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# **CONTENTS**

	OOM I EM I D	
Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	IMPACT OF THE URBAN INFORMAL SECTOR IN THE URBAN RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY MARKET	1
2.	MOHAMMED YAHAYA UBALE, DAVID MARTIN & DR. SEOW TA WEE  COMPARISON OF PCA AND LDA BASED FACE RECOGNITION TECHNIQUE IN NOISY ENVIRONMENT	9
۷.	MEETA DUBEY & PRASHANT JAIN	
3.	A STUDY ON WORKER'S EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN SIPCOT INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, RANIPET	14
	REV. FR. ANGELO JOSEPH, SDB, R. VEERAPPAN, A. STEPHENRAJ, L. MARY EZHILARASI & A. ANTONY MUTHU	10
4.	TERRORISM: A BIG THREAT FOR TELECOM AND INTERNET BASED COMMUNICATION VISHAL KAUSHIK, DR. AVINASH GAUR & DR. ASHISH MANOHAR URKUDE	18
5.	STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL INVESTORS TOWARDS INVESTMENT	23
6.	DR. KANCHAN NAIDU & HETAL GAGLANI  A STUDY ON TRAINING NEEDS FOR EXECUTIVES IN SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES AT SALEM DISTRICT  S. SUSENDIRAN, DR. T. VETRIVEL & M. CHRISTOPHER	28
7.	NONFINANCIAL REWARD SYSTEM IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS  DR. A. M. ABU-ABDISSAMAD	32
8.	WORKING CAPITAL EFFICIENCY AND CORPORATE PROFITABILITY: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM INDIAN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY	35
9.	DR. A. VIJAYAKUMAR  EFFECTIVENESS OF RESPONSIBILITY ACCOUNTING SYSTEM OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MANAGER'S AUTHORITY	44
	ALI AMIRI, HOJJATALLAH SALARI, MARYAM OMIDVAR & JACOB THOMAS	
10.	A STUDY ON APPLICATION OF DATA AND WEB MINING TECHNIQUES TO ENRICH USER EXPERIENCE IN LIBRARIES AND ONLINE BOOK STORES  A. PAPPU RAJAN, DR. G. PRAKASH RAJ & ROSARIO VASANTHA KUMAR.P.J	47
11.	IMPACT OF SIX SIGMA IMPLEMENTATION: A CASE STUDY OF A PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY  N. VENKATESH & DR. C. SUMANGALA	51
12.	A STUDY ON EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TUTORIAL PROGRAMS IN QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES  DR. ROSEMARY VARGHESE & DEEPAK BABU	54
13.	PROFITABILITY ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL RURAL BANKS IN INDIA: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WESTERN REGION  DR. KAUSHAL A. BHATT	59
14.	A SMALL TRIBUTE TO COMPUTER LEGENDS WHO MADE AN IMPACT ON THE COMPUTER INDUSTRY AND PASSED AWAY IN THE YEAR	65
	<b>2011</b> PRITIKA MEHRA	
15.	A STUDY ON MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS	68
	ANITHA R & M.P.SARAVANAN	
16.	COMPARATIVE STUDY ON TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES  DR. D. N. VENKATESH	76
17.	REVIEW AND CLASSIFICATION OF LITERATURE ON RURAL CONSUMERS' BUYING BEHAVIOUR FOR MOBILE PHONE IN INDIA	87
18.	CHIRAG V. ERDA  MOBILE BANKING IN INDIA: OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES	92
19	DR. P. AMARAVENI & K. PRASAD THE STUDY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REFINED ECONOMIC VALUE ADDED (REVA) AND DIFFERENT CRITERIA OF THE RISK ADJUSTED	97
13.	RETURN  MOHAMMAD NOROUZI & MAHMOUD SAMADI	
20.	ONLINE SHOPPING: A NEW TREND OF SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR SANTHOSH J & ANU VARGHESE	101
21	IMPLEMENTATION OF PCA WITH SVD TO REDUCE PRECISION LOSS	104
	AMITPREET KOUR & RAMANDEEP KAUR	
22.	AN ASSESSMENT OF UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY RELATIONS FOR COLLABORATIVE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER: THE CASE OF INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY OF BAHIR DAR AND TECHNOLOGY FACULTY OF GONDAR UNIVERSITY  TADESSE MENGISTIE	108
23.	DEMARKETING: A CREATIVE THINKING  ANITA KUMARI PANIGRAHI	113
24.	A REVIEW OF ISLAMIC BANKING AND CURRENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY ISLAMIC BANKS ON THE WAY TO GLOBALIZATION  UZMA FAZAL, SALMA TARIQ, MUHAMMAD MUMTAZ, MUHAMMAD NAEEM, JUNAID ABBAS & MADIHA LATIF	118
25.	THE IMPACTS OF PRODUCTIVE MARKETING COMMUNICATION ON EMERGING MARKET	124
26.	LOO LAE SYEE, TAN KAI HUN, VIVIAN LEONG & RASHAD YAZDANIFARD  HP SUSTAINABILITY AS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE	129
27.	RIDHI GUPTA  ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD IMPLEMENTATIONS AROUND THE WORLD  DIAMA LÓBEZ RORLEDO & SANDRA SANTOS NIEVES	132
28.	DIANA LÓPEZ-ROBLEDO & SANDRA SANTOS-NIEVES  FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI): AN OBSERVATION ABOUT TOURISM INDUSTRY IN INDIA	137
29.	A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH FOR DETECTION AND COST ESTIMATION OF CLONING IN VARIOUS PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES	142
30.	ANUPAM MITTAL INTELLIGENT SCADA FOR HOME APPLICATION	147
	S. R. KATKAR	454
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	151

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**OBJECTIVES** 

**HYPOTHESES** 

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY** 

**RESULTS & DISCUSSION** 

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## IMPACT OF SIX SIGMA IMPLEMENTATION: A CASE STUDY OF A PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY

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## **ABSTRACT**

Quality is the key for the success of any product or service in the present context. Many concepts have been used to improve the quality on a continuous basis. Six Sigma has been utilized by manufacturing industries to decrease cost and improve quality and productivity by reducing variation and production defects. By and large Six Sigma is seen as a quality improvement concept for mechanical industries. But of late it is gaining importance in other sectors as well. In this paper a pharmaceutical industry has been examined to test the underlying facts about Six Sigma implementation. The opinion of employees who have worked in the Six Sigma projects has been collected, tested and analyzed to check the outcome of Six Sigma implementation. Employees have observed that the implementation of Six Sigma has improved the financial status, productivity, peoples' equity, growth of the company and customer satisfaction.

## **KEYWORDS**

Benefits, Implementation, Pharmaceutical, Six Sigma.

#### INTRODUCTION

uality improvement concepts are being tested and used since many decades. It is due to improved quality consciousness among the customers that the companies have become more pragmatic about their products and services. Six Sigma has now spread far and wide, and has been adopted in many service industries as well as in manufacturing. While some of the big manufacturing names, such as General Electric, were early adopters, now service giants like American Express and Starwood Hotels also have major programs. So why does the pharmaceutical industry remain skeptical? (David Johnston, 2003)

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Few aspects distinguish the pharmaceutical industry from most other manufacturing industries. Firstly, the roles of consumers of pharmaceutical products are often limited in the products that they use as the drugs follow a chemical composition than the taste. Secondly, the pharmaceutical industry the patenting of products is essentially a critical issue especially in developing countries like India. Due to heavy investment for R & D of the drugs the companies the cost of the drugs would be very high till the patent period expires typically in the range of 20 years. However when the patent on drug expires, a generic drug usually gets surfaced and ready to be sold by a competitor. Hence it is very important for the manufacturer of drugs to keep the cost at minimum. Due to this reason Six Sigma is keenly observed by many pharmaceutical industries. More over the aim of sigma is not just to provide tangible benefits but the ultimate goal for Six Sigma is to change the mindset and culture of the entire organization to create an environment where in the quality and perfection are seen as achievable thus ensuring that the work force enjoys the work to achieve best possible performance levels (Maria Jernelid and Steven Roan, 2009).

Six Sigma is seen as a quality improvement concept targeting the process rather the end product. It uses a methodology known as DMAIC model, which begins by defining and identifying a problem like higher scrap rate, higher price of non conformance, etc. and then sets the course of actions in fixing it. Once the problem is resolved controls are put in place to make sure the problem doesn't recur. This procedure is very common for improvement of the processes of manufacturing industries

This concept is gaining popularity with pharmaceutical industries in recent times. There are many pharmaceutical companies that have implemented Six Sigma and are successful in achieving their corporate strategy. Examples of pharmaceutical companies that have implemented Six Sigma are Baxter, Eli Lilly, Johnson & Johnson and Novartis (Stückrath, 2006).

The implementation problems that companies face and the success factors are not unique to any industry and it is essential to recognize the similarities instead of differences, which would help to gain the knowledge and experience of other industries (Sewing et al. 2008).

When using Six Sigma in the pharmaceutical industry, extra care is required while identifying the customer as the customer definition is wider in this industry compared to many others (Young et al. 2004).

Carleysmith et al. (2009) explains the benefits of the implementation of Six Sigma tools in the R&D Pharmaceutical department of GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) which resulted in increased productivity by eliminating and decreasing time spent on repetitive tasks thereby reducing cycle times and a better knowledge exchange due to increased teamwork and common best practice procedures.

Maria Jernelid and Steven Roan (2009), in their research of pharma companies observed that the there is a huge potential for Six Sigma to be implemented in pharma companies to improve their satisfaction in terms of delivery time, reduced price. However they suggest that the process of Six Sigma implementation has to fine tuned as per the requirement of the company as each company is unique in its nature regarding its administrative practices.

## **NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

Literature review suggested for more research of pharmaceutical companies to understand their perception of Six Sigma. In India very rarely we have seen any pharmaceutical company coming forward to implement Six Sigma. There is a huge scope for implementation of Six Sigma particularly in pharmaceutical industry. Hence, in this paper a study of one such pharmaceutical company is done. Outcome of this study decides the status of six sigma implementation in pharmaceutical company. this could be a road map for other pharmaceutical companies. Normally any study comprises of primary data obtained through the company records to highlight the achievements of the company. Here the opinion of the employees is collected to understand to how far the employees are kept in the loop.

## THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives:

1. Investigate the benefits of Six Sigma implementation in a pharmaceutical industry

- 2. Prioritize the benefits as per the opinion of the respondents
- 3. Examine whether the managers and workers differ in their opinion about Six Sigma implementation.

#### HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses were declared based on the objectives of the study

- H1: The Six Sigma implementation brings about the benefits to the organization in the form of
- a. Financial benefits
- b. Improved growth of the company
- c. Improved Peoples' equity
- d. Higher Productivity and
- e. Increased Customer satisfaction
- H2: Managers and workers differ in their opinion about the practices of Six Sigma.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

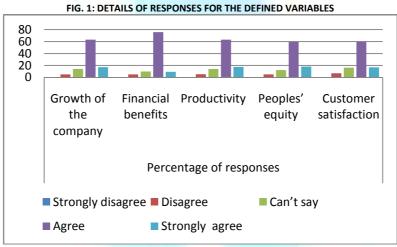
The research is done with the help of a questionnaire which consisted of questions to collect information on benefits of Six Sigma implementation categorized under financial benefits, growth of the company, peoples' equity, productivity and customer satisfaction. The data collected is analyzed with the help of SPSS V16 software.

#### SAMPLE SIZE

The study consisted of a sample of 20 employees who have gained the knowledge of Six Sigma. The respondents have worked on various Six Sigma projects for six years. Out of these, five belonged to manager level and fifteen belonged to worker level.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The data is collected from the respondents on a Likert 5 point scale of 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The following graph gives the picture of frequency of response for the scale parameters. The graph indicates that the respondents have a positive response towards the benefits of Six Sigma implementation as highest percentage of the respondents (about 80% for growth of the company, 85% for financial benefits, 82% for productivity, 80% for peoples' equity and 78% for customer satisfaction) have consented about the benefits of Six Sigma.



This fact is tested for its statistical significance. To start the tests it is important to test the reliability of the testing instrument. The Cronbach's alpha was observed to be 0.72 and as the Cronbach's alpha value is more than 0.7 the reliability of the testing instrument is established (Nunnaly, 1978).

## TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS H1a,H1b, H1c, H1d, H1e

Next, to test the hypotheses, we have used one sample t-test. The following table 1 gives the result of one sample t-test for the variables of the benefits for a sample size of N=20. The company has a practice of accepting the survey results if the mean value for a question is more than 3.6. In case of growth of the company the questionnaire included 9 questions under this variable. Thus the total expected value is 3.6 \* 9 = 32.4, in case of financial benefits (8 questions) it is 8 \* 3.6 = 28.8, for productivity (18 questions), it is calculated as 18 \* 3.6 = 64.8, for peoples' equity (27 questions) the expected value is 27 \* 3.6 = 97.2 and for customer satisfaction (16 questions) it is 16 \* 3.6 = 57.6.

TABLE 1: OBSERVED AND EXPECTED MEAN VALUES OF THE VARIABLES AND RESULTS OF ONE SAMPLE t-TEST

	Observed value of Mean	Std. Deviation	Expected value of Mean	T-value	P-value
Growth of the company	34.85	3.18	32.4	3.442	0.003 (highly significant)
Financial benefits	31.15	2.74	28.8	3.837	0.001 (highly significant)
Productivity	70.85	5.33	64.8	5.073	0.000 (highly significant)
Peoples' equity	105.85	8.11	97.2	4.768	0.000 (highly significant)
Customer satisfaction	61.9	5.39	57.6	3.52	0.002 (highly significant)

From the above table we can notice that the calculated mean is more than the expected value with respect to all the variables. Results of the one sample t-test indicate that all the variables enjoy a high significance. This is written as

- i. For growth of the company, the observed mean = 34.85 against the expected mean of 32.4, t (19) = 3.442, p (0.003) < 0.05.
- ii. For financial benefits, the observed mean = 31.15 in opposition to the expected mean of 28.8, t (19) = 3.837, p (0.001) < 0.05.
- iii. For productivity, the observed mean = 70.85 against the expected mean of 64.8, t (19) = 5.073, p (0.000) < 0.05.
- iv. For peoples' equity, the observed mean = 105.85 in comparison with the expected mean of 97.2, t (19) = 4.768, p (0.000) < 0.05.
- v. For customer satisfaction, the observed mean = 61.9, against the expected mean of 57.6, t (19) = 3.52, p (0.002) < 0.05.

Since the result of the one sample t-test established a high significance of difference of means between calculated and expected one can infer that all the five components of the hypothesis H1 is accepted. This means Six Sigma has helped the company in terms of financial benefits, growth of the company, productivity, peoples' equity and customer satisfaction.

#### **TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS H2**

After accepting the first hypothesis regarding the benefits of Six Sigma now it is required to check whether the managers and workers differ in their opinion. For this an independent sample t- test was used.

The following table gives result of the independent sample t – test.

TABLE 2: GROUP STATISTIC TABLE FOR BENEFITS OF SIX SIGMA AND RESULT OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE t TEST

Variable	Designation of respondent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	P-value
Growth of the company	Worker	15	34.6	3.51	436	0.668 (not significant)
	Manager	5	35.4	2.07		
Financial benefits	Worker	15	30.9	3.05	-0.602	0.554 (not significant)
	Manager	5	31.8	1.48		
Productivity	Worker	15	71.06	4.44	0.307	0.762 (not significant)
	Manager	5	70.2	8.07		
Peoples' equity	Worker	15	105.8	9.08	048	0.963 (not significant)
	Manager	5	106	4.84		
Customer satisfaction	Worker	15	62.0	6.02	0.14	0.89 (not significant)
	Manager	5	61.6	3.36		

The independent sample t -test suggest that the difference of mean values of managers and workers are not statistically significant written as

- i. For growth of the company, t = -0.436; P = .668 > 0.05
- ii. For financial benefits, t = -0.602; P = .554 > 0.05
- iii. For productivity, t = 0.307; P = .762 > 0.05
- iv. For peoples' equity, t = -0.048; P = .963 > 0.05 v. For customer satisfaction, t = 0.14; P = .89 > 0.05

Since the result of independent sample t-test established a non significant difference between managers and workers with respect to all the benefits one can infer that managers and workers do not differ in their opinion towards practice of Six Sigma. Hence hypothesis H2 is rejected.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The investigation of the benefits of Six Sigma at a pharmaceutical industry had aroused curiosity as there was a lack of clarity about its implementation in pharmaceutical industries. The survey of the opinion of employees of the company leads us to following observations.

- 1. Employees experience that the implementation of Six Sigma has helped the company to grow, due to its improved financial status and vice versa i.e. the improved financial status helped the company expand its market.
- 2. The respondents believe that the implementation of Six Sigma has resulted in process improvement which has improved the productivity with reduced price of non conformance.
- 3. The changes in a company will not sustain for a long time in any company. However, in this case, the work force has enjoyed the implementation of Six Sigma and they have preferred to work with more number of projects as per Six Sigma methodology. This fact is indicated by improved peoples' equity after the implementation.
- 4. Employees have observed that the implementation of Six Sigma resulted in a win-win situation with the customers as a result the customer satisfaction has become higher.
- 5. It is believed that the opinions of managers and workers usually differs as they belong to two different class of work force. But in this case their opinion does not differ significantly. In other words both of them feel that the Six Sigma implementation has helped their company to reap benefits and stay on course of the competition.

All these facts and figures have helped to come to conclusion that the implementation of Six Sigma is a success even in pharmaceutical industry. This should arouse the interest in other pharmaceutical industries to go ahead with the implementation of Six Sigma or else they may lose the competitive edge that the Six Sigma provides.

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