LEAN MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF CEMENT MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN KENYA

The purpose of this study was to establish the lean management practices implemented in cement manufacturing operations in Kenya and the challenges on the implementation thereon. It also sought to investigate the relationship between implementation of the practices and operational performance amongst the firms. These objectives were carried upon by a survey across all the six cement manufacturers in Kenya by administering questionnaires to four departmental unit heads in charge of production, marketing, human resource management and logistics. The questionnaires had open ended, closed ended and likert item questions. The data was analysed through a descriptive statistics and presented in frequency tables. Regression analysis was performed to generate the relationship between lean management practices and operational performance. The study establishes that the cement companies have adopted to different levels practices that include: Standardization of work practices, employee involvement practices, customer involvement practices, 5s practices, Production smoothing practices, Total productive maintenance practices, Total quality management practices and Poka yoke practices. These practices are established to positively relate with operational performance metrics of quality of output, productive capacity and inventory costs. The cited challenges to implementation of lean management practices across the cement manufacturing firms are: lack of understanding of lean manufacturing concepts, the nature of manufacturing processes and facilities, organizational culture and lack of intellectual capital amongst the companies and employees.