

# **Understanding Value Creation in the Public Sector through the Application of Lean**

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## **Abstract**

Value, Lean management, Public sector, Waste reduction and Contingency theory. Lean manufacturing is an integrated socio-technical system that uses principles, practices, tools, and techniques to improve the speed, cost and quality of processes by eliminating waste, synchronising workflows and managing service flows. Unlike the private sector, public organisations must balance economic, social and other objectives to create value for their customers. However, the primary customer in the public sector is the direct user of the public service. Existing studies are inconclusive on how to measure how organisations create public value. This paper explores lean in the public sector context by creating public value and not value for the individual customer. The shift from customer value to public value was explored using semi-structured qualitative interviews in South African state-owned entities. The findings indicate that public sector value is dependent on the interactions between the dynamic systems of the organisation and their environment.

## **Biographies**

**Unathi Thango** holds a Master's degree in Quality from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, and is a dynamic professional with a passion for advancing quality and performance in the energy sector. Currently, she is a dedicated PhD candidate at the University of South Africa, demonstrating her commitment to furthering her knowledge and expertise. She has participated in various PhD academies, including Naclics and Africalis, where she presented her research and continues to explore innovative solutions to industry challenges.

**Anthea Amadi-Echendu** is a senior lecturer at the University of South Africa. She holds a Master of Commerce degree from the University of South Africa and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Pretoria. Anthea

has presented various national and international conference papers and published several journal papers. She holds directorships of the Society of Operations Management in Africa (SOMA) and Destiny Environmental and Infrastructure Development (Pty) Ltd. Anthea is also a founder member of SOMA. In addition to academia, she has more than 15 years' industry experience on various levels.

**Marcia Mkansi** is the College Head of Research, Post-graduate Studies, Innovation, and Commercialisation, a Professor of Operations and Supply Chain Management and the former head of Department of Operations Management at the College of Economic & Management Sciences, University of South Africa. She holds a PhD (University of Bolton) and is SAP certified. Over the years she has optimised on her interdisciplinary knowledge to address business, economic and societal, constraints and produced digital artefacts and intellectual property.

She is a consummate academic and a prolific innovator with the uniqueness of focusing on societal research and human capital development. She serves as non-executive director for Hellmann worldwide Logistics, an advisory board member of Africa Resource Centre (ARC), a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)- funded non-governmental organization, set up to be a resource to the public health sector in African governments.

Her cross-fields blend of hands-on practical industry experience and academic insight avail her as a rare arsenal of notions, materials and approaches in the field. Her university-industry alliances include, but not limited to: Kuehne Foundation, The Innovation Hub, and SAP skills Africa. She is a nominee for the top women Standard Bank and UN women projects, and a finalist under the research, innovation, and creative economy of the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) – South32 awards. Her research activities on supply chain innovation have won numerous awards and reached the semi-finals of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) global solver challenge.