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PERFORMANCE CONCEPT THROUGH A SERVICE-DOMINANT LOGIC IN TUNISIAN MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to discuss the meaning and the aims of transitions to Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) concept especially in Tunisian manufacturing companies. It also aims to observe the performance perception, measurement and practices by these manufacturing companies. A literature review revealed that SDL share some ideas with other concepts such as corporate social responsibility, resource based view and product service system. Therefore a conceptual model of the transition to SDL in manufacturing companies was proposed. Then an interview-based study was employed to explore the extent of the SDL as well as the performance perception measurement and practices in the Tunisian manufacturing companies. An interview guideline was developed and used in the interviews across some of Tunisian companies. A qualitative data analysis revealed that the studied Tunisian manufacturing companies consider the performance as the combination of Quality-Cost-Time, they uses mostly technical and quality indicators and give importance to practices concerning quality management. The presented results are limited by the low response rate and the small sample size. Since the respondents belong to manufacturing companies, the research results could be only indicative of this type of companies. This research is an attempt to explore the service transitions that many manufacturing companies seek to undertake in order to contribute in the development of manufacturing companies' networks to provide grounds to be more competitive and preferment.

Keywords: Service-Dominant Logic, Performance, Manufacturing companies, interview, Corporate social responsibility, Resource based view, Product-Service System.

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DESEMPENHO POR MEIO DA LÓGICA DOMINANTE EM EMPRESAS DE MANUFATURA DA TUNISIA

RESUMO

O objetivo desta pesquisa é discutir o significado e os objetivos de transições para *Service-Dominant Logic* (SDL) conceito especialmente em empresas de manufatura da Tunísia. Além disso, tem o objetivo de observar o desempenho da percepção, medição e práticas por estas empresas de fabricação. Uma revisão da literatura revelou que SDL tem contraste com algumas idéias e com outros conceitos como responsabilidade social corporativa, visão baseada em recursos e sistema de serviço do produto. Por isso, foi proposto um modelo conceptual da transição para SDL em empresas de manufatura. Em seguida, um estudo baseado em entrevistas foi utilizado para explorar a extensão da SDL, bem como a medição percepção de desempenho e práticas nas empresas de manufatura da Tunísia. Um roteiro de entrevista foi desenvolvido e utilizado nas entrevistas através de algumas das empresas tunisinas. A análise qualitativa dos dados revelou que as empresas fabricantes tunisinos estudados considerar o desempenho como a combinação de Qualidade-Custo, que utiliza indicadores principalmente técnicos e de qualidade e dar importância às práticas em matéria de gestão da qualidade. Os resultados apresentados são limitados pela baixa taxa de resposta e o pequeno tamanho da amostra. Uma vez que os inquiridos pertencem a empresas de manufatura, os resultados da investigação poderia ser apenas indicativos para esse de empresas. Esta pesquisa é uma tentativa de explorar as transições de serviços que muitas empresas de manufatura procuram empreender a fim de contribuir para o desenvolvimento de redes das empresas de manufatura para fornecer motivos para ser mais competitivo.

Palavras-chave: Lógica Dominante; Desempenho; Responsabilidade Social; Visão Baseada em Recursos.

INTRODUCTION

There is an increased interest among manufacturers in adding value through the provision of services that extend the spectrum of their products (Mont, 2001). “Goods-Dominant Logic” (GDL) centered on outputs of a company’s efforts which are goods/products (Vargo and Lusch, 2007). A conceptualization of “Service-Dominant Logic” (SDL) can be a starting point to the transition toward service provision (Vargo and Lusch, 2007).

For manufacturing companies increased strategic importance of services and “Product-Service Systems” (PSS) (Kowalkowski, 2011). Indeed, the SDL approach was initially developed in the field of marketing. It has emerged as arguably the most challenging recent scholarly marketing debate. However according Gumesson (2010) it would have repercussions far beyond marketing, such as human resources, leadership, information technology, operations management, etc. In addition, Kowalkowski (2011) considers that the SDL is an undoubted interest in the industrial context due to the increasing strategic importance of services and Product-Service Systems for manufacturing companies. Furthermore, there is an increased awareness of that manufacturing exists to create value (Udea and al, 2009).

In parallel with the SDL approach, Product-Service Systems (PSS) has emerged as product-to-service transition in the manufacturing companies.

According to Cooka and al, (2006), the change in production and consumption practices has been conceptualised by many as the ‘shift from products to services’. Research has shown that these new services can be more accurately described as PSS. Therefore a PSS aims at providing sustainability of both consumption and production. Generally PSS is a promising business model that companies can use to increase their sustainability in a mature economy (Sakao and Lindahl, 2009).

In what follows, we first explain the research purpose and process; second, we define the theoretical foundations ie SDL, then present the results of the literature review and the interview-based study; finally we conclude by the implications and perspectives of this research.

RESEARCH PURPOSE AND PROCESS

The purpose of this research is to discuss the meaning and the aims of transitions to Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) concept especially in Tunisian manufacturing companies. It also aims to observe the performance

perception, measurement and practices by these manufacturing companies.

To achieve these objectives we proceeded by exploring diverse sources and publications that include journal articles, conference proceedings and books. The databases exploration was based on keyword related to our research wish are the service-dominant logic and manufacturing companies. We introduced these two keywords in the most common databases like Web of knowledge, SciVerse, Emerald and Springer link. The documents were filtered and repetition removed to establish 42 published articles that were related to our research enquiry. The authors of the found articles belong to diverse universities and countries especially USA, UK, Sweden and China. All of them are referring to the SDL founders which are Vargo and Lush. By exploring the concept of Service-Dominant Logic in industrial context, it appears different concepts and keywords associated with this logic besides obviously the Goods-Dominant Logic. Among these keywords there are: Corporate Social responsibility, Resource based view, Product-Service Systems / Industrial Product-Service Systems, Servitization / Productization, Dematerialization and Industrial service offerings, service orientation. Kowalkowski's article (2011) - found in SciVerse - is the most recent research analyzing the SDL concept in manufacturing companies. The author discussed the differences between a product-to-service transition and a transition from a goods-dominant to a service-dominant logic.

Once the data collected, they were analyzed so a conceptual model defining the management methods enhancing manufacturing companies the transition to these new approaches such as "Service Dominant Logic" was proposed. This model is made based on the results of research using the similarities identified between the management approaches. Then an interview-based study was employed to explore the extent of the SDL as well as the performance perception, measurement and practices in the Tunisian manufacturing companies. An interview guideline was developed and used in the interviews across some of Tunisian manufacturing companies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Service Dominant Logic and performance

Performance has been defined by practitioners and scholars from different disciplines: engineering, economics, sociology, marketing, management, management of information systems, human resources, finance and accounting. According to Lorino (1997) performance in the company is all procedures helping to improve the "value / cost" couple. Bourguignon (1998) proposes a definition of performance from three general purposes: performance results, performance action and performance success. Book (2004) defines performance as a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Ducrou (2008) says that to accurately describe the performance of an organization, a commonly used approach is the one that explains the concepts of efficiency, effectiveness and relevance from the triple objectives-means-results. Effectiveness is defined as the ratio between the result obtained and the objective. This concept assumes that a goal has previously been defined and that the result was measured or at least estimated (Bartoli, 2005). Efficiency is in turn defined as the ratio between the results obtained and the means used.

There are numerous references to the concept of performance. Authors seem to agree about the nature of performance measurement models, which remains closely linked to decision making (Hofer; 1983) and indicates systematically evaluation (Bessire 1999). Devinney et al. (2005) argue that "organizational performance is the ultimate dependent variable of interest for those concerned with just about any area of management." It may explain the high number of articles treating the concept. Chenhall and Langfield-Smith (2007) structured the literature review on performance measures around five domains which are strategy, operations management, human resources, marketing and finance. This classification is the most common one.

Performance has also been measured and analyzed and empirically tested in different cultural and market contexts. Thus, the notion of performance has produced many publications to validate empirical models and theoretical views.

However, very few studies have defined performance for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself indicating the limitations of contextual factors. There seems to be a missing link among the disciplines on how to view and define performance and how performance is perceived by the stakeholders who are part of the action, processes and results. Most theoretical development and empirical studies have expanded the notion of performance from an overall "Goods-Dominant Logic" without questioning the epistemology and impact of mixed and incomplete "performance" views, definitions and measures on stakeholders and the community. The overall performance success remains mainly oriented towards the firm perspective, the use of resources, guided by short-term guile and opportunistic behaviours (Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

The conventional logic of performance is thus problematic in its "holistic" sense since it does not take into consideration the "intangible" output of the firm whether it is positive or negative to the community. Vargo and Lusch (2008) conceptualization of "Service-Dominant Logic" (SDL) can be a starting point to capture

commonalities of various alternative logics and their intersection around performance.

In the Service-Dominant Logic, performance is defined around a "customer focus strategy" and "customer perceived value" through services (Vargo and Lusch 2008). The emphasis is on the application of specialized competences (operant resources-knowledge and skills), through deeds, processes and performances for the benefit of another entity of the entity itself (Ferguson, Paulin and Bergeron, 2005; Ferguson et al. 2005; Ferguson, Paulin and Leiriao, 2006; Paulin and Ferguson 2010).

Vargo and Lusch (2008), indicate that the Goods-Dominant Logic also refers to the "neoclassical research tradition" (Hunt, 2000), a "manufacturing logic" (Normann, 2001), an "old enterprise logic" (Zuboff and Maxmin, 2002) and a "marketing management" (Webster, 1992). The different designations emphasize the logic centred on units of "goods" output whether they are "products" or "service activities".

GDL is centred on the good as archetypical units of exchange. This logic views services in terms of a type of good and implies that goods production and distribution practices should be modified to deal with the differences between tangible goods and services (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). SDL has been developed by Vargo and Lusch (2004) as a critic to the GDL. It considers service – a process of using ones resources for the benefit of and in conjunction with another party – as the fundamental purpose of economic exchange and implies the need for a revised, service-driven framework for all of marketing (Vargo and Lusch, 2008).

These authors have labelled the SDL in form of eight premises (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) then moved to ten foundational premises (Vargo and Lusch, 2008) (table 1).

Table 1: Foundational premises (Vargo and Lusch, 2008).

Foundational premises	Title
FP1	Service is fundamental basis of exchange
FP2	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange
FP3	Goods are a distribution mechanism for service provision
FP4	Operant resources are the fundamental source of competitive advantage
FP5	All economies are service economies
FP6	The customer is always co-creator of value
FP7	The enterprise cannot deliver value but only offer value proposition
FP8	A service centered view is inherently customer oriented and relational
FP9	All social and economic actors are resource integrators
FP10	Value is always uniquely phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary

Source: Authors.

B. SDL versus similar logics and concepts

1) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): According to Bahadur and Waqqas (2013), Blowfield and Frynas (2005) defined the CSR as an umbrella term for a variety of theories and practices, all of which recognize that: (i) companies have a responsibility for their impact on society and the natural environment, sometimes beyond legal compliance and the liability of individuals; (ii) companies have a responsibility for the behaviour of others with whom they do business; and that (iii) business needs to manage its relationship with wider society, whether for reasons of commercial viability, or to add value to society. Sebhatu (2010) demonstrated that CSR is mainly defined as concepts and strategies by which companies voluntarily integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations and stakeholder interactions (Enquist et al., 2006; 2008). According to Sebhatu (2010) the integration of sustainability and stakeholder thinking for social responsibility and decision-making allows SDL to have a broader view and reflect its implicit assumptions regarding business ethics. It also represents a shift from static to dynamic resources with a stakeholder rather than a customer-centric perspective (such as those of employees, value creation partners, and customers) (Edvardsson and Enquist, 2009).

Given the similarities between the CSR approach and the SDL some recent research such as Bahadur and Waqqas (2013) and Sebhatu (2010) discussed the analogies between these two management approaches in terms of objectives and practices.

*2) Resource-Based View (RBV):*The resource-based view addresses that the accumulation of valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable resources is the basis of enterprise competitiveness and economic rent (Barney, 1986; Dierickx and Cool, 1989; Peteraf, 1993). Newbert

(2007) also suggests that value and rare resources are related to competitive advantage and that competitive advantage is related to performance. The RBV implies that firms are different amalgams of resources accompanied by productive and strategic capabilities that lead to various performance potential. According to Barney (1995), it is necessary that any company coordinates its resources and adequately mobilizes its expertise to gain a competitive advantage. Indeed, the success of the most successful companies internationally is really explained by the intangible resources (or immaterial) at their disposal and deploy than their tangible resources (or material).

Recently, the authors Mele and Corte (2013) conducted a theoretical analysis to compare the two approaches: RBV and SDL which are related.

*3) Product Service System (PSS):*Concerning the PSS, one of its definitions is given by Goedkoop et al. (1999) "PSS is a marketable set of products and services capable of jointly fulfilling a user's needs; can be beneficial to the environment in combination to creating business". Tukker (2004) made a classification for the different kinds of PSS. According to this author, the first main category is product-oriented services. Here, the business model is still mainly geared towards sales of products, but some extra services are added. The second main category is use-oriented services. Here, the traditional product still plays a central role, but the business model is not geared towards selling products. The product stays in ownership with the provider, and is made available in a different form, and sometimes shared by a number of users. The last main category is result-oriented services. Here, the client and provider in principle agree on a result, and there is no pre-determined product involved (Tukker, 2004). According to the collected data, and since there are multiple articles evoking the PSS over the years, we grouped the aims and objectives of PSSs written in the reference articles (table 2). In order to analyze the collected data all the issues are first explored and listed to help identifying broad issues or ideas.

Table 2: Aims of Product-Service Systems

Author (date)	PSS Aims
Goedkoop et al. (1999)	1- enables companies to find strategic options for business growth, renewal, innovation and diversification. 2- can prove beneficial to the environment in combination to creating (new) business. 3- is especially inspiring for companies who regard sustainability as a co-pilot for management strategies.
Mont (2001)	4- has the potential to minimise environmental impacts of both production and consumption. 5- has the potential to bring about such changes in production and consumption patterns that might accelerate the shift towards more sustainable practices and societies. 6- might be promising for commercial companies, governments and society, and customers and the environment.
Tukker (2004)	7- allows companies to create new sources of added value and competitiveness. 8- result in marginal environmental improvements.
Baines et al. (2007)	9- values asset performance or utilization rather than ownership, and achieves differentiation through the integration of product and services that provide value in use to the customer. 10- has economic success but: 11- tending to emphasize the environmental and social gains.
Sakao and Lindahl (2009)	12- aims at providing sustainability of both consumption and production. 13- is a promising business model that companies can use to increase their sustainability in a mature economy.

In order to classify these results we established an affinity diagram. It categorizes disorganized issues into various groupings by natural relationships. These issues are then ranged to general topics. The affinity diagram thus identifies and organizes the issues by natural relationship. These topics are first the environmental improvements, second the sustainability of consumption and production, third the social gains, economic/business growth and creation, renewal/innovation and diversification finally the value addition.

In another side, according to Vargo and Lusch (2007) SDL points almost directly to normative notions of

investment in people (operant resources), long-term relationships, quality service flows, and only somewhat less directly toward notions of symmetric relations, transparency, ethical approaches to exchange, and sustainability. Arguably, these directions have advantages for both the enterprise and society that cannot be found in GDL.

C. Conceptual Model

According to the results of the literature review presented above, we elaborated a conceptual model for SDL transition in manufacturing companies presented in Figure 1:

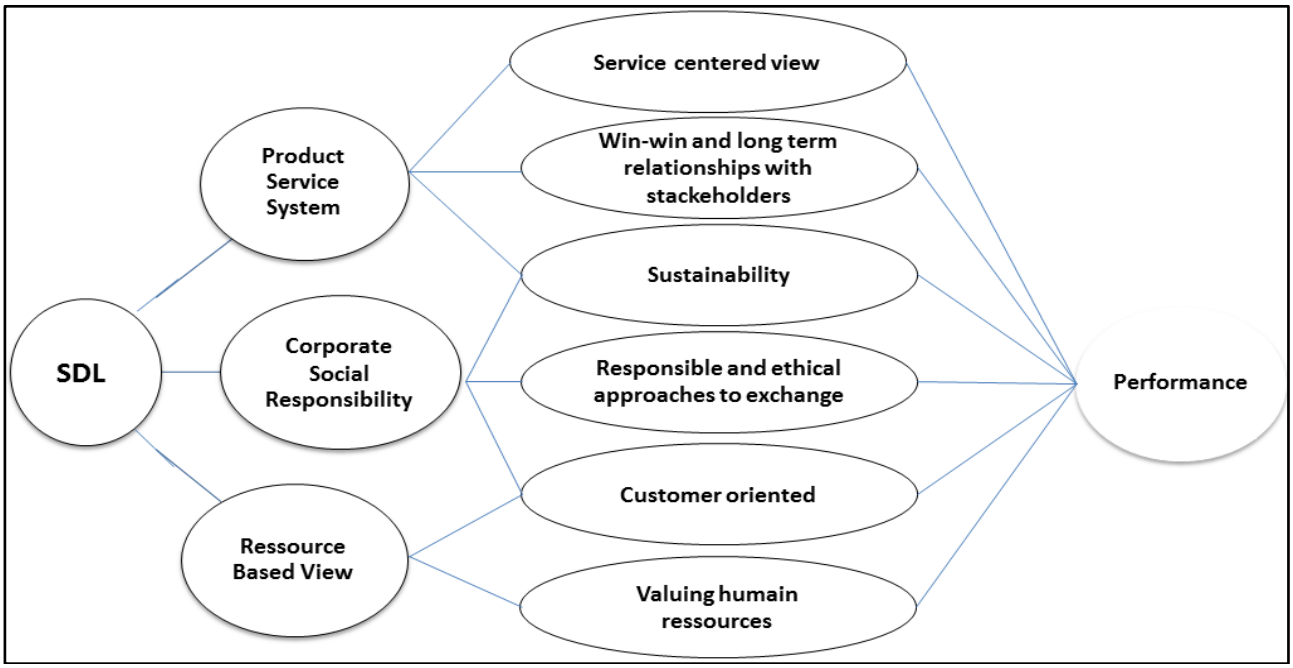

Figure 1: Conceptual model for SDL transition in manufacturing companies

The comparison we made indicates that the concepts i.e. SDL, CSR, RBV and PSS, share some ideas as sustainability, social aspect, creation and innovation in service-product providing. However SDL is not only about how to provide service joined by a product. It is a mind-set which could be adopted by the managers in order to have benefits for both the company and society. In fact, for manufacturing companies the SDL is adopted in a strategic and managerial level.

EXPLORATORY RESEARCH IN TUNISIAN MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

The Tunisian industry is a pillar of national economic growth and contributes 4.8% of export increase in 2015 (Ministry of industry). She is a strong pillar of the national export because Tunisia is the leading industrial exporter to the European Union, the South Shore of the Mediterranean. The Tunisian industry is also experiencing growth momentum in value added and exports (Ministry of Industry, Energy and Small and Medium Enterprises). In this context, and to cope with this dynamic, leaders are looking for tools to have a global view of their business integrating all stakeholders in their industry. Indeed, the performance should be sought multiple criteria, long-term and on social, ecological, operational and economic.

This part aims to explore the adoption of SDL especially in Tunisian manufacturing companies in order to identify the practices adopted by companies in their search for long term performance and develop the set pattern.

For this exploratory phase through a qualitative research based on interviews with managers in the Tunisian industrial sector was carried out.

Methodology

The adopted methodology is a qualitative one that provides content data, not numbers. The choice concerned the semi directive interview as a qualitative method of data collection where the need to develop an interview guide. It is the basic tool for carrying out the exploratory phase through a qualitative research based on interviews conducted with managers in Tunisian manufacturing companies. The analysis of the data collected is based on texts of content analysis using QDA Miner Lite software.

The purpose of the interviews is to draw conclusions in light of research results with certainty that the most appropriate tool to collect information from businesses was direct interviews. The questions of the interview guideline are formulated taking into account the theoretical research.

In order to establish the interview guideline, we traduced the practices presented in the conceptual model (Fig 1) in open questions.

The interview guideline was tested and sent to 12 managers in Tunisian manufacturing companies. This guideline is then divided in four parts:

- Part 1: Company Description
- Part 2: General information about the interviewee
- Part 3: Performance concept perception and measurement
- Part 4: Practices: This part covers three areas: CSR and sustainability, Human Resources' valuing and relationship with stakeholders (customers and suppliers).

The 12 Tunisian manufacturing companies in which the interviews were conducted belong to various industry branches (electric, electronic, chemical, mechanical, leather industries). Regarding the respondents there are quality managers, training department managers and production managers. The 12 companies studied were chosen according to the criterion of the adoption of a Quality Cost System since it has a positive impact on the companies' performance (Kerfai et al., 2016).

C. Results

In order to analyse the qualitative data, a content analysis is carried out using QDA Miner lite V4 software. It is primarily a descriptive analysis to define the frequency of certain activities. We have codified all the text content of the interviews with codes of our choice based on the theory and literature review.

1) Performance perception: The coding frequency analysis of the variable "Performance definition" showed that in most cases, the company's performance concept is seen as the combination of triplet "cost-quality-time". It is also seen as "economics" but also "continuous improvement" and "objectives"; these perceptions come second being the most cited by those responsible.

Nevertheless the least cited are aspects of human resources, relationships. Only three of interviewees cited "customer satisfaction", two "motivated personal" and one "innovation" in their definition of performance.

2) Performance measurement: Regarding the most commonly used performance measurement indicators through the companies studied, most of them are technical, production and quality indicators.

Indeed, membership of these companies to multinational groups and referral to the European market with an export percentage of 100% interest explains their recent international certification ie ISO 9001. Actually, to achieve the performance, these manufacturing companies are based on: quality certifications, training and staff motivation, respect of the pyramid of the cost-time-quality, tools continuous improvement such as QRQC, 6 sigma, and quality costs calculation systems. According to the respondents these practices increases their competitiveness.

3) Corporate Social Responsibility and sustainability: Based on the responses of the interviewed managers, their companies assign great importance to incentive practices to fulfill with safety and environmental hygiene practices, this with disseminating and educating their application from employees.However, these practices are mainly only the common practices of basic safety rules.

4) Human Resources: Concerning human resource management and according to the responses of the interviewed managers, skills development in the SDL is traduced by in the accomplishment of employees trainings, a recruitment policy, planning for the integration process of new recruits, as well as employee motivation eg by symbolic award for the best employee or the best proposals for improvement, social and medical assistance, financial bonuses or benefits, teamwork, staff involvement in decisions and solutions finding.

5) Relationship with customers and suppliers: Most of the companies gives importance to relationships with stakeholders ie customers and suppliers through specific actions. Concerning the customers these actions are: taking seriously their claims, limiting the processing time of these claims, anticipating their needs and satisfaction surveys. Thus, in all cases the companies studied, the variable "relationship with customers" is traduced by the customer orientation such as:

- Customer complaints treatment
- Anticipation of the customer needs
- Satisfaction surveys elaboration
- Diversification of the communication tools
- Delay's respect of orders
- Ensuring better quality price ratio

Concerning the suppliers and according to the data coding, the relationship of the cases of Tunisian manufacturing companies with their suppliers for 8 of them is restricted to a simple description (good, fair or not) for the others it is focused on the evaluation and selection or collaboration and cooperation to improve their processes and involve the suppliers in the company policy.

CONCLUSION

This study is a conceptual work in nature. It is an attempt to explore the service transitions that many manufacturing companies seek to undertake.

A literature review revealed that SDL share some ideas with other concepts such as corporate social responsibility, resource based view and product service system. Therefore a conceptual model for SDL transition in manufacturing companies was proposed. Then an interview-based study was employed to explore the extent of the SDL as well as the performance perception measurement and practices in the Tunisian manufacturing companies. An interview guideline was developed and used in the interviews across some of Tunisian companies. A qualitative data analysis revealed that the studied Tunisian manufacturing companies consider the performance as the combination of Quality-Cost-Time, they uses mostly technical and quality indicators and give importance to practices concerning quality management. The presented results are limited by the low response rate and the small sample size. Since the respondents belong to manufacturing companies, the research results could be only indicative of this type of companies.

To improve the companies' performance operational actions that can be applied in companies which are :

– Applying rules of Quality, Hygiene, Safety and Environment within the company.

– Using human resource management methods and tools.

– Preservation of relationship with customers and suppliers.

The managerial implication of this study is then contributing in the development of manufacturing companies' networks to provide grounds to compete on the global market while preserving basic resources as a capital rather than a short-term profit use which is the basis of the SDL.

This study also helps to enhance the adoption of management practices to develop the reflex of viewing performance while questioning the epistemology and its impact on companies' stakeholders which can be the aim of the SDL.

Further research could be the elaboration of a specific list of all operational practices and activities for manufacturing companies to ensure the transition toward SDL since it is a management approach not common for such type of companies.

Finally an empirical research could also be envisaged in order to study if there are significant differences in performance between companies with GDL and SDL.

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