



Continuous Improvement: Introduction

Continuous improvement is used in all types of organizations around the world, from large manufacturing to public sector organizations. Back in the 1930s, Stewart proposed a recurring plan-do-see cycle for continuous improvement. This approach was well documented and later called the Deming Wheel or Stewart Cycle and formed the basis for many of the continuous improvement activities practiced today [i].

Individual continuous improvement initiatives emerged in Western manufacturing systems after World War II, but it is clear that most (and most successful) continuous improvement applications until recently were in Japan, due to pressures to conserve and use resources efficiently, as Japan is a country poor in natural resources [ii]. The importance of continuous improvement in the business environment subsequently arose (and later increased) as a result of three main phenomena: changes in the business environment (such as globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution), the emergence of new management systems (such as lean manufacturing), and the importance of quality management itself [iii]. Many continuous improvement methodologies have been developed over the past decades based on the basic concepts of quality improvement or process improvement, or both, with the aim of reducing waste, simplifying the production line, and improving quality. These modern programs include many concepts, the most famous of which are: Lean Manufacturing (LM) and Six Sigma (SS), and then some integrated continuous improvement programs appeared later, such as Lean Six Sigma (LSS) [iv]. The topic of continuous improvement has received wide attention in foreign studies. For example, we note that in the period from 1986 to 2011, 1090 studies were published on the topic of continuous improvement in 525 scientific journals listed in the Web of Knowledge database.

These studies belong to different research fields, which confirms the multidimensional orientation of the field of continuous improvement. The United States of America and the United Kingdom received the largest number of published studies. It was noted that in some Asian, African and Eastern European countries, the first studies on continuous improvement were published in 2010 or 2011, while we note that in the United States of America, the first study on continuous improvement was published in 1986 [v]. Based on the above, we will briefly discuss the following topics in this series of articles: the concept of continuous improvement, determinants of continuous improvement, benefits of applying continuous improvement, tools and techniques of continuous improvement.

References

The primary source of the article is: Al-Farhan, Mohannad. (2022). The role of continuous improvement technique on organizational learning process: An applied study on the electrical appliances manufacturing sector. Master's thesis, Faculty of Commerce - Menoufia University. / The thesis can be obtained by [clicking here](#).

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