

IMPACT OF LEAN PRACTICES ON THE OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF THE APPAREL SECTOR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KANDY DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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1. Introduction

The apparel sector of Sri Lanka contributes significantly to the economy by providing employment opportunities and enhancing national income. The apparel industry is labor-oriented and subjected to considerable errors and wastage. The lean practice is a systematic approach to eliminate wastage by removing non-value-adding operations. This study aims to explore the impact of lean practices on the operational performance of the apparel sector with special references to the Kandy district. The study's main objective is to investigate the impact of lean practices, i.e., 5S, kaizen suggestions and visual management, on operational performance in the apparel sector to fill the empirical gap and to provide insight into the lean implementation in the Sri Lankan context.

2. Research Methodology

The quantitative approach and positivist research paradigm were adopted for the sample of 157 entities in the Kandy district. A structured questionnaire was distributed among the executives of the sample using purposive sampling technique. Further, the study applied the deductive approach to construct theoretical connections. The SPSS data analysis package was applied to investigate effects of selected lean practices.

3. Findings and Discussion

The responses to all four selected items are reliable and reflect the intended construction of the study. The results of the coefficients and correlation show a strong positive significant relationship between all selected lean practices and the operational performance. The ANOVA test indicates the model is statistically significant. The 5S practices emerged as the most prevalent lean tool among others. The empirical results reveal that with proper training and effective implementation lean practices can improve the apparel sector performance.

4. Conclusion and Implications

This study provides evidence that lean is an effective strategy for enhancing operational performance in the apparel sector of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Apparel sector, Kaizen suggestions, Operational performance, 5S practices, Visual management