ABSTRACT

The studies were conducted in three major US institutions between 2003 and 2010 where a combination of the Lean Method and Business Process Management were used (Toyota Motor Corporation, 2009; Frolick & Ariyachandra, 2006) with the exception that specific targets were not set (“open-expectation”). In addition, individuals were inspired through formal and informal individual and group sessions to improve themselves with an expectation that this would improve efficiency at the workplace (Saha, 2004).

Agency-wide educational programs were instituted where key stakeholders were invited to attend and educational seminars were presented. Opportunities were created for the employees to be successful, business process reviewed, strategic plans devised, key performance indicators (KPIs) developed, checklists prepared, office staff re-trained to quickly identify administratively-incomplete applications and the expectations of improved efficiency and quality clearly communicated.

The improvement measures were based on turn-around times, error rates, and budget vs. expenses for applications from data such as file folder, databases, electronic records – both retrospective and prospectively.

Data were collected from 8 months to 60 months where efficiency was defined as the turn-around time and the quality was defined as the percentages error in a document considered completed by the reviewers. The performance was defined as the efficiency of a task or unit adjusted in terms of total employee or total expenditure.

Pre- and post-implementation data were analyzed by one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) as presented in the combined methods and materials and results table.

INTRODUCTION

During the past two decades, significant changes have occurred in research and its operations in most western countries. As interest in research among politicians and citizens has grown, more emphasis has been placed on the practical value of research and effective utilization of limited funds. Therefore, a new approach to research administration and management has become necessary in order to successfully navigate in a rapidly changing research climate (Ejmo-Kjihede, 2001) and to improve efficiency and quality of research services.

In several national surveys, performance variables such as financial and organizational policies, procedures, and operational efficiency outcomes on a higher level, based on full-time equivalents (FTEs), were reported (Kirby & Waugaman, 2001, 2005). The results of a recent study on some performance and compliance metrics have been reported, implying the need for efficiency and quality improvement initiatives and their impact on research administration (Smith and Chan, 2011). Therefore, we undertook this project to gather information and provide interventions with the expectations to improve efficiency and quality in research administration. It has been reported that higher expectations increase scholarly productivity (Anema and Byrd, 1991; Whorley and Addis, 2007) and implementation of new strategies may increase efficiency at workplaces (Saha, 2004). We wanted to examine whether these approaches would be applicable to research administration. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine expectation-based efficiency and quality improvement in research administration and to determine whether these processes affect the financial performance of units adopting this method.

RESULTS: INSTITUTION #1

• The studies were conducted in three major US institutions between 2003 and 2010 where a combination of the Lean Method and Business Process Management were used (Toyota Motor Corporation, 2009; Frolick & Ariyachandra, 2006) with the exception that specific targets were not set (“open-expectation”).

• In addition, individuals were inspired through formal and informal individual and group sessions with an expectation that this would improve efficiency at the workplace (Saha, 2004).

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• Pre- and post-implementation data were analyzed by one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) as presented in the combined methods and materials and results table.

CONCLUSIONS

Higher expectations from superior are associated with increased productivity of employees and improved financial performance of the unit studied in research administration.

REFERENCES


