Abstract

Purpose
This paper aims to illustrate the application of Lean Six Sigma (LSS) in higher education institutions (HEIs). A real-time case study presented as part of the paper highlights the value which LSS can bring to the higher education system.

Design/methodology/approach
The paper commences with an overview and the success of the LSS methodology. The uniqueness of the higher education system for imbibing quality excellence is elaborated, comparing it with the manufacturing industry. Various opportunities for LSS projects in HEIs are then discussed as part of the paper. The last section of the paper elaborates a real-time case study, explaining how LSS was leveraged to improve a university library process.

Findings
The study identified the key attributes of the higher education system, which need to be understood for imbibing quality excellence. The study also provided an insight into the upcoming application of LSS and the benefits it can bring to HEIs.

Practical implications
The introduction of LSS into the higher education setup could bring multifold organizational and social benefits

Originality/value
LSS has been successful in the past few decades in the manufacturing and service sector. However, its application in HEIs was very nascent. This study illustrates its importance and application to a highly responsible area of the service sector, for imbibing quality excellence, serving as an excellent resource for researchers and higher education professionals.

Keywords
Process improvement, Higher education, Lean Six Sigma, Case study, Quality excellence
Lean Six Sigma is a method that relies on a collaborative team effort to improve performance by systematically removing waste and reducing variation. It combines lean manufacturing/lean enterprise and Six Sigma to eliminate the eight kinds of waste (muda): Defects, Over-Production, Waiting, Non-Utilized Talent, Transportation, Inventory, Motion, and Extra-Processing. Lean and Six Sigma are complementary and provide organizations with a set of tools for management and growth. Higher education needs a method that supports a systems-thinking and project-based approach for improvement. Key themes of Lean Six Sigma include:

- A strong focus on the internal and external customer. Multiple functions and departments within the institution are involved in applying the quality concepts based on the project selected. This fosters collaboration across the functional silos and provides a means to effectively communicate and resolve problems.
- Help establish measures. Measures used in education tend to be lagging indicators. Because of the requirements of Lean Six Sigma (LSS), team members identify leading indicators that reflect the success of projects.

M. Vijaya Sunder. Published 2016. Economics. Purpose This paper aims to illustrate the application of Lean Six Sigma (LSS) in higher education institutions (HEIs). A real-time case study presented as part of the paper highlights the value which LSS can bring to the higher education system.

Design/methodology/approach The paper commences with an overview and the success of the LSS methodology. The uniqueness of the higher education system for imbuing quality excel – The purpose of this paper is to critically evaluate whether Lean Six Sigma (LSS) can be a powerful business improvement methodology for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of higher education institutions (HEIs). The paper will also explore the fundamental challenges, barriers, and critical success factors for the introduction and development of LSS in the HE context. The last part of the paper is to understand the role of tools and techniques for the sustainability of this initiative for making the HEIs more efficient and effective. Lean Six Sigma applied to document management services in higher education. One key area where higher education institutions seek to improve efficiency is by implementing electronic document and digital image repository to simplify and streamline document-intensive business processes, such as enrollment. Imaging and document repository solutions include scanning, organizing, and storing back files and incoming documents so they are readily available and instantly accessible to people who need them most. Institutions often look to experts in the industry to help them implement transformation.