

Chapter 14

Agenda for Future Research

This book presents some limits mainly due to the fact that is based on a literature review. Thence, first of all, practitioners and academics could carry out case studies inside companies that have applied all the six systems or the majority of them. Critical implementation factors presented in Table 11.1 need to be validated and eventually put under discussion.

In addition this book enters in the open debate of TQM in Western companies. Surely TQM has lost its popularity, but for what reasons? Has Six Sigma gradually substituted TQM in the West because is more suitable for that culture? There is too much theoretical research, the scientific community needs more case studies concerning companies that have embraced Six Sigma and left TQM. Using a survey within a sample of companies and by the means of quantitative inquiries the hypotheses of a changeover from TQM to Six Sigma could be validated. Furthermore BPR practitioners could analyse whether the DMAIC pattern can perform in alternative aggressive and short-term oriented reengineering projects. Another interesting question arises from this paper. Is there an interest concerning Six Sigma in Japan? Or do Japanese companies continue implementing, as emerged from some literature, TQM in their own style? How far is this latter system from the original JTQC? It could be useful if Japanese practitioners and academics participated more in this debate proposing Japanese case studies as well as general research.

And what about Deming's System of Profound Knowledge? Academics could analyse whether or not it has left something to be inherited, for instance by Six Sigma. Practitioners could analyse successful case studies of Deming's system implementation along with some of the other systems.

Finally Lean Six Sigma needs more investigation from academics and practitioners because the degree of influence of the Japanese style on Six Sigma is unclear. Is it just a matter of integrating tools and techniques or could it finally be the way to introduce to Western culture what JTQC, TQM and Deming's system seems not to have achieved?