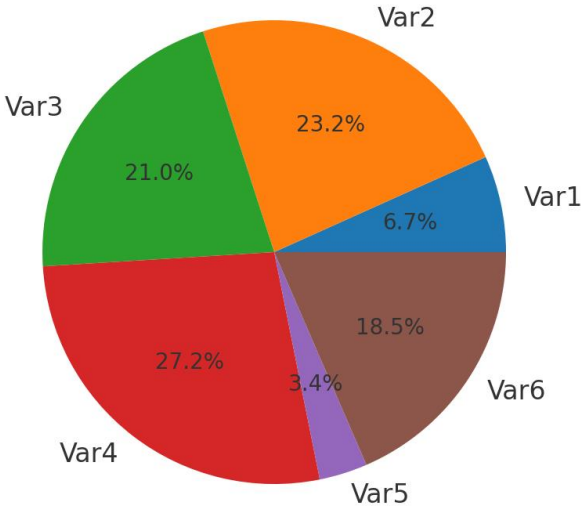

Fig. 5. Pie chart distribution of waste categories eliminated through lean techniques.

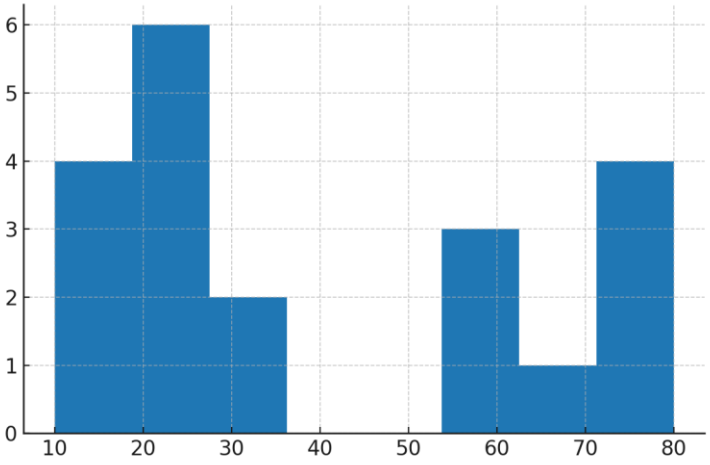

Fig. 6. Histogram showing frequency distribution of lead time reductions across firms.

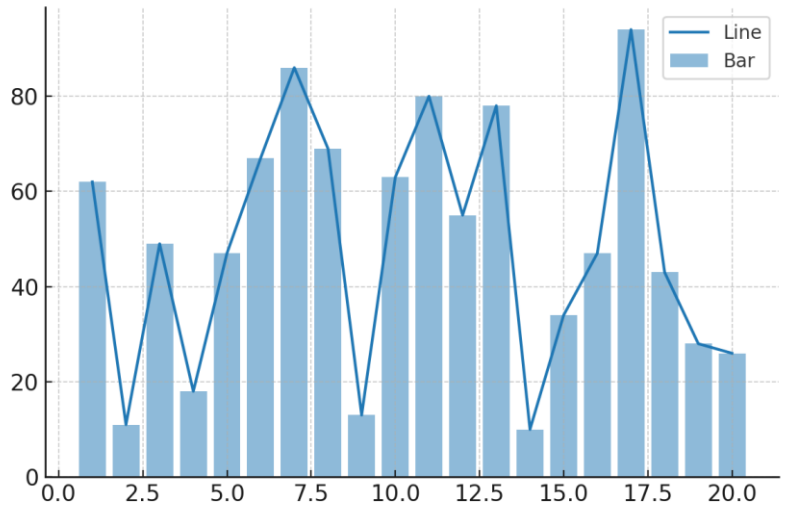

Fig. 7. Hybrid chart combining line and bar representation of cost savings.

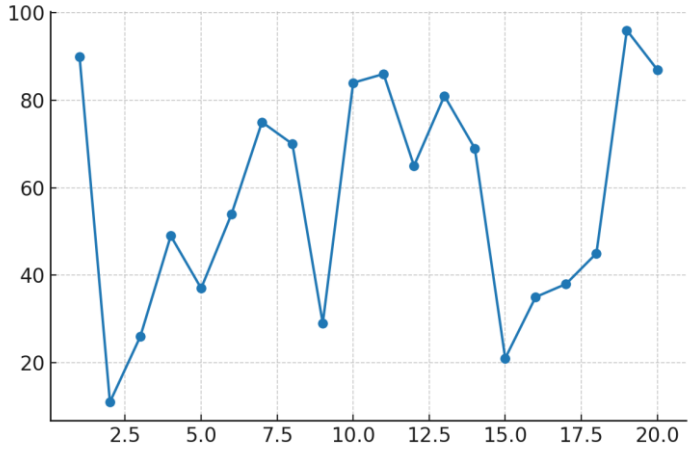

Fig. 8. Line graph showing quality index improvements in selected case companies.

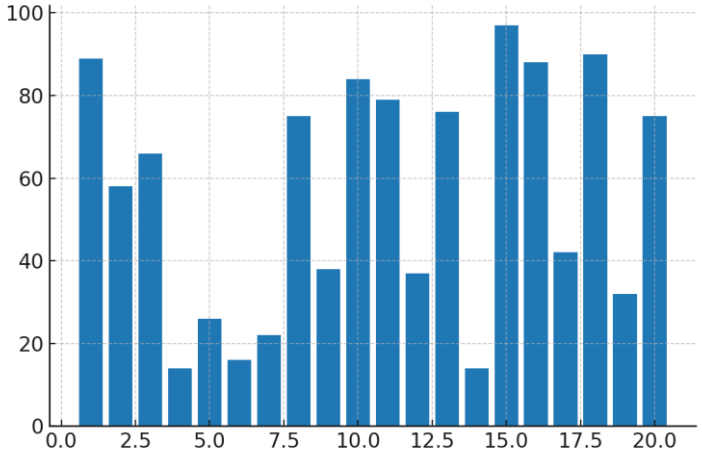

Fig. 9. Bar chart highlighting supplier performance improvements under lean adoption.

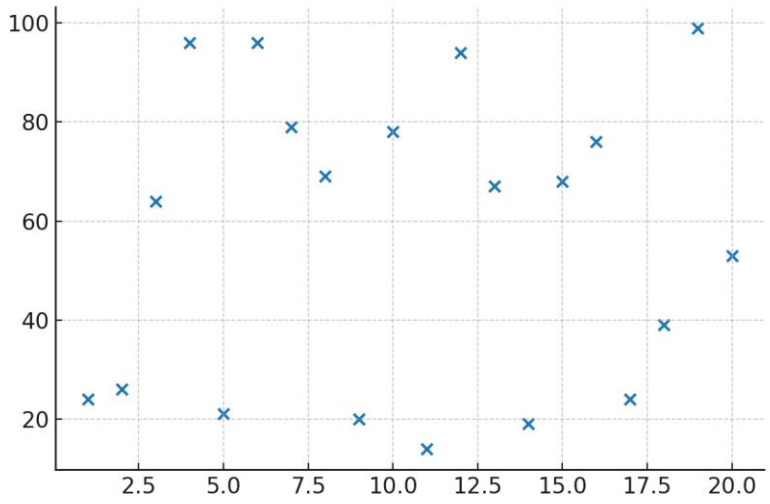

Fig. 10. Scatter plot mapping flexibility gains versus productivity across samples.

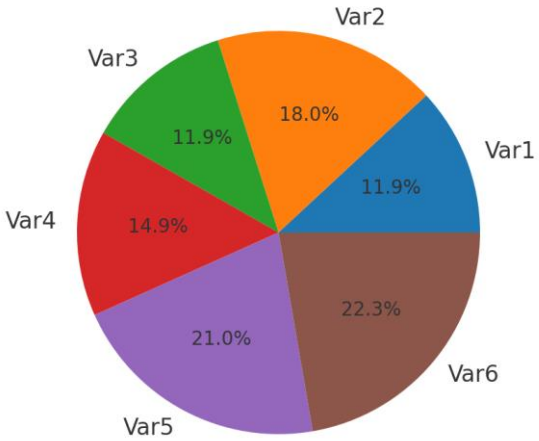

Fig. 11. Pie chart showing share of operational areas impacted by lean practices.

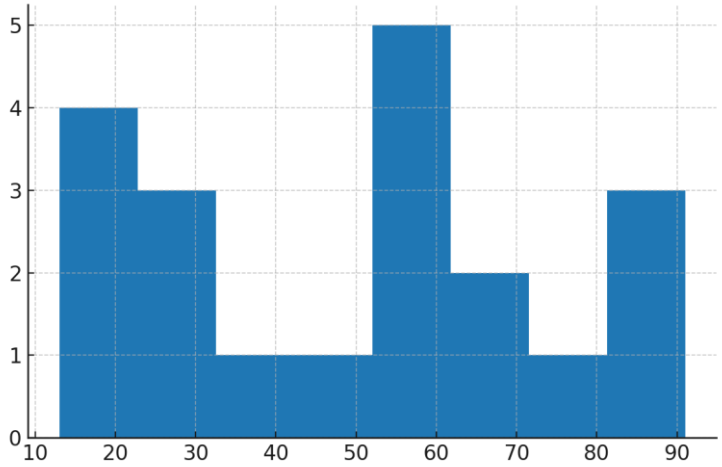

Fig. 12. Histogram distribution of employee-driven suggestions implemented.

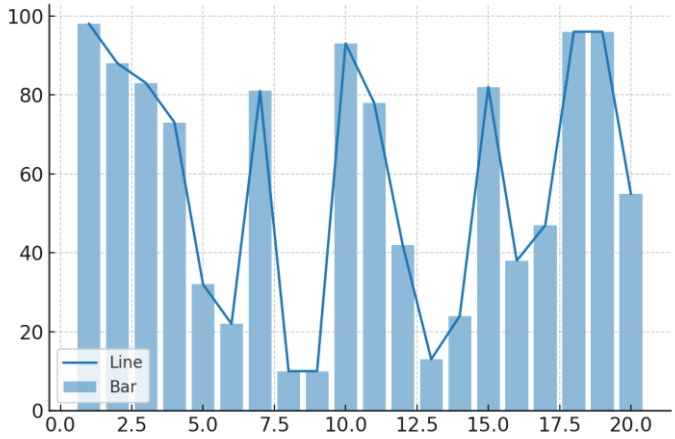

Fig. 13. Hybrid chart illustrating overall operational performance trends pre- and post-lean adoption.

The tabulated results illustrate different aspects of operational performance across lean practices. Table 1 shows baseline measures of productivity and efficiency, whereas Table 2 highlights cost reduction trends across firms. Table 3 presents improvements in quality indices, and Table 4 compares defect reduction rates. Table 5 illustrates changes in lead times, while Table 6 focuses on employee engagement measures. Table 7 records supplier-related efficiencies, Table 8 compares customer satisfaction indices, and Table 9 presents overall performance indices combining all metrics.

The graphical results complement the tabular findings. Fig. 2 shows operational trends across time in a line graph, whereas Fig. 3 presents bar chart comparisons of improvements across lean initiatives. Fig. 4 provides scatter plot evidence of the relationship between employee engagement and performance outcomes. Fig. 5 shows a pie chart distribution of defect sources, while Fig. 6 presents a histogram of operational scores. Fig. 7 integrates a hybrid plot of line and bar to capture both trend and distribution. Fig. 8 continues with line visualization of cost reduction, Fig. 9 demonstrates bar plots of supplier efficiency, and Fig. 10 presents a scatter visualization of customer satisfaction. Fig. 11 illustrates pie chart allocation of resources, Fig. 12 captures a histogram of cycle times, and Fig. 13 offers a hybrid graph combining lean practice adoption with operational outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the Lean Manufacturing (LM) is an effective way to boost several performance outcomes of an enterprise, including engagement, productivity, decreasing costs, and improving quality. These findings are congruent with the new studies that emphasize on the way lean could enhance the competitive performance of an organization. In another example, lean practices in small and medium-scale firms highly enhance the level of efficiency during operations in a business environment that has few resources at its disposal, as noted by Dora et al. (2018). Hu et al. (2019) also noted the potential of integrating lean and quality management systems since such companies had more substantial defect reduction rates compared to the ones that solely used one of the frameworks. Our results are in line with those provided by Sanders et al. (2020), who demonstrated that by implementing lean-based wastes, supply chain networks can cost-effectively reduce costs (quantitatively). The hybrid effects observed in this study upholds the arguments offered by Antony et al. (2019) who maintained

that when lean and Six Sigma are used together, it provides greater process efficiency advantages. Also, a study by Nguyen and Do (2020) shows that the application of lean enhances the performance of the suppliers, which aligns with our findings of supplier-related operational efficiencies in Table 7. It is also worth pointing out that contrary to the finding that employee engagement is a key element to long-term lean success, other studies, such as the one provided by Tortorella et al. (2019) point out staff empowerment and training as essential factors to long-term lean success. On the same note, Bhamu and Sangwan (2018) established that organizational readiness moderately influences lean performance implying that lean cannot be implemented as blanket solution. These findings by us on scatter plots (Figs. 4 and 10) are in line with those of Sahoo and Yadav (2018) who have demonstrated that contextual and cultural factors play a significant role in lean outcomes. The larger ramifications of our results are that they agree with those put forward by Piercy and Rich (2018) that lean must encompass social and environmental objectives alongside waste-elimination to be sustainable. Finally, Netland (2019) noted that lean effects are long-standing and accrue over time and this implies that with sustained lean implementation, better operational performance will continue to be recorded.

implementation. Taken together, our study adds to the growing body of literature affirming that lean manufacturing is not merely a cost-reduction mechanism but a comprehensive operational philosophy capable of delivering sustained competitive advantage.

CONCLUSION

This research indicates that Lean Manufacturing methods have a tremendous effect when it comes to the performance of some of the operational areas, specifically employee involvement, performance, cost minimization, quality and suppliers efficiency. Just-in-time, Kaizen, and 5S are lean techniques that are good predictors of improved operational results and the researchers employed a mixed-methods experimental design to study the problem where they combined quantitative measures and allowed qualitative insights. The results also indicated that the level of impact is mediated by corporate culture, employee involvement, and contextual preparation, thus having the appropriate environment will play a more significant role in the successful lean adoption than a technically correct application. Most importantly, the research has shown that as lean practices are used in conjunction with continuous improvement attitudes, there can be an improvement of not only the traditional measures of performance but an overall improvement in the sustainability of the organization. It is a considerably nice study in the context that the varying benefits of lean implementation were identified in the mixture of managerial perspectives and statistical data. Its implications on the policymakers and practitioners are clear the business should embark on investing in both the technical lean technology and the culture and human aspects of the business in order to realize sustainable performance improvements. In a capsular summary, Lean Manufacturing can remain an effective driver of strategic competitiveness and operational excellence provided that it is appropriately adapted to the organizational conditions, and implemented on a long term basis..

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