Author’s response to reviews

Title: Organizational issues for the lean success in China: Exploring a change strategy for lean success

Authors:

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Version: 1 Date: 23 Sep 2018

Author’s response to reviews:

Nurul Habidin (Reviewer 1):

1) Background

The author can explain more about the lean and add updated references (2014-2018).

ANSWER: We have updated references and included much more explanation about lean.

2) Results

The results should explain clearly and supported by previous studies.

ANSWER: Thanks for your comment; we have endeavored to provide a clearer connection with previous studies.

3) Conclusions

Suggest to add implications regarding three implications: (theoretical, practical, and empirical)

ANSWER: We added the implications in the conclusion (see page 20-21)
Giovanni Improta, PhD (Reviewer 2): *

* Underline the innovation of the work

ANSWER: We clarified it in the conclusion (see page 19).

* Change the word methods from plural in singular

ANSWER: We have changed the word methods from plural to singular.

* Table 3 "Hospital C and D" change in "Hospitals C and D"

ANSWER: We have removed table 3.

* Figure 1: please to reorganize this figure, the crosses as inserted create confusion

ANSWER: We have revised figure 1.

* Figure 2: insert the titles to the axis

ANSWER: We have inserted the titles to the axis of figure 2.

* Figure 4 insert the name of the axis

ANSWER: We have inserted the name of the axis of figure 4.

* Insert a plan of development of the project

ANSWER: We thank the reviewer for his comment. We are not sure whether we have met this.
Michael I. Harrison (Reviewer 3):

I agreed to review this paper with interest, because I have read many studies of lean applications and have published such studies myself, and I was completely unfamiliar with lean uses and implementation in China. I am sharing this information because I think it will probably characterize many of the readers of your papers when they are published. I should add that I have published both quantitative and qualitative studies and have a strong sympathy for mixed methods research, so I am in no way hostile to or your basic methodological approach.

Let me start with some general comments and I will then offer specific comments citing the related page numbers and lines.

I think the paper tries to cover too much ground. The result is that it states several different goals and includes sections that appear to pursue additional, unstated, goals. In thinking about how to respond to my comments and those that you received from other readers, you might consider dividing the paper into two parts, each of which deals with the purposes, methods, findings, and implications of one of the two data gathering methodologies (literature survey versus case studies).

ANSWER: We have followed your advice and eliminated the four case studies’ data from this paper, and focus on quantitative data from literature.

You might chose the Cresswell and Sheikh framework to help you accomplish these tasks. For example, you could to introduce it and justify its selection more thoroughly at the start of the paper. Then you might use it to organize the entire results and much of the discussion sections. When it appears so late in the paper seems to be something of an add on.

ANSWER: We have now introduced this framework under 2.2. and used it in the results and Discussion sections.

I strongly urge you to ask a specialist to provide a thorough editing of the manuscript for clarity and language precision. There are many statements that I found hard to interpret, and some places where I think there may have been some slight shifts in language nuances, so that your intended meaning is not clearly expressed.

ANSWER: We have fully edited the paper.

Let me now address some issues as they appear in the paper:
Abstract. The abstract needs to be thoroughly revised to make clearer what the actual goals of research were, what the main findings were, and how they relate to these goals. Mention of the Cresswell and Sheikh framework only in the conclusion of the abstract is insufficient and unclear.

ANSWER: This has been done.

Background. This section focuses on the factors affecting lean success, neglecting other themes and topics raised in the paper.

Lean. This survey needs to define success clearly and then to be much more focused on what the literature has found about factors affecting success. It needs to draw on a broader set of systematic reviews and to ensure that the most recent relevant literature is cited. One source you might consult is the CL EA R, bibliography which is online at the University of California at Berkeley at http://clear.berkeley.edu/ourwork/annotated-bibliography/

ANSWER: We believe that the background is much clearer.

There is some confusion in the section about the way that lean is characterized. It is not really a technical innovation. Rather, depending on its goals and uses, it is either a process redesign innovation, or a strategy for culture and organizational change. In most cases it has been used as the former. The statement about systematic evidence on the application of lean cites studies published no later than 2013. Much of the relevant literature appeared after that date.

ANSWER: We have recognized this error; lean is a managerial innovation. We have adapted the Cresswell and Sheikh framework to this.

The literature has been updated.

Organizational issues for the successful clean implementation. This section needs much more development. Right now it is not clear why you chose this model or how you intend to use it.

ANSWER: This section has been updated.

The Chinese hospital context. Readers who are unfamiliar with the Chinese hospital setting, need more information and clearer statements of the regulatory and payment environment. What exactly are the current incentives for hospitals to change their practices? What do terms used in other nations mean in China? For example, on page 7 line 4, I was confused by the reference to
Medicare, which is an American institution. What does it mean in the Chinese setting? Similarly beginning on line 10 you discuss diagnosis related groups. We need information on how this mechanism is structured. It is handled in different ways in different countries. You indicate several goals for the introduction of DRGs (line 16 FF.), but you don't provide any evidence that DRGs elsewhere have produced these results. Nor do you make clear the logic between the incentives to which the hospitals are now exposed, and expected changes.

ANSWER: We have re-written this section on p.7 to make it clearer.

Methods. This section needs greater clarity and further development. For example, it is not really clear who was interviewed and how the interviews were analyzed. If only two hospitals allowed interviews, what data sources were available? Are these comparable to the data that's available on the two hospitals where interviews were done or do the sources introduce systematic biases?

ANSWER: We have removed the qualitative research data.

Nor are the implications of the design of the case studies considered sufficiently: It is not true that conditions and processes observed in a set of cases selected on an outcome variable can be assumed to be either necessary or sufficient conditions for the successful achievement of that outcome. Unless, for example, your study included some similar hospital that adopted lean but had very different implementation results, it would not usually be possible to make inferences about the causal effects you observed. One way you could do so would be to provide detailed information demonstrating documented, logical linkages between organizational conditions and processes and some subsequent outcome. That is the method used in case studies that are not built on comparisons.

ANSWER: We have eliminated the 4 case studies from this paper.

p. journals. are all of these peer reviewed? are they all in Chinese? Please provide a list of the papers with publication details.

ANSWER: All of these journals are peer reviewed. They are all in Chinese. We have provided a list of the papers with publication details.

Results. P.9. l. 37. The rate of publication of studies is not the same thing as the rate of diffusion of innovation. Comparison of figure 2 and 3 show that this difference occurs in your case.
ANSWER: We corrected the errors in figure 2.

p.9 The information on lines 48ff and thereafter and only be understood in comparison to other Chinese hospitals.

ANSWER: We trust that in the rewrite we have addressed the reviewers concerns.

p. 11 Please clarify the term "hospital culture construction." Eliminating waste and quality improvement are not tools. Please clarify the term "field management." What is intended by the reference to 4.3?

ANSWER: We use “hospital culture change” to instead of "hospital culture construction." We use “site management” to instead of “field management”.

p. 13. Outcomes are not a good indicator of goals. The discussion needs to be revised.

ANSWER: We have revised it.

Table 3: I don't think most readers would view technical support as a technology. There are many issues grouped under the heading of "stakeholder involvement," some of which would not usually be clustered under that heading. Similarly the term "individual and organizational benefits" is not clear and seems to cover a very wide range of effects.

ANSWER: We have deleted table 3.

Page 11, l. 50 ff and p. 15, l. 18ff. Be careful about drifting from a descriptive discussion to a prescriptive one, or to working with an underlying assumption of the value of lean.

ANSWER: We trust that we have eliminated the prescriptive parts.

p. 15, l. 48ff. It is not clear how you decided what conditions are necessary and sufficient greater clarity is needed.

ANSWER: We have removed the qualitative data.
p. 16, l. 8ff. This belongs in the discussion section. l 40 it is not clear that the quotation supports your point about lean.

ANSWER: We have revised these (see page 14).

p. 17, l 23ff. It is not clear how this discussion fits in with the paper's main topics and goals.

ANSWER: It now follows the Cresswell and Sheikh model.

p. 19 More clarity is needed in the usage of "bottom up and top down".

ANSWER: We have removed the content related to qualitative data.