The Influence of Organizational Culture on Lean Implementation in Healthcare

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Abstract

A stable organizational culture is necessary to sustain operations in healthcare organizations. In this paper, I explore the value of the Toyota Production System (TPS), also known as Lean Management, in healthcare organizations. Extant literature and empirical evidence have shown that lean has the potential to positively change the culture of a healthcare organization because it creates a foundational level of “Lean Thinking.” That said, my goals are to determine whether: 1) there is resistance to Lean implementation; and 2) a positive effect occurs in an organizational culture with a Lean environment and the specific mechanisms of this change. This literature review examines Lean thinking with lean resistance and opportunities, the idea of culture capability, and a new concept referred to as systems approach.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to examine the influence of organizational culture on the implementation of a quality initiative. More specifically, a lean management system, in a healthcare setting driving Lean success and furthering research by identifying the influential causes of change in such an environment.

Background

Three assumptions were found in the literature: (1) a lean management system's foundational level of shared values influences an organizational culture or behavior, (2) an organizational culture drives the success of a lean management system; and (3) the lean management system provides sufficient data, rather than theory, to prove the model's effective culture or behavior influence. This literature review explicates lean thinking with lean resistance and opportunities, the idea of culture capability, and a new concept referred to as systems approach.

Systems Approach

“If we use a systems approach to embrace the understanding of our connections, interactions, and patterns, we could acknowledge the organization we function in” (Adam, 2014). This approach can provide context to discuss our shared values, recognize interdependence as an element of organizational change, and provide a foundation for Lean thinking.

Future Directions

A more comprehensive review of this literature is needed to understand the topic, subtopics, and questions. Focused questions will need to be asked and reviewed to explore the deeper issue for the causes of culture influence on Lean implementation in healthcare. For dissertation research, a secondary analysis regarding how employees struggle or succeed with Lean could improve our understanding of its effectiveness ultimately preparing healthcare organizations for a quality improvement change, such as: 1) What are the behaviors for organizations to recognize both positive and negative, that influence Lean implementation? 2) Does a model/study prove culture influences effect Lean implementation? 3) How do we provide healthcare organizations information to implement tools to support organizational influence?

References

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