



"THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT IN ACHIEVING PRODUCTIVE AGILITY: A CASE STUDY AT PETRONAS IN THE AL-GHARRAF" OIL FIELD

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Abstract

My current" research aims to clarify the role and contribution of management (the management of Petronas Oil Company) in achieving production efficiency through its oil and gas extraction operations in the Al-Gharraf oil field, and to ascertain the existence or absence of a correlation between the independent variable, management, and the dependent variable, oil production efficiency. In order to arrive at an explanation of my research problem, I assumed a first affirmative hypothesis stating that there is a correlation between the management variable, focusing on the dimension of (planning and control), and the production efficiency variable with its dimensions (production maintenance and improving production quality), and a second negative hypothesis stating that there is no correlation between the independent variable, management, and the dependent variable with its aforementioned dimensions . The descriptive approach was used to cover the theoretical framework of the research, while the quantitative approach was used in the practical framework. A questionnaire and the SPSS statistical software were used to obtain the research results. (25) questionnaires were distributed to a group of employees of Petronas Company, Al-Gharraf Oil Field branch, in Al-Rifai District, Thi Qar Governorate. The results of my research indicate a positive and direct correlation between management and production agility, and that management, especially strategic or senior management, is one of the most prominent and important factors contributing to achieving production" agility.



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Keywords: Petronas Company, production agility, and planning.

Introduction

Currently, the world is experiencing a great industrial revolution and remarkable economic development. Under these circumstances and amidst these major industrial and technological advancements, the urgent need arises for a conscious and insightful management that understands productive progress in all fields, and especially in the oil sector. Hence, the role of management, particularly senior management, becomes paramount. It is the most important driving force in organizations or companies. For organizations to maintain their market share and leading position in competitive markets, the responsibility falls on management, with its strategic planning capable of keeping pace with industrial developments and its human and material resources. An organization's efficiency and distinction stem from the competence of its staff, as they are its most important asset and resource. It is the employee who propels the organization to the top if managed correctly in terms of recruitment, appointment, training, motivation, and constructive, purposeful evaluation by the human resources department in companies in general, and in the company under study in particular. Therefore, Management must adopt humane practices and methods in dealing with its human resources and work to satisfy their needs in order to achieve productive efficiency and reduce the noticeable waste in production, or what is called "productive agility" or "lean production," especially since oil companies (which are the community of this research) produce many oil derivatives that require highly efficient management and good exploitation for the benefit of the company and the public interest, and this is what lean production aims for if it is managed correctly.

Chapter One / Research Methodology and Some Previous Studies

Section One / Research Methodology

First: The Research Problem

The researcher summarizes her research problem with a main question: Does the management (the management of Petronas oil company in the Al-Gharraf oil



field) strive for and contribute to achieving production efficiency? Several questions arise from this question, including":

How" can Petronas management achieve operational efficiency? 1-

2- Does Petronas management have strategic plans that enable it to achieve operational efficiency in its operations?

3-Does the company prioritize preventive maintenance plans for work equipment? Does the company conduct a comprehensive evaluation of its operational maintenance system to minimize unexpected work stoppages?

4- Does the company (the research sample) rely on specific criteria in monitoring its production" processes?

Secondly/ The Importance of the Research

The" importance of the current research stems from the fact that management is the fundamental component of the production process and is the primary driver of work. It is necessary to highlight the management that cares for its human resources and personnel, training and motivating them to achieve its goals and reach the stage of lean production. The researcher also believes that this modest research will provide feedback to the management of Petronas' Al-Gharraf oil field by presenting results on the practical side, which will clarify whether the company adopts a policy or philosophy of lean production or not. The research is also important because it provides recommendations that help" decision-makers in the company.

Thirdly/ Research Objectives

Through" this research, the researcher aims to achieve the following objectives:

1-To determine the role of Petronas management in achieving production efficiency and the extent of management's contribution to this.

2-To identify the strategic plans used by the company under study to reach the stage of production efficiency.

3-To identify the standards used by the company in controlling production.

4-To ascertain whether or not a correlation exists between management and achieving production" efficiency.



Fourthly/ Research Hypothesis

The" researcher relies on a first, confirmed hypothesis and a second, negative hypothesis, as follows":

1-There is" a statistically significant correlation at the (0.05) level between the independent variable, management, with its dimensions (planning and control), and the dependent variable, production agility, with its dimensions (production maintenance and production quality improvement). From this main hypothesis, the following sub-hypotheses are derived:

-There is a statistically significant correlation between the planning dimension and the production quality improvement dimension.

-There is a positive correlation between the control dimension and the production maintenance" dimension.

2-There is no" statistically significant correlation at the (0.05) level between the independent variable, management, with its dimensions (planning and control), and the dependent variable, production agility, with its dimensions (production maintenance and production quality improvement). From this main hypothesis, the following sub-hypothesis emerges:

-There is no statistically significant correlation between the dimension of "Planning" and the dimension of "Improving production" quality.

Fifth / Study Community and Sample

The" research community is represented by the Malaysian oil and gas company Petronas, which invests in a number of countries around the world, including Iraq. The research sample is the Al-Gharraf oil field in Dhi Qar Governorate, southern Iraq, the field in which Petronas operates. The researcher distributed a questionnaire to a random sample of employees present in the Al-Gharraf oil field, as their number reached" (25) employees.



Sixth / Research Procedural Plan

Fifth/ Research P

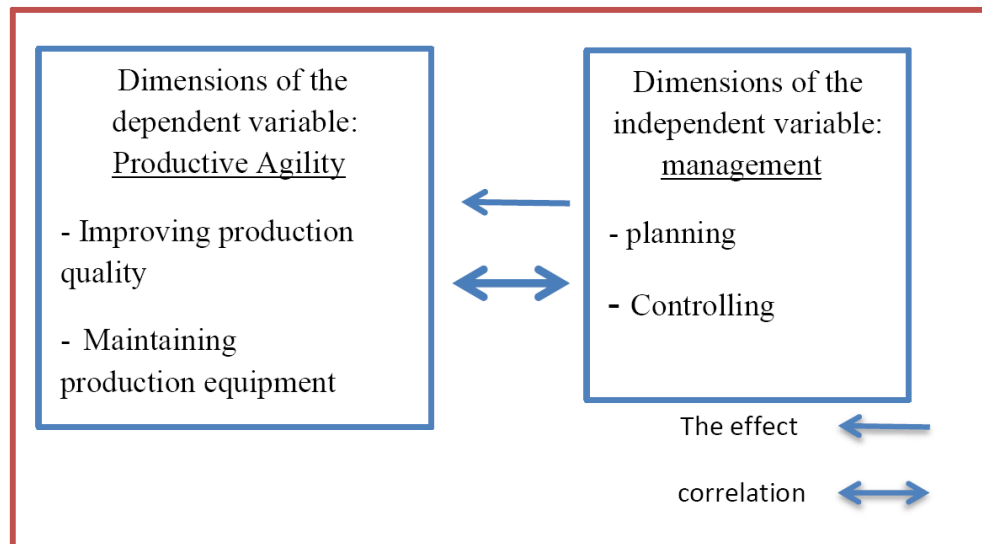


Figure (1): "Represents the procedural diagram for the research. Source: Prepared by the" researcher.

Seven / Study Community and Sample

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Section Two/ Previous Studies

The" researcher focused in this research on some of the previous studies that dealt with the two variables of management and production agility, as follos"
1-"Al-Sabawi and others (2020) aimed in their research entitled **The Role of the Agile Management Approach in Applying the ISO/TS: 2010 Quality Management System for the Oil and Gas Sector: An Exploratory Study in the Qayyarah Refinery** to determine the percentage of adoption of agile management in the quality management system related to oil and gas in the Qayyarah



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Refinery. The researchers relied on a questionnaire and distributed (40) forms to the administrative leadership in the Qayyarah Refinery, and with the help of the SPSS program, they were able to prove the existence of a correlation relationship between the agile management variable with its dimensions (value creation, withdrawal system, and continuous improvement monitoring)" and quality management.

2-"Osman's study (2018), **"The Role of Strategic Management in Achieving Organizational Goals – A Case Study of Khartoum State Company,"** aimed to identify the actual practices used by strategic management in industrial and business organizations in Sudan. His research sample consisted of several industrial companies in Khartoum. He employed a descriptive methodology and statistical analysis using a questionnaire and the SPSS program for the practical component. The study concluded that a limited number of organizational managers possess knowledge of strategic management and its application within their organizations, and that there is a noticeable deficiency in how to establish strategic foundations within these" organizations.

3-The study by Al-Dulaimi and Abdul-Kadhim (2017), entitled **"The Impact of Using Lean Production Methods on Improving Product Quality: An Exploratory Study at the General Authority for Automotive Industry in Alexandria,"** aimed to reveal the relationship between the independent variable, lean production with its dimensions of "Kaizen, Kannaban, and Total Productive Maintenance," and the dependent variable, product quality improvement with its dimensions of "performance, reliability, and perceived quality." The research was conducted at the Automotive Industry Company affiliated with the Ministry of Industry in Iraq, and the results showed a positive correlation between lean production and improved product quality.

Chapter Two / Theoretical Framework

Section One: Management Management of Petronas Oil Company

First / "The Concept and Definition of Management: Management has many diverse definitions depending on the perspective of management scholars, each defining it according to their specialization and way of thinking. However, most agree that management is: accomplishing tasks through others, or it is the sum



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of processes related to planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Management is also scientifically" defined as intellectual processes and human activities reflected in the practical aspect of managers, represented by the administrative functions they perform to achieve the goals of their organizations. "(Al-Amiri & Al-Ghalibi, 2014, p. 28). Management is also a set of activities, processes, and strategies designed to support the organization's goals by creating synergy between the organization's needs and the individuals who work within it. (Kashway, 2006, p. 12). Based on the above, management can be defined as: A collective human organization with a clear and" specific goal.

About Petronas: Petronas is a Malaysian oil and gas company founded in 1974. It has investments in more than 34 countries, including Iraq, where it invests in the Al-Gharraf oil field in the Al-Rifai district of Dhi Qar Governorate." Its main activities at the Al-Gharraf oil field include oil refining, natural gas trading, gas pipeline transportation, oil exploration, and the distribution and marketing of petroleum products. In 2010, a contract was signed with Petronas to develop the Al-Gharraf oil field. Petronas is the main operator of the field, alongside Dhi Qar Oil Company (the Iraqi state-owned company) and the Japanese company Japex. Petronas holds a 45% stake in the Al-Gharraf oil field, located in Dhi Qar Governorate. Oil production at the field began in 2013, with a commercial production rate of 35,000 barrels per day" (EcoGen Arabia, 2024).

Secondly, "Petronas Oil Company's Contribution to Achieving Production Efficiency"

"Petronas Oil Company's management, in cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Oil, contributes to development operations at the Al-Gharraf oil field in Iraq, including the following:"

-The company "increased oil production capacity to 100,000 barrels per day, and by the end of 2025, oil production had reached more than 240,000 barrels per day. The company continues to operate at the AlGharraf oil field".

-"Gas Processing Project: This project works to reduce the percentage of waste in oil" production

-"Also, among the company's contributions is the planning for associated gas investment, meaning achieving the Zero Flare goal, i.e., reducing the flaring of



associated gas and improving the efficiency of its use in oil extraction, as well as protecting the environment." (Al Arabiya Business website, 2025).

Thirdly / Dimensions and Functions of Management

There are essential functions that a manager must perform, divided into four functions, though some divide them into five, as follows:

1-"Planning: This involves pre-determining objectives and how to achieve them. Planning also includes forecasting the future".

2-"Organizing: This involves arranging or preparing the necessary resources to achieve the objectives set during the planning phase. The organizing function includes defining the company's organizational structure," identifying administrative departments, and dividing duties and responsibilities.

3-"Directing (Leading and Issuing Orders): This involves instructing and guiding employees towards the desired goal while building a network of relationships between managers and subordinates.

4- Control: This involves monitoring progress and ensuring that what has been achieved and accomplished actually matches what was previously defined, while correcting any deviations. The goal of control or monitoring is to correct errors, not to find fault. Henri Fayol added the coordination function after the directing function, making it five functions of management" (Al-Dhahabi & Al-Azzawi, 2005, p. 13). The following figure illustrates this.

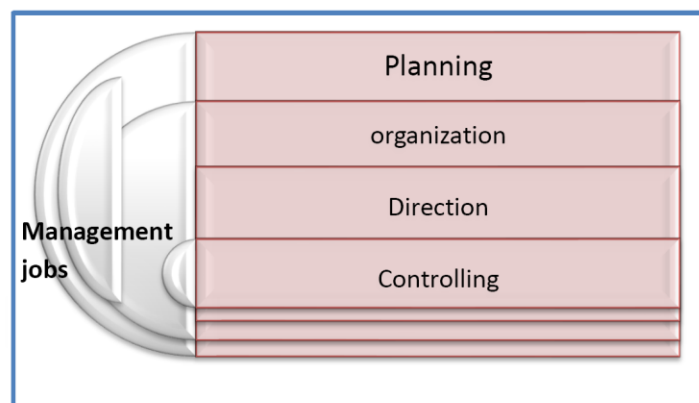


Figure (2) / Represents Management Functions

Source / Prepared by the Researcher



Fourth / Aspects of Successful Management

Among the most important aspects of successful and efficient management are:

- 1-"Increasing productivity rates in the companies or organizations it manages".
- 2-Increasing sales volume continuously
- 3-"Being a conscious and capable management that identifies its financial needs and how to obtain funds to carry out its work" (having a predetermined plan).
- 4-"Selecting staff efficiently and according to demand, with a decrease in employee turnover rates".
- 5-"The ability to form a comprehensive organizational structure for all parts of the organization"
- 6-The organizations it manages having a good reputation
- 6-The organizations it manages having a good reputation
- 7-"The organization's management maintaining, as much as possible, the environment in which it operates." (Abbas & Barakat, 2000, p. 10).

Fifthly / Characteristics of the Administrative Process

The administrative process is characterized by several features, including: (Al-Sirafi, 2008, pp. 33-34).

- 1-"Formality: This means that administrative work takes place within a clear, understandable, and defined framework. In other words, it occurs within a formal organizational unit, and its members are officially" appointed.
- 2-"Continuity: This means that administrative work continues as long as the project to be completed remains in place".
- 3-"Comprehensiveness: Administrative work must be comprehensive, encompassing every function within the organization, such as production, marketing, purchasing".
- 4-"Sequence: Sequence is required in defining administrative levels and clarifying the organizational structure. Information should flow from top to bottom to ensure the smooth operation of administrative work and prevent duplication of" effort.
- 5-"Clarity: Clarity and the absence of ambiguity are essential in several stages, including defining organizational goals, developing strategic plans by senior management, "and defining job responsibilities.
- 6-"Fairness: Fairness In the treatment of employees in terms of wages, bonuses, and fairness when monitoring performance".



Section Two: Production Agility

First: The Concept and Definition of Production Agility

As is evident in the business sector, there is widespread interest in modern and innovative production systems and advanced production technologies. This has led companies to focus on the quality of their production by adopting the philosophy of production agility. This is a production system or philosophy that works to reduce or eliminate waste or loss in the company's products, while ensuring an increase in output (Al-Sharifi, 2022, p. 3)". Agility is a term derived from the word reduction, meaning minimizing the use of production resources and avoiding waste when using them, as well as reducing waste or unwanted items. Waste here refers to any activity that does not add value to the products and is therefore considered waste and must be disposed of (Al-Aboudi, 2024, p. 420). Toyota was the first company to develop a lean production system. (Abdul Wahid et al., 2025, p. 237).

Secondly, Dimensions of Production Agility

Three dimensions of production agility were highlighted, as follows:

1-"Total Productive Maintenance (TPM): This is a strategy used to protect and repair work equipment to ensure the proper functioning of machinery through the use of preventive and predictive maintenance of production process equipment" (Al-Lami, 2005, p. 16).

2-"Improving Production Quality: It is important to understand the meaning of productivity, as it is a company's ability to produce or its capacity to increase production, according to Littré's definition in 1883. It is also defined as the relationship between the final output of goods and the materials used in production (Ahmed, 2014, p. 4). Production quality is achieved when outputs exceed inputs, and by minimizing waste in company resources while maximizing resource utilization. Furthermore, it involves company management attending to the needs of its employees, motivating them," and fulfilling their desires so they feel valued and thus exert their utmost effort at work (Musa & Al-Sarairah, 2021, p. 238).

3-"Continuous improvement - The continuous improvement process in productivity is a strategic process of an ongoing nature, the goal of which is to



bring about positive and transformative changes in the production process by increasing work efficiency, reducing waste in resources, and developing the methods and technologies used in production in order to achieve customer satisfaction and enhance the company's competitiveness through the application of continuous improvement tools such as Kaizen (the Japanese philosophy)," Six Sigma to improve quality and reduce defects, and reliance on the principle of Total Quality Management (TQM). (Al-Barqawi, 2023, p. 36).

Thirdly/ Objectives and Advantages of Lean Production

When applied in the production process, the lean production system aims to achieve the following:

- 1-Waste Reduction: Eliminating unnecessary production activities and minimizing operational costs.
- 2-"Continuous Improvement: Enhancing the company's production processes, improving workflow, and reducing the time between" activities.
- 3-"Implementing Lean Production principles across all company activities".
- 4-Customer Focus: Identifying and understanding customer requirements and striving to meet them effectively. "The customer is the starting point, the end point, and the central focus of the company". (Al-Rubaie, 2019, p 15).
- 5-"Flexibility and Responsiveness: Production flexibility coupled with the ability to respond quickly to market developments and" changes in demand. (Shah, 2007, p. 16).
- 6- Utilizing technology and automating production processes to reduce errors and improve product efficiency.
- 7-"Working to minimize sales losses while increasing profits". (Al-Waldi & Al-Shamasi, 2024, p. 7).

Fourthly / Types of Waste Addressed by Lean Production

Among the types of waste addressed and eliminated by lean production are:

- 1-"Overproduction: Attempting to eliminate estimated or projected production of goods before they are actually ordered by" customers.
- 2-"Waiting: Minimizing the gap between the time of production and the time of delivery to customers".



-Eliminating Unnecessary Product Transportation.3

4-"Excess Inventory: Some companies maintain large quantities of raw materials that exceed their needs, burdening their warehouses. This must be eliminated by implementing a lean production system".

5-"Excessive Processing in the Production Process That Does Not Add Real Value to the Products" Delivered.

6-"Unnecessary Movements: Eliminating and addressing unnecessary movements performed by some employees, such as movement while searching for tools, which is a waste of time.

7- Defects: Any production of parts that differ entirely or partially from the required product specifications".

8-Unutilized creativity or skills of employees, which is a cause of waste in the workplace. (Abdul Salam, 2023, p. 471).

Chapter Three – The Practical Aspect

First – Description of the Research Sample

" Table (2) represents the correlation ratio between the independent and dependent variables according to Spearman's coefficient

Spearman's test results			independent variable	dependent variable
Spearman's rho	independent variable	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.321
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.118
		N	25	25
	dependent variable	Correlation Coefficient	.321	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.118	.
		N	25	25

The" research sample was randomly selected, comprising a number of employees from the Petronas Oil Company, Al-Gharraf Oil Field branch, located in Al-Rifai District, north of Dhi Qar Governorate. The researcher distributed (25) questionnaires to the aforementioned company's employees. The following tables illustrate the characteristics and features of the selected research" sample:



Table No. (1) Statistical description of the research sample in terms of academic qualification

Academic qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Preparatory	4	16.0	16.0	16.0
Valid diploma	15	60.0	60.0	76.0
Bachelor's	6	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Source: Prepared by the researcher

From the above table No. (1)," it became clear to us that the number of employees who hold a preparatory certificate is (4) employees, and their percentage was 16% of the total number of the sample, while those who hold a diploma certificate, their number was (15) employees only, as their percentage is 60% of the total research sample", and they are the largest percentage.

From Table" (2), we conclude: the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative confirmed hypothesis is accepted, which proves the existence of a positive correlation between the independent variable, management, and the dependent variable, productive agility. The correlation was strong and direct, as whenever the independent variable changed, the dependent variable also followed it in change, whether it was a positive or negative change. The correlation ratio was (0.321), less than (1), which is an acceptable ratio compared to the statistical significance ratio of" (0.05).

"Table (3) represents a statistical description of the research variables.

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
independent variable	3.6625	.35994	25
dependent variable	3.7325	.37868	25

Source/Prepared by the researcher



Table No (3)"shows that the arithmetic mean of the management variable, the independent variable, was (3.662), while the standard deviation was much less than the arithmetic mean (less than one), as it was (0.359), which indicates that the independent variable had a strong effect on (productive agility),the dependent variable, and it became clear that the relationship was positive and direct between the two" variables.

" Table (4) represents a statistical description of the research variables.

Questionnaire statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Spearman's test results
"The management of Petronas' Al-Gharraf oil field branch is capable and competent in developing strategic plans for its administrative work".	4.24	.522	.698
"The company's management understands that sound planning ensures positive" business results.	4.480	.8226	.254
"The management of Dhi Qar Oil Company supports its employees and recognizes their efforts in performing their" duties.	3.440	1.4456	.685
Do" you believe that Petronas' management is striving to achieve production efficiency in its "products?	3.200	1.683	.466
The" company's management is concerned with the direct monitoring of oil production operations".	2.440	1.5567	.717
Petronas' management relies on global standards for the quality of its products in its production operations.	2.400	1.0408	.726
"Employees in the company are monitored and evaluated according to specific criteria that are understood by the employees".	3.720	1.4583	.426
Are" preventative maintenance plans prioritized in the company's production processes"?	3.960	.9780	.112
She believes" that the company's management is conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the maintenance system to ensure that its productivity" goals are achieved.	4.1600	.9865	.836



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Petronas' management at the Al-Gharraf oil field "provides real opportunities to improve production maintenance performance."	4.2400	.92556	.454
Your" company's management will enhance the efficiency of production lines and increase competitiveness".	4.5200	.50990	.559
Petronas management" is conducting ongoing processes to analyze and evaluate the performance of its production" operations.	4.400	1.0408	.400
She believes" that the management of the aforementioned company encourages the exchange of knowledge and experiences between its teams and departments to enhance continuous improvement processes within it".	4.480	1.0049	.609
She believes" that the management of Petronas in the Al-Gharraf oil field can achieve lean production in its work and that management is primarily responsible for reaching the stage of" lean production.	2.440	1.003	.455

Source - Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of the program SPSS.

Table" (4) shows that the arithmetic mean for the first question was (4.24) and the standard deviation was (0.522). Comparing the arithmetic mean with the hypothetical mean of (3), the arithmetic mean was greater than the hypothetical mean. This demonstrates that the management of Petronas in the Al-Gharraf oil field is proactive and operates according to the principle of planning in its production" operations.

In the second question, the arithmetic mean was" (4.68) and the standard deviation was (0.556). The arithmetic mean was also greater than the standard deviation, demonstrating that sound planning ensures positive results. Observing paragraph twelve, it is evident that Petronas management conducts continuous processes to analyze and evaluate the performance of its production operations. The arithmetic mean for this paragraph was (4.400), "which is greater than the standard deviation of (1.04).

In the last paragraph, the arithmetic mean was (2.4400) and the standard deviation was (1.003). When comparing the arithmetic mean with the standard deviation of (3), we see that the arithmetic mean is less than the standard



deviation. This results in the company's management being able to achieve production efficiency in its work, and it is primarily responsible for achieving the stage of efficiency in oil production.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the practical aspect, we can conclude the following:

1-"There is a positive correlation between the independent variable, management (the management of Petronas in the Al-Gharraf oil field), and the dependent variable, oil production efficiency. The correlation coefficient was 0.321, which is considered acceptable compared to the statistical significance level of" 0.05.

2-"It was found that management is the driving force behind production, leading to lean production and minimizing waste, in addition to other factors provided by management that contribute to" achieving this.

3-"The results showed that the company works on developing strategic plans for its production and administrative operations".

4-"The research sample proved that sound planning leads to the best results and the least losses or waste in production".

5-"the management of Petronas in the Al-Gharraf oil field adopts a culture of continuous improvement in its production operations and encourages the exchange of expertise and knowledge among its departments to enhance these continuous improvement processes".

6-"The company, which is the subject of my research, conducts a comprehensive evaluation of its production maintenance system and relies on a preventive maintenance" system in all its production operations.

Recommendations

The researcher (from her humble perspective) has outlined several points that she considers important and necessary to consider in order to achieve lean production or better, waste-free production:



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1-"It is essential for the company to implement the principles of occupational safety and health, to better care for human resources, and to treat all company employees equally, without discrimination based on qualifications or job title".

2-"It is necessary to allocate sufficient funds to cover production maintenance operations, as this equipment is one of the factors in achieving lean production within the company".

3-"The company should implement a preventive and predictive maintenance system in all" its departments to reduce the rate of equipment failures during operation.

4-"It is essential for the Human Resources Department at Dhi Qar Oil Company to monitor and analyze the performance of its employees through their direct supervisors," using effective performance indicators to facilitate the evaluation process..

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