Spirituality in Management
from Islamic Perspectives

AAhad M. Osman-Gani, Ph.D
Professor of HRD & International Management

&

Suhaimi Mhd Sarif, Ph.D
Asst. Professor of Business Management

Faculty of Economics & Management Sciences
Department of Business Administration

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Lean Management and Islamic Perspective: Convergence in Diversity

NoorHazilah Abd Manaf and Ibrahim Mohamed Zein

Abstract

The lean philosophy is not an alien concept in Islam, although lean management is often attributed to the Toyota Production System (TPS). Central to the lean philosophy is the elimination of all form of waste or muda, in all work activities throughout the supply chain. Although the lean philosophy emerged out of the incapacity of Toyota to afford the waste inherent in mass production, nevertheless convergence in Islamic teachings is evident from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Muslims are constantly reminded against committing any acts of ‘israf’ (waste). Thus, wasteful acts are seen as a disvalue in Islam from both the level of ethics of intent as well as the level of ethics of action. In addressing lean from an Islamic perspective, the stand is to establish relevancy along the line of mutual exchange and cultural meanings, with meaningful contribution of Muslim scholars towards human civilisation.

Introduction

Lean developed into a sound management philosophy following the highly acclaimed research on the Toyota Production System (TPS) carried out by the International Motor Vehicle Programme (IMVP) of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The unstoppable rise of Toyota into global prominence overshadowing heavyweights General Motors and Ford was the main motivation behind the extensive research which was documented in the best-selling book “The Machine that Changed the World” by Womack, Jones and Roos. In comprehending the completely dissimilar manufacturing concept of