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# Towards Applying the Lean Management Principles to Improve Travel Agencies Performance at Cairo Governorate

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## ARTICLE INFO

## Abstract

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The research aims to explore the feasibility and impact of applying Lean Management Principles (LMPs) within travel agencies at Cairo Governorate, with the goal of enhancing operational efficiency, reducing waste, and improving customer satisfaction. Lean Management (LM), originally developed in the manufacturing sector, has been successfully adapted across various service industries. The research investigates how key tools of LM, such as continuous improvement (Kaizen), value stream mapping, and the elimination of non-value-added activities, can be integrated into the operations of travel agencies.

The research involved collecting data from a sample of travel agency managers, utilizing a descriptive analytical approach, through questionnaires distributed in the travel agencies at Cairo Governorate. Several tests were applied, like descriptive analytical approaches, reliability tests, and Pearson correlation tests with the aid of SPSS 25.0. The findings indicate that while the adoption of LMPs can lead to significant improvements in service delivery and operational performance like optimizing booking processes, resource allocation, and fostering a culture of innovation., there are several challenges to be addressed, including cultural resistance, the need for extensive employee training, and financial constraints.

The research concludes that LM holds substantial potential for enhancing the competitiveness of Egyptian travel agencies. However, success depends on the agencies' ability to adapt these principles to their specific operational contexts and the broader market environment. Practical recommendations are provided for both travel agencies and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to support the effective implementation of LM, thereby fostering sustainable growth and long-term success in the dynamic tourism industry.

## 1. Introduction

Travel agencies are facing the challenge of needing to reduce costs significantly and improve the efficiency of their internal processes. While the tourism industry has experienced continuous growth in recent years, it is now anticipating economic turbulence and difficult times ahead. As a result, travel agencies are expected to earn less in the future than they have in the past. This issue has not been widely considered in tourism, even though it has been present in the industrial sector for decades. The industrial sector has successfully applied

modern methods and tools to optimize productivity, improve efficiency, and enhance service quality. These strategies, known as "Lean Management," have been used for many years to boost productivity in industrial environments (Rauch et al., 2016).

In the face of increasing economic and environmental challenges confronting Egyptian travel agencies, the need to adopt modern and effective management strategies has become urgent to improve their performance and ensure their sustainability. LM is among the innovative approaches that have proven effective in various sectors worldwide. This methodology focuses on enhancing efficiency, reducing waste, and improving service quality, contributing to achieving company goals more effectively (Palange and Dhatrik, 2021).

Starting from the research of specialized literature, this research will identify the possibilities of applying the lean principles in Egyptian travel agencies. Industrial sectors are successfully implemented of lean philosophy but notes challenges in applying lean tools and methods in the service industry. It emphasizes the need to customize lean methodology based on the unique characteristics of each sector for successful implementation and improvement in service operations. This underscores the importance of adapting lean principles to suit the specific needs and requirements of different industries, including services like travel agencies (Ahlstrom, 2004)

The research seeks to present a framework that can help travel agencies adopt and implement lean management principles. Furthermore, the research will first discuss the concepts of LM, and then review the methods and principals of LM that can be applied in the Egyptian travel agencies.

### **Research Problem**

Egyptian travel agencies face increasing challenges in a highly competitive environment and rapidly changing market demands. Among these challenges is the urgent need to improve operational performance, reduce costs, and increase efficiency, which requires adopting modern and effective management methods. LM represents one of these methods, proven to enhance performance in various sectors worldwide by focusing on reducing waste and enhancing tourist value.

However, the application of LM in the Egyptian tourism sector remains unclear and underutilized. Many Egyptian travel agencies lack effective strategies to leverage the benefits of LM. Therefore, the problem of this research arises from the necessity to explore the feasibility of applying LMPs in Egyptian travel agencies and to determine the expected impact of these applications on improving their operational and financial performance.

### **Research Questions**

The main question of this research is how can LMPs be applied in Egyptian travel agencies to improve their performance, and what are the factors contributing to the success or failure of these applications? Specifically, this research tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most suitable LMPs for application in Egyptian travel agencies?
2. How can employees in Egyptian travel agencies be trained and prepared to effectively implement LMPs?
3. Which factors can impact on applying LM in Egyptian travel agencies?
4. What are the benefits of applying LM in Egyptian travel agencies?
5. What challenges and obstacles might Egyptian travel agencies face when implementing LM?

6. How can the improvement in performance resulting from the application of LMPs in these agencies be measured and analyzed?

### **Research Objectives**

1. Identify suitable LMPs for application in Egyptian travel agencies.
2. Analyze the potential challenges and obstacles to implementing LM in Egyptian travel agencies.
3. Develop action plan for training and preparing employees in Egyptian travel agencies on LMPs.
4. Evaluate the financial and operational impact of applying LM on Egyptian travel agencies.
5. Develop tools to measure and analyze performance improvements resulting from the application of LM in Egyptian travel agencies.

## **1. Literature Review**

### **1.1. Lean Management Concepts**

LM is a systematic approach that aims to eliminate unnecessary elements within an organization, such as errors, costs, excess inventory, and inefficient processes. By focusing on efficiency and customer expectations, LM seeks to increase output while minimizing effort, resources, and time. Essentially, it involves simplifying operations by removing anything that does not add value to the organization (Kılıç et al., 2016).

Foris et al. (2021) illustrated that the concept of LM encompasses all the principles, methods, and procedures used to organize and run an organization by reducing or eliminating waste from the value chain processes. LM is not just a tool for improvement but a management philosophy that requires direction from top management to be effectively applied at the production level, fostering necessary understanding and trust. By adopting LM, manufacturers aim to deliver more value to customers, increasing process speeds and minimizing waste.

LM aims to distinguish between valuable and wasteful practices by shifting the focus of management towards improving processes that directly impact products rather than fixed organizational structures. By emphasizing efficiency and reducing waste, lean production seeks to achieve a streamlined production process involving suppliers, producers, and customers, ultimately aiming for wasteless production while enhancing quality, reducing lead times, and improving cost and delivery performance simultaneously. This approach aligns with the core strategy of LM, which prioritizes speed, flow efficiency, and overall performance improvement within the value chain (Kılıç et al., 2016).

To achieve long-term success, LM must be integrated harmoniously with the organizational structure, culture, and performance evaluation system. It is crucial for the culture of continuous improvement to be ingrained in the daily actions of all employees, fostering sustainable decision-making for ongoing enhancements. Recent years have seen a heightened focus on organizational culture within companies aiming to effectively implement lean principles (Bortolotti et al., 2015; Atkinson, 2010).

Beside on the previous the research suggested a definition for LM in travel agencies as “LM involves applying lean principles and practices to enhance efficiency, reduce waste, and improve overall operations within travel agencies. It focuses on streamlining processes, optimizing resource utilization, and delivering high-quality services to tourists while minimizing costs. Key components of LM in travel agencies may include continuous improvement, customer-centricity, employee empowerment, and the elimination of non-

value-added activities. By adopting lean principles, travel agencies aim to enhance customer satisfaction, increase competitiveness, and achieve sustainable growth.”

## **1.2. Lean Management Methods and Techniques**

LM offers a set of tools. When implementing lean practices, various techniques work together to achieve the desired outcomes. Therefore, travel agencies must carefully select the strategies that will have the most significant impact with the least effort. This research focuses on five key methods and techniques that can be utilized in the implementation of LM in Egyptian travel agencies. The LM approach emphasizes equipping employees with the skills and a shared mindset to minimize waste, design more efficient workflows, and enhance connections and processes (Thorhallsdottir, 2016; Abdi et al., 2006).

### **1.2.1. Value Stream Mapping**

Value Stream Mapping (VSM) is a visual tool used to analyze and improve the flow of materials and information needed to deliver a product or service. The primary goal of VSM is to determine whether production processes add value from the customer's perspective. This technique helps identify non-value-adding activities or waste, allowing for their elimination (Engelund et al., 2009).

To understand how flow efficiency works, it is essential to first grasp how travel agency processes operate. Flow efficiency involves mapping out the process to identify which steps add value for tourists and which do not. The goal is to eliminate all non-value-added activities, making the process leaner for the benefit of the tourists. In travel agencies, Value Stream Mapping (VSM) can help identify inefficiencies in booking processes, customer interactions, and service delivery (Modig, 2012).

### **1.2.2. Kanban**

Kanban is a visual management method used to control and optimize workflow. Known as a "pull" system, it involves planning and organizing production so that nothing is done in the upstream process without a signal of necessity from the downstream process. Lean ensures process stability and continuous flow, based on three principles: flow, takt, and pull. In travel agencies, Kanban boards can be used to visualize the status of bookings, customer inquiries, and other tasks, helping teams prioritize and manage their work effectively (Foris et al., 2021).

### **1.2.3. Kaizen**

According to Khan (2011), Kaizen refers to continuous improvement aimed at eliminating non-value-added waste through gradual changes, whether small or significant. The approach focuses on regular meetings with employees to gather suggestions that help travel agencies solve problems and enhance performance (Näslund, 2008). Kaizen is described as a work-based philosophy designed to improve operations by eliminating waste, reducing unproductive time and scrap, organizing workspaces, standardizing procedures, and minimizing production costs while maximizing efficiency (Foris et al., 2021; Imai and Kaizen, 2012).

A Kaizen workshop is a key tool in LM for identifying customers, analyzing the current state, developing future visions, implementing changes, and assessing performance (Sorte, 2014). These workshops, widely used in LM, enable cross-functional teams to make rapid improvements that might otherwise take months (Thorhallsdottir, 2016). Success depends on selecting the right people, providing them with dedicated time and strong management support, and offering basic training on LM concepts, particularly the distinction between value-added and non-value-added activities. Travel agencies can apply Kaizen events to engage employees in identifying and implementing operational improvements.

#### 1.2.4. Gemba

Genchi Genbutsu, commonly known as Gemba, is a core LM technique where managers and supervisors directly observe work processes to gain a deeper understanding. During a Gemba walk, participants should remain respectful, ask "why," observe the situation firsthand, and inquire how they can support improvements (Modig, 2012). The aim is to identify ways to simplify tasks, make processes faster, and reduce unnecessary steps.

A Gemba walk is not a one-time activity but should be integrated into management's routine and the organizational culture. Regular engagement shows employees that management is genuinely invested in helping them, which promotes continuous improvement. By interacting with all employees, management builds trust and identifies individual challenges. This approach emphasizes making small, incremental changes rather than large improvements and encourages learning from mistakes, as they can lead to new solutions. Credible facilitators are crucial to the success of Gemba walks (Thorhallsdottir, 2016). In travel agencies, Gemba walks can reveal operational challenges and uncover areas for improvement.

#### 1.2.5. 5S Technique

The 5S methodology is focused on organizing the workplace for greater efficiency and effectiveness. The concept is that when everything has its designated place, the workplace remains orderly, with just enough of what is needed and no excess of unused materials. This allows employees to work faster since they don't have to waste time searching for their tools and materials (Foris et al., 2021; Thorhallsdottir, 2016). The 5S principles translate to:

- Sort: Keep only what the agency needs and eliminate what it does not.
- Straighten: Ensure everything has its place and is returned there after use.
- Shine: Maintain cleanliness to help employees identify quality issues more quickly.
- Standardize: Establish rules, standards, and systems to keep everything sorted, straightened, and shined.
- Sustain: Continuously maintain the improved conditions and seek ongoing improvement.

In travel agencies, implementing 5S principles can help improve workspace organization, cleanliness, and overall efficiency.

### 1.3. Lean Management Principles in Egyptian Travel Agencies

LMPs focus on maximizing value for tourists while minimizing waste (Rauch et al., 2020). These principles are applicable across various industries, including service sectors like travel agencies. Here are the core principles of LM in Egyptian travel agencies.

#### 1.3.1. Identifying Value

Identify what tourist's value and are willing to pay for. To understand tourist needs and preferences to determine what constitutes value (Karim and Arif-Uz-Zaman, 2013). For a travel agency, this could mean personalized travel packages, timely service, and seamless booking experiences. It can be applied in Egyptian travel agencies by conducting surveys and gather feedback to understand what tourists value most, such as customized itineraries or 24/7 tourist support.

#### 1.3.2. Value Stream Mapping

Mapping the entire process flow from product creation to delivery, identifying each step involved in delivering value. Visualizing the process to pinpoint activities that add value and those that do not (Mudgal et al., 2020; Andi et al. 2009). In a travel agency, this might include the steps from tourist inquiry to booking and post-travel follow-up. It can be applied

in Egyptian travel agencies by outlining the entire tourist journey, from initial contact to trip completion, to identify wasteful steps.

### **1.3.3. Improving Flow**

Ensuring that the value-creating steps flow smoothly without interruptions, delays, or bottlenecks. Optimizing the workflow to eliminate waste and ensure a smooth process (Rauch et al., 2016). This could involve improving the efficiency of the booking system and reducing the time taken for each step in the travel planning process. It can be applied in Egyptian travel agencies by Streamlining booking processes by integrating advanced booking systems and reducing redundant paperwork.

### **1.3.4. Establish Pull**

Producing only what is needed when it is needed, based on tourist demand. Implementing a pull system where services are provided in response to actual demand rather than forecasts (Rauch et al., 2016). For a travel agency, this means responding promptly to tourist requests and avoiding overbooking or unnecessary services. It can be applied in Egyptian travel agencies by developing a responsive system that adjusts services based on real-time tourist demands and trends.

### **1.3.5. Pursue Perfection**

Striving for continuous improvement in all processes by identifying and eliminating root causes of problems. Fostering a culture of continuous improvement (kaizen) where employees at all levels are encouraged to suggest improvements. This helps in consistently enhancing service quality and operational efficiency (Ofori-Okyere et al., 2016). It can be applied in Egyptian travel agencies by Regularly review and refine processes based on feedback and performance metrics.

### **1.3.6. Employees Engagement**

Engage and respect employees, recognizing their contributions and involving them in problem-solving. Encourage collaboration and empower employees to take ownership of their work. In a travel agency, this means valuing staff insights on tourist interactions and process improvements. It can be applied in Egyptian travel agencies by fostering a supportive work environment where employees feel valued and motivated to contribute to process improvements (Weerasooriyan and Alwis, 2017). By applying these LMPs, Egyptian travel agencies can enhance their efficiency, reduce costs, and deliver superior value to tourists, achieving a competitive edge in the market.

## **3. Research Methodology**

The research used a descriptive analytical approach in which they tried to describe how LMPs, initially developed in manufacturing, have found application across various service industries, including the travel industry. This research explores the application of LMPs within travel agencies in Cairo Governorate to enhance operational efficiency.

### **3.1. Data Collection**

Data has been collected through questionnaires that were prepared in an approach that is relevant to the situation so as to decrease invalid responses. They were distributed to the general manager, assistant general manager, operation manager, marketing manager, tourist manager, booking manager, customer service manager, and IT manager in travel agencies at Cairo Governorate. The research used the descriptive analytical approach, where a questionnaire was prepared and distributed to a random sample of 124 managers in travel agencies. The statistical analysis of the responses was carried out via SPSS v25.

### 3.2. Questionnaire Design and Measure

To fulfill the research objective, explore the application of LMPs within travel agencies at Cairo Governorate to enhance operational efficiency. To achieve that, this research employed a method of descriptive analytical methodology by using a questionnaire tool. A survey consisting of seven sections was used as a data collection tool. The first section includes the respondent's demographic characteristics (gender, age, education level, Job Title, and Years of experience). The second section is about the respondent's knowledge of lean and its impotence. The third section included four variables representing the concept of LM in Egyptian travel agencies. The fourth section included 13 variables representing the benefits of LM in Egyptian travel agencies. The fifth section included 16 variables representing factors of LM in Egyptian travel agencies. The sixth section includes the six principles of lean that were modified by Thorhallsdottir (2016) and Foris et al. (2021), and finally the challenges of adopting LM in Egyptian travel agencies. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagrees to (5) strongly agree, rates most of the items.

### 3.3. Data Analysis

To achieve the objective of this study, the research used the descriptive analytical approach. The researcher depends on using SPSS v. 25 to process data statistically. The treatment included the following statistical methods:

1. Cronbach's Alpha Test.
2. Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviation (SD).
3. Pearson Correlation analysis

### 3.4. Data Validity and Reliability

The study used a questionnaire to validate its readability, format, and ability to measure constructs. The questionnaire was distributed to managers in Cairo's travel agencies, who had specializations in the field. The instrument was updated and refined to reflect expert feedback. The experts showed interest and interaction, enhancing its validity. Reliability testing was conducted to ensure consistent measurement across various items in the questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha, a commonly used measure, measures the instrument's reliability, with an index ranging from 0.0 to 1.0. Researcher should aim for a value closer to 1.0, as an Alpha value indicates the instrument's strength and consistency. In social sciences, a threshold value of 0.7 is considered acceptable. This method ensures the instrument's validity and stability.

**Table (1): Cronbach's Alpha Value**

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Validity Coefficient*
The concept of LM in Egyptian travel agencies	4	0.937	0.968
Benefits of the LM in Egyptian travel agencies	13	0.955	0.977
Factors of LM in Egyptian travel agencies	16	0.968	0.984
Lean principles in Egyptian travel agencies	31	0.984	0.992
- Value Identification	6	0.936	0.967
- Value stream mapping	10	0.963	0.981
- Create Flow	2	0.814	0.902
- Establish Pull	2	0.794	0.891
- Pursue Perfection	5	0.915	0.957
- Employee Engagement	6	0.954	0.977
Challenges of adopting LM in Egyptian travel agencies	14	0.958	0.979

- Financial Challenges	4	0.896	0.947
- Top management Challenges	5	0.932	0.965
- Top management Challenges	5	0.924	0.961
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>0.989</b>	<b>0.994</b>

\* **Validity coefficient** =  $\sqrt{\text{Reliability coefficient}}$

To examine the internal consistency and dependability of the study's constructs, The Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) measure was employed. The reliabilities of the scales were examined, and the Cronbach's alpha values in Table (1) ranged from 0.937 to 0.984, with a total of (0.989) indicating an acceptable Cronbach's alpha value for each field. It is also clear that the validity coefficient (99.40%) indicates that the study sample is reliable and genuine.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1.Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

#### The First Section: The Respondent's Demographic Characteristics

**Table 2: Demographic Profile of Sample Elements**

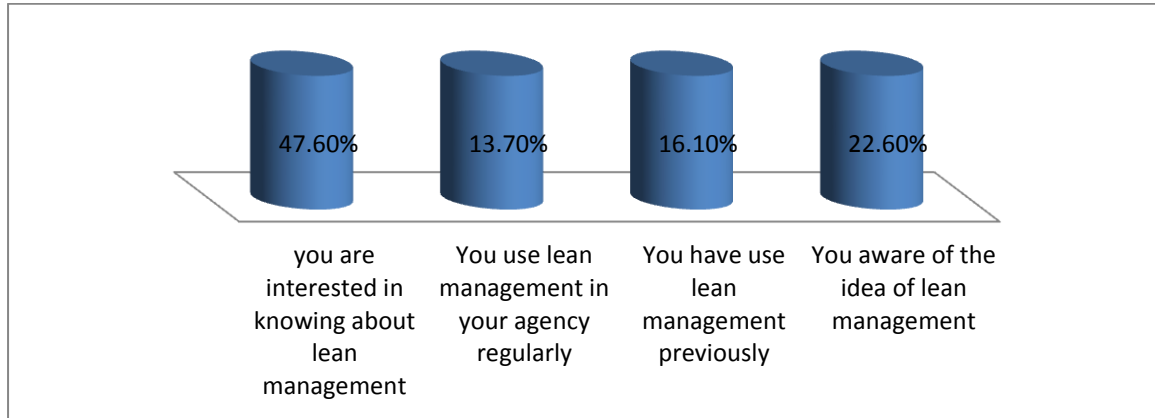
Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	112	90.3
Female	12	9.7
<b>Age Group</b>		
Less than 30	16	12.9
31 – 40 years old	32	25.8
41 – 50 years old	50	40.3
51 – 60 years old	26	21.0
<b>Educational level</b>		
Bachelor's degree	103	83.1
Master's degree	9	7.2
PhD degree	12	9.7
<b>Job Title</b>		
General Manager	39	31.5
Assistant General Manager	12	9.7
Operation manager	12	9.7
Marketing manager	12	9.7
Tourist manager	17	13.7
Booking manager	16	12.9
Customer service manager	16	12.9
<b>Years of Experience</b>		
4-6	16	12.9
7-9	28	22.6
10-12	16	12.9
Over 12	64	51.6

As depicted in Table (2) shows the discussion of the research findings begins with a brief demographic profile of respondents in terms of gender, age, education level, Job Title, and Years of experience. The majority of the respondents were male (90.30%), rather than female respondents (9.70%). Of this sample, the age bracket of 41 – 50 years old had the greatest number of respondents (40.30%). and the majority of respondents had completed a bachelor's



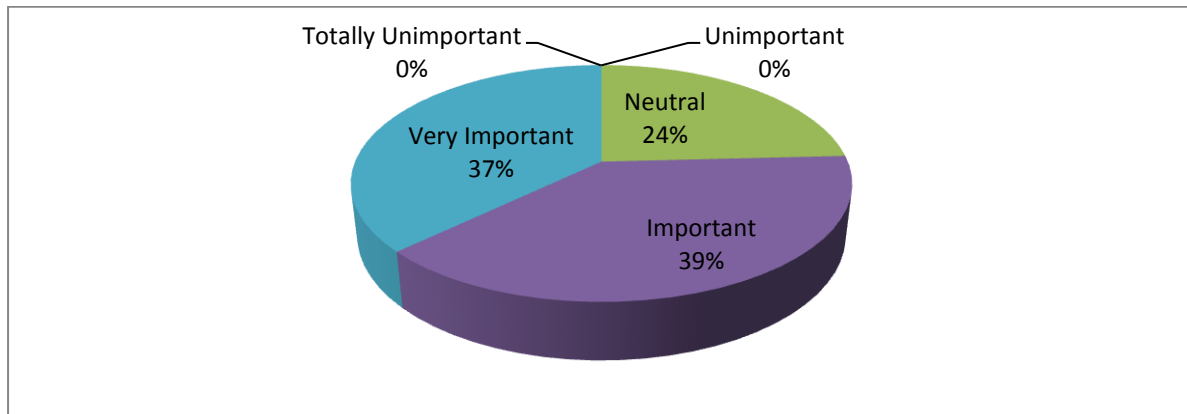
degree (83.10%). The majority of participants were classified as General Manager (31.50%), Tourist manager (13.70 %), Booking manager and Customer service manager (12.9%), Assistant General Manager, Operation manager, and Marketing manager (12.9%). fifth section concerned about the years of experience in travel agencies and reflected that the majority (51.60%) of the sampled travel agency spent Over 12, when (22.6 %) of respondents spent round 7 to 9 years.

**The Second Section: The Respondent’s Knowledge of Lean and Its Impotence.**



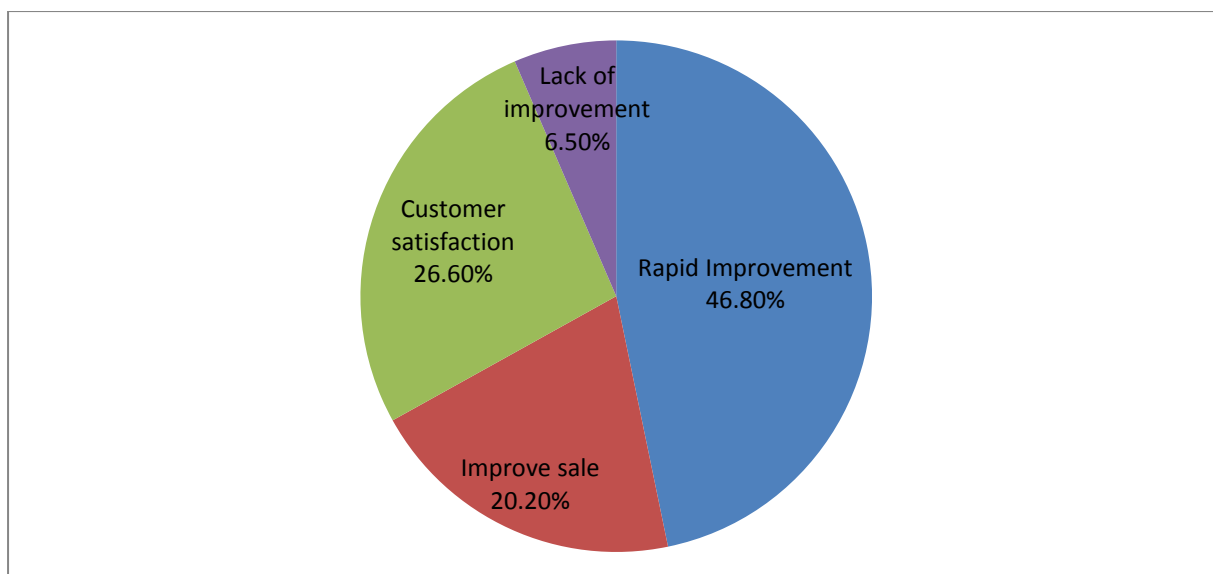
**Figure 1: Experience with LM**

Figure (1) shows that there is a significant interest (47.6%) in learning about LM, but only a small percentage (13.7%) regularly use it in their agencies. About 22.6% are aware of the concept, and 16.1% have used it previously. This reveals a gap between the interest in LM and its actual implementation, indicating a need for increased training and awareness to effectively expand its application.



**Figure 2: The Importance of Using LM in Your Agency**

Figure (2) shows that the majority consider the topic either "Important" (39%) or "Very Important" (37%), while 24% are neutral. No one views it as "Unimportant" or "Totally Unimportant," indicating that the topic is widely regarded as significant.



**Figure 3: The Reasons of Implementing Lean**

Figure (3) shows that 46.8% prioritize rapid improvement, 26.6% focus on customer satisfaction, 20.2% aim to improve sales, and only 6.5% report a lack of improvement.

**The Third Section: The Concept of LM in Egyptian Travel Agencies**

**Table 3: The Concept of LM in Egyptian Travel Agencies**

Statements	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank	Attitude
Active exchange of information on quality among all stakeholders	3.63	1.070	4	Agree
Policy development and appropriate alternatives to address business problems	3.85	1.080	1	Agree
Lean’s A quality management program and philosophy focusing time and efforts on identifying and improving steps in a customer's valuable operation and removing wasteful or unnecessary process steps	3.79	1.038	2	Agree
Lean is a management strategy to reduce work stress	3.76	.983	3	Agree
<b>Total Mean</b>	<b>3.76</b>			<b>Agree</b>

It’s declared from this table that respondent’s see that all concept Compatible with of LM in travel agencies and the most concepts are: “Policy development and appropriate alternatives to address business problems”, “Lean’s A quality management program and philosophy focusing time and efforts on identifying and improving steps in a customer's valuable operation and removing wasteful or unnecessary process steps” and “Lean is a management strategy to reduce work stress” with mean 3.85, 3.79 and 3.76 respectively.

### The Fourth Section: Benefits of LM in Egyptian Travel Agencies

**Table 4: Benefits of LM in Egyptian Travel Agencies**

Benefits	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank	Attitude
Increase of knowledge and competence	4.02	.836	6	Agree
Employee involvement in the lean process	3.76	.983	13	Agree
Improving work safety	4.06	.940	5	Agree
Choosing the optimal time for tasks to complete	3.93	.903	9	Agree
Increasing the efficiency of providing services	4.00	.928	8	Agree
Retention of existing customers	3.92	.959	11	Agree
Standardization of services	3.79	.973	12	Agree
Acquiring new customers	4.19	.659	3	Agree
Providing customer value	4.26	.685	1	Strongly Agree
Improving work organization	4.13	.674	4	Agree
Ensuring the availability of services at specific times	3.92	.949	10	Agree
Improving the quality of services offered	4.23	.720	2	Strongly Agree
Minimization of service time	4.00	.776	7	Agree
<b>Total Mean</b>	<b>4.02</b>			<b>Agree</b>

Table (4) presents the means and standard deviations of benefits of the LM in travel agencies, where the means ranged between (4.26 – 3.76) compared with the total instrument mean for the domain (4.20). The item “Providing customer value” ranked first with a mean and standard deviation (M=4.26, SD=.685). The item "Employee involvement in the lean process" ranked last reached a mean (3.76) and the standard deviation was (.983).

### The Fifth Section: Factors of LM in Egyptian Travel Agencies

**Table 5: Factors of LM in Egyptian Travel Agencies**

Factors	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank	Attitude
Top Management commitment and support	4.06	.634	3	Very Important
Involvement of employees	4.02	.770	9	Very Important
Linking Lean method to suppliers	3.67	.952	16	Very Important
Monitoring and evaluation of performance	4.06	.868	5	Very Important
Skills and expertise	4.13	.721	2	Very Important
Leadership	3.98	.959	11	Very Important
Cultural change	4.03	1.043	8	Very Important
Communication	3.98	1.028	12	Very Important
Education and training	4.16	.780	1	Very Important
Linking Lean Method to the business strategy	3.97	.709	13	Very Important
Consultant participation	3.85	.917	15	Very Important
Reward system	3.98	.928	10	Very Important
Understanding the tools and techniques within Lean to the employees that perform job in travel agencies	4.03	.754	6	Very Important
Linking Lean to human resources	4.03	.776	7	Very Important
Linking Lean to customers	3.92	.889	14	Very Important
Project Management skills	4.06	.730	4	Very Important
<b>Total Mean</b>	<b>4.00</b>			<b>Very Important</b>

Table No. 5 summarizes the attitudes, means, and standard deviation in relation to the descriptive study of Factors of LM in travel agencies. The overall mean value of 4.00 showed nearly Factors of LM in travel agencies. In addition, the greatest mean was for "Education and training" with a value of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 0.780, while the lowest mean value was for "Linking Lean method to suppliers" with a low mean value of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 0.952.

### The Sixth Section: Lean Principles in Egyptian Travel Agencies

**Table 6: Lean Principles in Egyptian Travel Agencies**

Principles	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank	Attitude
<b>Value Identification</b>				
We identify the customer whether internal or external.	4.02	.770	3	Agree
We have a formal method for determining customer needs.	3.99	.831	5	Agree
The travel agencies measure customer satisfaction for service delivered.	4.06	.789	1	Agree
We delivering a high standard of service with a suitable price.	3.97	.910	6	Agree
We identify the customer needs and provide them with a suitable product.	4.06	.974	2	Agree
We identify customer expectations and requirements before serving delivered	4.00	.855	4	Agree
<b>Value stream mapping</b>				
Value Stream Mapping tool adoption will clarify end-to-end processes, allowing you to eliminate non-value-added activities.	3.61	.917	10	Agree
Implementing Value Stream Mapping tool reduces lead times for travel bookings, delivering faster service to tourists.	3.90	.975	8	Agree
Value Stream Mapping tool facilitates better resource allocation and capacity planning, improving staff and equipment utilization.	3.85	1.049	9	Agree
Tourists will notice improved responsiveness and efficiency in services post-Value Stream Mapping tool implementation.	3.96	.810	3	Agree
Value Stream Mapping tool helps identify and address booking process bottlenecks, creating smoother workflows and reducing wait times.	3.92	.866	5	Agree
Value Stream Mapping tool will engage team members in improving processes and workflows collaboratively.	3.90	.805	7	Agree
Managers will gain insights into departmental performance with Value Stream Mapping tool, aiding informed decision-making.	3.93	.889	4	Agree
Value Stream Mapping tool implementation leads to cost savings and resource optimization, boosting profitability.	4.02	.850	2	Agree
Value Stream Mapping tool adoption reduces errors and rework, enhancing service quality and tourist satisfaction.	4.06	.730	1	Agree

Value Stream Mapping tool fosters a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, driving ongoing process and service enhancements.	3.90	.703	6	Agree
<b>Create Flow</b>				
We divide time of production according to client demand.	3.86	.779	2	Agree
We organize our working place to reduce the risks during the working day.	4.02	.811	1	Agree
<b>Establish Pull</b>				
We adapted "just-in-time" philosophy to delivers the service at the right time and in the quantity required.	4.00	.687	1	Agree
We keep the service system flexible and adaptable to customer requirements and future changes.	4.06	.684	2	Agree
<b>Pursue Perfection</b>				
Strategic goals seat for the travel agencies.	4.00	.638	4	Agree
Formal method of continuous improvement in place	4.12	.782	2	Agree
Training and educating staff to execute the designated role of delivering customer requirements.	4.10	.655	3	Agree
We have Effective improvement process starts with a plan; do (determine the activities to achieve the plan); check (evaluate the results); act (procedures are taken to improve the process).	3.97	.611	5	Agree
Taking corrective actions to respond to defects and retaining those solutions for use in the future	4.13	.721	1	Agree
<b>Employee Engagement</b>				
Operational employees are actively involved in improvement activities and have the authority to make changes.	3.89	.904	6	Agree
The work environment is organized so that most tasks are performed in teams.	3.95	.944	4	Agree
Employees regularly submit individual and team ideas for improvement.	4.05	.961	3	Agree
Leadership is engaged in quality-related training.	4.06	.773	2	Agree
All employees are encouraged to suggest solutions to problems.	4.23	.763	1	Strongly Agree
A structured employee training program is implemented and adhered to.	3.95	.954	5	Agree

Table No. 6 presents the results of a survey about the application of lean principles in Egyptian travel agencies, analyzing various aspects such as customer needs identification, the use of continuous improvement tools like Value Stream Mapping, achieving efficient flow, applying the "just-in-time" philosophy, striving for perfection, and employee engagement.

### 1. Customer Value Identification:

The results show that travel agencies are diligent in identifying customer needs and meeting their expectations, with most items in this section receiving high averages ranging from 3.97 to 4.06. This indicates strong agreement among respondents on the importance of these practices. The principle "The travel agencies measure customer satisfaction for service delivered" received the highest average score ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = .789$ ), indicating a strong emphasis on monitoring and analyzing customer satisfaction as a key part of quality improvement. In contrast the principle "We deliver a high standard of service with a suitable

price" had the lowest average score ( $M= 3.97$ ,  $SD = .910$ ), which may suggest challenges in balancing service quality with pricing.

## 2. Value Stream Mapping:

The results indicate variability in the effectiveness of using the Value Stream Mapping tool. The highest rating was 4.06 for the item "reducing errors and rework," reflecting a positive impact on service quality and tourist satisfaction. However, several areas need improvement, such as "clarifying end-to-end processes," which received an average of 3.61.

## 3. Create Flow:

The results suggest that dividing production time according to client demand and organizing the workplace to reduce risks had a positive impact, with both items receiving high averages of 3.86 and 4.02, respectively.

## 4. Establish Pull

The findings indicate that travel agencies are successful in applying the "just-in-time" philosophy, as all items in this section scored averages above 4.00, reflecting customer satisfaction and flexibility in service delivery.

## 5. Pursue Perfection:

This principal shows a strong commitment to striving for perfection, with "taking corrective actions" receiving the highest average of 4.13. This suggests that travel agencies place significant emphasis on continuous process improvement.

## 6. Employee Engagement:

The results demonstrate that employee engagement in improvement activities is well-regarded, with the item "encouraging all employees to suggest solutions to problems" receiving the highest average of 4.23. This indicates strong management support for employee participation in quality enhancement.

Based on the results, it is evident that travel agencies are committed to applying lean principles, though there are variabilities in the effectiveness of tools like Value Stream Mapping. It is recommended that agencies focus on enhancing the understanding and application of this tool among employees to improve overall performance. Additionally, continued encouragement of employee participation will ensure ongoing improvements in service quality.

## The Seventh Section: Challenges of Adopting LM in Egyptian Travel Agencies

Table 7: Challenges of Adopting LM in Egyptian Travel Agencies

Challenges	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank	Attitude
<b>Financial Challenges</b>				
Lack of financial resource availability	3.81	.943	3	Agree
The necessity of high investment	4.03	.754	1	Agree
The necessity of high cost	3.68	1.008	4	Agree
Extra cost to rain new employees	3.97	.945	2	Agree
<b>Top management Challenges</b>				
Poor knowledge and understanding	3.87	.987	3	Agree
Poor commitment from top management	3.73	.991	5	Agree
Absence of quality culture	3.76	.949	4	Agree
Resistance to change	3.95	.753	2	Agree
Absence of clear communication	4.02	.710	1	Agree

Workforce and Challenges				
Requiring a change in culture and demanding a new way of thinking.	3.88	.717	1	Agree
Poor commitment from employees.	3.72	.950	3	Agree
Poor knowledge and understanding.	3.75	.942	2	Agree
Employees fear of job cutting.	3.72	1.137	4	Agree
Lack of experience.	3.69	1.054	5	Agree

Table No. 7 outlines various challenges faced by Egyptian travel agencies, categorized into financial challenges, top management challenges, and workforce challenges. Each category presents the mean scores, standard deviations, and ranks, reflecting the level of agreement among respondents regarding the significance of these challenges.

**1. Financial Challenges:**

The most significant financial challenge identified is the "necessity of high investment," which received the highest mean score of 4.03, indicating strong agreement that high investment requirements are a major obstacle. In contrast "the necessity of high cost" ranked lowest in this category with a mean score of 3.68.

**2. Top Management Challenges:**

The top management challenge ranked highest is the "absence of clear communication," with a mean score of 4.02, indicating that ineffective communication is seen as a critical issue. In return "Poor commitment from top management" ranked lowest in this category with a mean score of 3.73.

**3. Workforce Challenges:**

The most significant workforce challenge is the "requirement for a change in culture and a new way of thinking," which has the highest mean score of 3.88. This indicates a strong need for cultural shifts and innovative thinking within the workforce. In contrast "lack of experience ranked lowest in this category with a mean score of 3.69.

The results show that financial and top management challenges are significant barriers to progress, particularly the need for high investment and clear communication from leadership. Workforce challenges also play a critical role, especially the need for cultural change and innovative thinking. To address these issues, Egyptian travel agencies should prioritize clear communication strategies, invest in training to build knowledge and understanding, and foster a culture that embraces change and continuous improvement. Additionally, managing financial resources effectively and ensuring that both management and employees are committed to the travel agency goals will be essential for overcoming these challenges.

**4.2 Pearson Correlation analyses**

**Table (8): Correlations Between Benefits of the LM in Egyptian Travel Agencies and Lean Principles in Egyptian Travel Agencies**

		Lean Principles in Egyptian Travel Agencies					
		Value Identification	Value stream mapping	Create Flow	Establish Pull	Pursue Perfection	Employee Engagement
Benefits of the LM in Egyptian Travel Agencies	Pearson Correlation	.921**	.872**	.797**	.728**	.841**	.797**
	Sig. (2-tailed).	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

According to table (8), there is a significant relationship between Benefits of the LM in travel agencies and Value Identification ( $R = .921, p \leq .01$ ), Value stream mapping ( $R = .872^{**} - sig = 0.000$ ), Create Flow ( $R = .797, p \leq .01$ ), Establish Pull ( $R = 0.728; P\text{-value} \leq 0.0001$ ), Pursue Perfection ( $R = 0.841; P\text{-value} \leq 0.0001$ ), and Employee Engagement ( $R = 0.797; P\text{-value} \leq 0.0001$ ) These results indicate that there is a strong positive relationship between the Benefits of the LM in travel agencies and Lean principles in travel agencies.

**Table (9): Correlations Between Factors of the LM in Egyptian Travel Agencies and Lean Principles in Egyptian Travel Agencies**

		Lean Principles in Egyptian Travel Agencies					
		Value Identification	Value stream mapping	Create Flow	Establish Pull	Pursue Perfection	Employee Engagement
Factors of the LM in Egyptian Travel Agencies	Pearson Correlation	.833**	.784**	.728**	.545**	.689**	.686**
	Sig. (2-tailed).	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

According to table (9), there is a significant relationship between Factors of the LM in travel agencies and Value Identification ( $R = .833, p \leq .01$ ), Value stream mapping ( $R = .784^{**} - sig = 0.000$ ), Create Flow ( $R = .728, p \leq .01$ ), Establish Pull ( $R = 0.545; P\text{-value} \leq 0.0001$ ), Pursue Perfection ( $R = .689; P\text{-value} \leq 0.0001$ ), and Employee Engagement ( $R = .686; P\text{-value} \leq 0.0001$ ) These results indicate that there is a strong positive relationship between the Factors of the LM in travel agencies and Lean principles in travel agencies.

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

The research represents a significant step towards understanding the application of LMPs in Egyptian travel agencies, particularly in light of increasing economic challenges and rapid changes in the tourism market. Through an analytical study, it has been demonstrated that LM is not just a set of tools and techniques, but a comprehensive philosophy aimed at improving operational efficiency and maximizing value for tourists.

The findings indicate that adopting this philosophy can lead to tangible improvements in various aspects of travel agency operations. For instance, the use of tools like Value Stream Mapping has enhanced process flow and reduced waste time. Additionally, the implementation of the Kaizen concept has encouraged active employee participation in performance improvements, which positively impacts the quality of services provided to tourists.

However, despite these benefits, the application of LMPs faces several challenges. Chief among these is the need for a fundamental shift in organizational culture, requiring strong support from top management and full cooperation from employees. Furthermore, financial challenges represent a major barrier to the effective implementation of these principles, as initial investments are needed for training and the necessary technology.

To successfully implement LM, Egyptian travel agencies must develop comprehensive strategies that include raising awareness and providing training, engaging all levels of management and staff in the change process, and allocating the necessary resources to ensure the successful execution of these principles. Additionally, there must be a continuous



mechanism for monitoring and evaluating performance to ensure the sustainability of improvements.

In conclusion, LM offers Egyptian travel agencies powerful tools to address both current and future challenges. Implementing these principles requires long-term commitment and a strong will to embrace change, but the potential outcomes in terms of improved efficiency and increased customer satisfaction make the effort worthwhile.

### **Recommendations**

The research directed the recommendation to Ministry of tourism and antiquities and Egyptian travel agencies.

#### **A. Recommendations directed to the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities:**

1. The Ministry should create a national framework to guide travel agencies in adopting LMPs. This framework could include a set of guidelines and standards to help agencies implement best practices.
2. The Ministry can promote public-private partnerships to support the implementation of LM in travel agencies. These partnerships can provide the necessary funding, technology, and technical support for applying these principles.
3. The Ministry should offer incentives, such as tax breaks or recognition awards, to companies that successfully implement LMPs, motivating more agencies to follow this approach.
4. The Ministry can organize workshops and conferences to raise awareness of LMPs and their benefits. These events could feature local and international experts to share knowledge and best practices.
5. The Ministry should create a digital platform that allows travel agencies to exchange experiences and best practices in implementing LM. This platform can serve as a valuable resource for information and lessons learned.
6. Provide support to travel agencies by offering government-led training programs and initiatives to raise awareness about the importance and benefits of applying LM.
7. Encourage collaboration between the ministry and academic institutions to conduct research on best practices for applying LM in the tourism sector and disseminate this knowledge to companies.
8. Support initiatives aimed at improving innovation in tourism services through the adoption of LM methods, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of the Egyptian tourism sector.

#### **B. Recommendations related to Egyptian Travel Agencies:**

1. Egyptian Travel agencies should regularly conduct training programs to train employees on LMPs and tools, focusing on how to implement them in daily operations.
2. Foster a culture where employees are encouraged to suggest ideas for improving internal processes and offer incentives to motivate contributions that enhance efficiency and reduce waste.
3. Start with simple tools like Value Stream Mapping to identify and eliminate waste, and gradually expand to more complex applications of LM.
4. Allocate resources to improve the tourist experience by reducing service delivery times and enhancing the quality of tourist interactions.
5. Establish internal systems to measure and analyze performance based on metrics such as response times to tourist requests, tourist satisfaction, and operational efficiency.

6. Egyptian Travel agencies should embrace digital transformation technologies such as cloud computing and advanced data management systems, which can enhance operational efficiency and provide personalized services to customers.

## 6. Proposed Action Plan for Applying LMPs in Egyptian Travel Agencies

### Action Plan Objective:

To enhance operational efficiency, reduce waste, and improve customer satisfaction by implementing LMPs in Egyptian travel agencies.

Table (10) Proposed Action Plan for Applying LMPs in Egyptian Travel Agencies

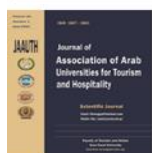
Phase 1: Preparation and Planning					
Step one: Establish a Lean Implementation Team		Step two: Conduct LM Training	Step three: Assess Current Operations	Step four: Set Clear Objectives and Goals	
Duration	2 weeks	4 weeks	3 weeks	1 week	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify key stakeholders, including senior management and department heads.</li> <li>• Form a cross functional team to lead the Lean initiative.</li> <li>• Define roles and responsibilities within the team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize training sessions for all employees on LMPs and tools (e.g., Kaizen, Value Stream Mapping, 5S).</li> <li>• Provide specialized training for the Lean implementation team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a comprehensive audit of current processes and workflows.</li> <li>• Identify areas of waste, inefficiencies, and bottlenecks.</li> <li>• Gather data on key performance indicators such as service delivery times, customer satisfaction, and operational costs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define specific, measurable goals for the Lean initiative (e.g., reduce booking time by 20%, increase customer satisfaction by 15%).</li> <li>• Align these goals with the overall strategic objectives of the agency.</li> </ul>	
Phase 2: Implementation					
Step one: Apply Value Stream Mapping (VSM)		Step two: Implement 5S Methodology	Step three: Introduce Kaizen for Continuous Improvement	Step four: Implement a Kanban System	
Duration	4 weeks	3 weeks	Ongoing	3 weeks	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map the entire process flow from customer inquiry to service delivery.</li> <li>• Identify value-added and non-value-added activities.</li> <li>• Develop a plan to eliminate waste and streamline processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sort: Remove unnecessary items from workspaces.</li> <li>• Set in Order: Organize essential items for easy access.</li> <li>• Shine: Clean and maintain workspaces regularly.</li> <li>• Standardize: Establish procedures for maintaining organization and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule regular Kaizen events or workshops to identify and solve operational problems.</li> <li>• Encourage employees at all levels to contribute ideas for improvement.</li> <li>• Implement small, incremental changes that lead to significant improvements over</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce Kanban boards to visualize and manage workflows.</li> <li>• Use the "pull" system to ensure tasks are only initiated based on actual demand.</li> <li>• Monitor and adjust workflows to prevent overproduction</li> </ul>	

		cleanliness. • Sustain: Create a culture of continuous improvement.	time.	and reduce lead times.
<b>Phase 3: Monitoring and Evaluation</b>				
Step one: Monitor Performance and Progress		Step two: Conduct Regular Gemba Walks		Step three: Review and Refine Lean Strategies
Duration	Ongoing	Monthly		Quarterly
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly track KPIs such as customer satisfaction, service delivery times, and operational costs.</li> <li>• Use performance dashboards to provide real-time insights into the effectiveness of Lean initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and Lean team members should visit work areas to observe processes and engage with employees.</li> <li>• Identify issues, provide support, and ensure that Lean practices are being followed.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold quarterly review meetings to assess the success of Lean initiatives.</li> <li>• Adjust strategies based on performance data and feedback from employees.</li> <li>• Update goals and action plans as needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 4: Sustaining LM</b>				
Step one: Embed Lean Culture		Step two: Scale Lean Practices Across the Organization		Step three: Collaborate with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
Duration	Ongoing	6 months		Ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster a culture of continuous improvement by recognizing and rewarding employees who contribute to Lean initiatives.</li> <li>• Incorporate LMPs into the agency's standard operating procedures and training programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand successful Lean practices to other departments or branches.</li> <li>• Share best practices and success stories within the organization to encourage wider adoption.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Ministry to gain access to resources and support for Lean initiatives.</li> <li>• Participate in government-led programs that promote LM in the tourism sector.</li> </ul>

By following this action plan, Egyptian travel agencies can systematically apply LMPs to improve efficiency, reduce waste, and enhance customer satisfaction. Continuous monitoring, employee engagement, and collaboration with key stakeholders will ensure the long-term success and sustainability of these Lean initiatives.

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## نحو تطبيق مبادئ الإدارة الرشيقة لتحسين أداء وكالات السفر في محافظة القاهرة

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المخلص	معلومات المقالة
<p>يهدف البحث الحالي إلى استكشاف تأثير تطبيق مبادئ الإدارة الرشيقة في وكالات السفر بمحافظة القاهرة، بهدف تعزيز الكفاءة التشغيلية، وتقليل الفاقد، وتحسين رضا العملاء، حيث تم تطوير الإدارة الرشيقة في الأصل في قطاع التصنيع، ولكن تم تبنيها بنجاح في العديد من الصناعات الخدمية، وأهتم البحث الحالي في كيفية دمج أدوات الإدارة الرشيقة المتمثلة "التحسين المستمر، ورسم خريطة تدفق القيمة، والقضاء على الأنشطة غير ذات القيمة المضافة" في عمليات وكالات السفر.</p>	<p><b>الكلمات المفتاحية</b> مبادئ الإدارة الرشيقة؛ الكفاءة التشغيلية؛ وكالات السفر؛ مصر.</p>
<p>كما اعتمد البحث على جمع البيانات من عينة من مديري وكالات السفر باستخدام المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، من خلال استبيان تم توزيعه على مديري بعض وكالات السفر بمحافظة القاهرة، كما تم تطبيق عدة اختبارات مثل المناهج الوصفية التحليلية، واختبارات الموثوقية، واختبارات الارتباط بيرسون بمساعدة برنامج SPSS 25.0، وأشارت النتائج إلى أن تبني مبادئ الإدارة الرشيقة يمكن أن تؤدي إلى تحسينات كبيرة في تقديم الخدمة والأداء التشغيلي، مثل تحسين عمليات الحجز، وتخصيص الموارد، وتعزيز ثقافة الابتكار، كما أنها تواجهها عدة تحديات يجب معالجتها ومنها الثقافية التنظيمية المقاومة للتغيير، والحاجة إلى تدريب مكثف للموظفين، والقيود المالية.</p>	<p><b>(JAAUTH)</b> المجلد ٢٧، العدد ١، (٢٠٢٤)، ص ٢١٢-٢٣٢.</p>
<p>كما خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الإدارة الرشيقة تحمل إمكانات كبيرة لتعزيز القدرة التنافسية لوكالات السفر المصرية، كما تم تقديم توصيات عملية لكل من وكالات السفر ووزارة السياحة والآثار لدعم التنفيذ الفعال للإدارة الرشيقة، وبالتالي تعزيز النمو المستدام والنجاح طويل الأجل في صناعة السياحة.</p>	