

To cite this article: Ibrahim Dumbuya, Mohamed Jessie Koroma and Zachariyah B. Conteh (2025). ENHANCING PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY IN THE WORKPLACE THROUGH THE 5S METHODOLOGY: A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AT SIERRA LEONE BREWERY LIMITED, International Journal of Research in Commerce and Management Studies (IJRCMS) 7 (1): 46-61 Article No. 327 Sub Id 614

ENHANCING PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY IN THE WORKPLACE THROUGH THE 5S METHODOLOGY: A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AT SIERRA LEONE BREWERY LIMITED

Ibrahim Dumbuya (PhD)¹ Mohamed Jessie Koroma (M.Tech)^{1,2} Zachariyah B. Conteh (M.Sc.)³

^{1,2}Department of Industrial Technology, School of Technology, Njala University, Sierra Leone

³Department of Computer Science and Technology, Kono University of Science and Technology

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38193/IJRCMS.2025.7104>

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the deployment of the 5S methodology in enhancing productivity and efficiency within the Manufacturing Department in Sierra Leone Brewery Limited. The 5S methodology, comprising the phases Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain, was implemented as a step-by-step approach toward streamlining the organization of space and enhancing operational efficiency within the workplace. All steps applied aimed at optimizing the tool arrangement, streamlining the workflows, and encouraging a culture of cleanliness and continuous improvement. Results show major cuts in the time it takes to get tools, and improvements are evident in the workplace safety, employee engagement, and cost efficiency. Shadow boarding and standard practices in the rearrangement of tools allowed SLBL to establish a clean environment conducive to increased productivity.

The specific research objectives of this study are to evaluate the impact of 5S on productivity and efficiency, determine its effects on quality and cost reduction, and analyze its role in enhancing employee morale and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. The findings indicate quantitative improvements in retrieval times and cost savings, highlighting the methodology's effectiveness in attaining productivity gains and operational excellence.

Moreover, embedding 5S principles into the workplace culture of SLBL through training, audits, and feedback loops ensures sustainable adherence, promoting accountability and efficiency. Quantitative analyses demonstrated notable improvements in retrieval times and operational costs, underscoring the methodology's effectiveness in achieving productivity gains. The conclusion of the study recommends future areas of research to include looking into complementary Lean Manufacturing practices such as Kaizen and Just-In-Time Production that may be explored further in optimizing SLBL's operations. Longitudinal studies into employee engagement with the 5S approach, cost-benefit analysis for maintaining 5S, would go further to identify the long-term impact and economic feasibility

of implementing 5S. This research provides a model for SLBL and similar organizations, highlighting 5S as a valuable framework for sustainable organizational excellence.

KEYWORDS: 5S Methodology, Productivity, Efficiency, Lean Manufacturing, Operational Excellence, Workplace Organization.

1. INTRODUCTION

The methodology of 5S—a major pillar of lean manufacturing—is very much operative for organizing and maintaining efficient workplaces, having bearing on productivity and operational efficiency. The Japanese philosophy of 5S comprises five stages: Sort (Seiri), Set in Order (Seiton), Shine (Seiso), Standardize (Seiketsu), and Sustain (Shitsuke). Each stage has been artfully planned in order to improve operations, culminating in structured, safe, and competent work environments necessary in this highly competitive industrial phase. At SLBL, the strategy of implementing 5S has had positive effects that include cost-reduction, reduced downtime, and better product quality, contributing to bringing the brewery's operation closer to meeting the international production standards and best practices considering that the consumer tastes in the market are changing rapidly and the competition is intensifying. Systematic application of 5S principles in SLBL has taken the production process another step closer to being an organized and responsive system. This means a lot in a competitive market that values efficiency and quality very much and impacts how the brewery might meet the customer demand and therefore be a leader on the market.

The road to operational excellence, however, is a bumpy one and is characterized, specifically in manufacturing, by a number of challenges. Such perennial issues include disorganization, waste of materials, and delays in the production all of which have historically harmed productivity at SLBL. For example, cluttered workstations often result in considerable time losses as workers search for tools and materials, delays that can pose a danger to production schedules. Such inefficient processes not only cause harm to operational throughput, but they also turn employees' spirits down when workers become frantic with their failures to execute effectively amid disarrayed surroundings.

The continual procession of merely inefficient processes results in excessive waste not only of material resources but also of time and energy on the part of the workers. Such wastes might in fact be some forms of overproduction, waiting, and excessive movement, which erode productivity forthwith. Therefore, with this lapse in mind, SLBL, while using systematic principles of 5S, is seeking to arrest the operational issues pertaining to process efficiency while simultaneously improving productivity through the reduction of waste of time and resources due to inherent inefficiency.

The project focuses on the case studies of SLBL in implementing these 5S systems: where a top-down,

detail-oriented implementation of 5S is in place, this project intends to show not just short-term gains gained through 5S application but also the long-term potential in creating a culture of continuous improvement. And the change of culture becomes necessary because that is perhaps what will drive individual employees toward pro-active engagement forever in spotting and fixing waste such that operational excellence is no longer seen as a noble goal; rather, it gets instilled in the culture of SLBL. Viewing from this perspective, the result of this study will be of tremendous importance in assessing how the 5S methodology can function as a strategic tool in increasing productivity and efficiency in manufacturing environments. It will analyze these trends surrounding SLBL's adoption of 5S that lead to tangible improvements in operational performance and staff engagement that further contribute to sustainability and competitiveness in the brewery industry. Additionally, by showing the story of SLBL adopting 5S, this research seeks to provide others with real practical guidance for implementing the same. By this study, the importance of adopting a holistic approach to 5S will be reinstated; thus, the successful implementation of 5S must not only involve the simple application of its principles but also the commitment to instill an organizational culture that nurtures excellence and continuous improvement.

1.2. Problem Statement

This Manufacturing Department at Sierra Leone Brewery Limited (SLBL) faces critical challenges while ensuring that production is done in a proper way because of the current exodus from competent management of the tools and equipment. The tools necessary for the production process are often not organized or classified properly; thus, they aren't being retrieved in a timely manner, and the tools often get lost. Workers often experience long delays owing to tiresome searches for tools, wherein everything takes longer because of many unnecessary items in the tool storage area, and more importantly, cluttered workspaces have an impact on the worker's motivation and performance as confusion builds with every passing minute.

Observation of current tool management practices shows issues such as frequent loss of tools, hoarding of obsolete or unneeded items, and lack of tool organization. With all the clutter, tools couldn't be found with a mere glance, leading to wasted time searching for them as the workers navigate through branched sequences of moving around. Such a disorganization derails workflows, lowering productivity, while often driving up operational costs due to frequent replacements and unnecessary repurchases.

The existing tool storage setup exemplifies the inefficiencies that affect SLBL's manufacturing operations, thereby necessitating a more organized and systematic management process. Should enhance productivity and achieve operational excellence in SLBL through the implementation of the 5s methodology-Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain

1.3. Research Objectives

The study sets forth a comprehensive assessment of every phase of the 5S methodology on the enhancement of operational efficiency, productivity, and organizational culture at Sierra Leone Brewery Limited. The aims in this respect are:

❖ **Evaluate the Impact of 5S on Productivity and Efficiency:**

The approach is to evaluate the extent of the impact of the applied 5S methodology on productivity levels and the efficiency of operations at SLBL. It would seek to quantify improvements in workflow, output levels, and resource utilization due to a systematic organization of the workplace.

❖ **Determine the Effect on Quality and Cost Reduction:**

The objective will analyze how the application of 5S practices leads to the improvement of product quality and operational cost reduction. By looking at metrics of quality control, defects, and savings before and after implementation, this study will show correlation between the 5S application and improvement.

❖ **Analyze the Role in Improving Employee Morale and Cultivating Continuous Improvement Culture:**

This objective will investigate how the 5S methodology affects employee morale and engagement towards work. It will explore how the structured nature of such an approach provides a basis for culture development that stimulates continuous improvement whilst encouraging employees to participate in organizational joint ventures for better job satisfaction for employees with SLBL.

2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

A key element of lean manufacturing techniques, the 5S methodology was developed in Japan and is closely related to the Kaizen philosophy, which stands for "change for the better." According to Ishikawa [1], 5S promotes continuous improvement and closely resembles the concepts of Total Quality Management (TQM), creating well-organised, productive, and secure workplaces—all of which are critical for operational excellence. Recent studies show that 5S is widely applicable in a variety of sectors, including manufacturing, healthcare, and services. For instance, Jasti and Kodali [2] demonstrated how the application of 5S greatly improved worker safety and productivity in manufacturing environments while also lowering operating expenses. Afonso et al. [3] demonstrated how 5S practices successfully enhanced patient flow and decreased errors in the healthcare industry, highlighting the methodology's adaptability in a variety of contexts.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Singh and Singh [4] explains how 5S contributes to higher

employee satisfaction and engagement. Employee participation in the organization's improvement process is encouraged by 5S, which fosters a sense of accountability and responsibility. Chiarini [5] provides evidence for this point, demonstrating that companies who implement 5S have higher staff morale and a greater dedication to quality enhancements.

Its essential use influences waste reduction in terms of resource efficiency. By minimising process-specific waste and allocating resources optimally in regard to resource usage, Ali et al.'s effective application of 5S approaches [6] suggests increased productivity within those connected systems. Most importantly, in a lean production-based setting where excessive inefficiency is the focus of attention towards production system components. There is an interesting association found between the overall performance of an organization and 5S. A meta-analysis conducted by Zhan et al. [8] found that there is a strong relationship between 5S practices and a host of performance metrics, such as higher productivity, better quality of product, and a higher standard of safety. This research demonstrates the many advantages of the 5S concept, which goes beyond organisational cleanliness to include a comprehensive strategy for operational excellence. Furthermore, according to Antonacopoulou and Chiva [9], 5S can be a major force behind innovation in businesses by encouraging a continuous improvement and change-adaptability mindset. In a more recent article, Melton [10] talked about how 5S helps businesses operate better by improving supply chain performance. University organisations must use 5S to develop organisational culture that supports both teaching and non-teaching activities, according to Jiménez et al. [11]. Phogat [12] introduced the philosophy of management and organisational culture, emphasising lean viewpoints and the application of 5S to increase productivity in industrial settings.

For instance, Al-Aomar [13] gives a clear example of an implementation in a prefab factory regarding 5S and the potential use that can be done to optimize processes amid volatile demand and different types of product specifications. It has been shown that its application led to increased employee motivation and raised value-added per person after a massive rise in Kaizen proposals as per Singh and Ahuja [14]. Yang et al. [15] analyzed the relationships between lean manufacturing strategies, environmental management, and business performance outcomes in order to illustrate how 5S might reconcile the tension between environmental sustainability and operational efficiency.

The dynamic ramifications of the 5S sorting characteristics are relatively short-term in nature, as demonstrated by Omogbai and Salonitis [16]. The findings are predicated on how 5S relates to other lean methodologies. Veres et al. [17] found that the productivity increase based on the evolutionary growth of 5S was precisely proportionate, confirming the methodology's validity for over ten years. Additionally, Agrahari et al. [18] discussed the application of 5S in small-scale enterprises and showed significant gains in organisational culture, productivity, and safety. Finally, Patel and Thakkar [19]

looked into how to apply 5S in a workshop setting to efficiently use space and get rid of waste. Likewise, Hasan et al. [20] investigated the application of 5S to Total Quality Management.

2.1. Systematic 5S Approach to Enhance Efficiency and Productivity at Sierra Leone Brewery Limited.

The Sierra Leone Brewery Limited 5S methodology will carry out the program methodically and step-by-step in order to eliminate the inefficiencies that exist in the Manufacturing Department. This type of strategy makes sure that every step only improves upon the one before it, creating a workable atmosphere that increases productivity and efficiency.

Eliminating unnecessary tools, equipment, and materials from the workplace is the main goal of **SEIRI (Sort)**. It is the outcome of assessing every item in a workstation and separating the essential from broken, outdated, or rarely used items. All of these items that aren't really useful are disposed of appropriately. Thus, just the required equipment and supplies will be located.

SEITON is next in line. This stage arranges everything that is required for convenient access and retrieval. For every tool category, a structural layout is created with designated storage spaces. Less often used tools will be in the outskirts, while more frequently used ones will be next to the main workstations. The tools will be easily recognised by using tool shadow boards, colour-coded bins, and labelled shelves. All of this would contribute to the best possible tool placement for high accessibility and less needless movement.

After that, **SEISO (Shine)** makes sure to keep things clean for a better working environment and lowers tool loss at work. Workstations and storage spaces should be cleaned on a daily and weekly basis. A visual checklist of cleanliness will be implemented to guarantee that all locations are consistently clean and pristine, and particular areas and tools will be assigned to individual staff members or teams to verify that cleaning requirements are met. As a result, there will be less time wasted searching for or cleaning equipment during the manufacturing process and a neat and orderly workspace with clean and accessible instruments.

Standardising processes is the fourth step, or **SEIKETSU (Standardise)**, which aims to continuously maintain cleanliness and order. Creating and recording standard operating procedures (SOPs) for tool maintenance, labelling, and storage is part of this. Tool outlines, colour codes, and signs are examples of visual management strategies that will direct appropriate handling and storage. Regular 5S training sessions will also be included in order to maintain employee involvement with the system and enforce practices. In the end, this will result in a standardised system where all staff members adhere to precise procedures and guarantee consistency throughout the department, improving operational stability.



Last but not least, **SHITSUKE (Sustain)** will work to integrate the 5S concept into SLBL's culture for ongoing, consistent practice and development. To evaluate adherence to 5S principles and identify possible areas for improvement, periodic audits will be conducted. Over time, staff members will be asked for their opinions on how to adapt and enhance 5S procedures to best meet demands. Employees that show a dedication to attaining 5S criteria will get recognition and awards, which will foster an excellence-oriented culture. Because of its effectiveness, the culture here will be able to endure, fostering ongoing development that reinforces SLBL's dedication to operational excellence and productivity.

The time spent retrieving and storing tools will be reduced, the cost of replacing misplaced or unnecessary tools will be decreased, overall productivity will increase, and a more dependable and efficient production process will result from this methodical 5S approach. It will also be linked to a great workplace culture where workers take pride in being part of a well-run, productive company. By taking these actions, SLBL's Manufacturing Department will enter a disciplined and effective setting that can continue to improve and set the standard for best practices.



Figure 1: 5S Philosophy overview

2.2. Methodology for Addressing Tools and Material Storage Inefficiencies Using 5S Methodology at Sierra Leone Brewery Limited.

Sierra Leone Brewery Limited (SLBL) has implemented a systematic approach based on the 5S technique to increase production and efficiency in the Manufacturing Department. The five main processes in this methodology—Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardise, and Sustain—are meant to help create a productive, orderly workspace that promotes long-term operational excellence. Each phase is described below with particular goals, procedures, expected results, and accompanying tables and figures to help with visualization.

The first stage is Seiri. It is to make the workplace free from unnecessary objects in order to clear

space and enhance accessibility to facilities common to most people. The inventory is launched with a comprehensive run-down of all supplies and equipment and sorted into those which will be required, little used, or outmoded. After that, defective or unnecessary instruments are taken out, and necessary objects are placed according to their frequency of use. A simplified, clutter-free workstation with only the essential tools left is the desired result, allowing for faster access and shorter search times. Employee involvement assisted in identifying a number of unneeded products in the manufacturing unit during the deployment phase. To make sure the workplace only had the necessary items, tools such as certain Allen key sets and older packer sets were categorized and then deleted.

Table 1: Usage and Frequency Classification

Priority	Frequency of Use	Storage Recommendation
Low	Less than once per year	Dispose
Average	Once per year	Store away from the workplace
High	Once per month	Store offline but accessible
Very High	Once per week	Locate at the workplace
Daily	Once per day	Place directly at workstation

In order to improve workflow efficiency, the second stage, Set in Order (Seiton), focusses on methodically positioning tools and supplies. This entails designating distinct storage spaces for every tool category while accounting for usage frequency. Larger or less used things are kept in specific yet accessible locations, whereas commonly used tools are positioned closest to the workstations. Shadow boarding increases the visibility and accessibility of tools by standardising their location. This well-organised structure reduces retrieval times and increases productivity. Ergonomic tool placement also improves worker safety and lessens physical strain.

Figure 2: Example of a Shadow Board Layout for Tool Organization, illustrating a systematic arrangement of tools with clearly labelled outlines to ensure efficient and consistent tool storage in an industrial workspace.



The third technique, Shine (Seiso), involves keeping all areas tidy to avoid dirt mounds and misplaced items. To maintain the cleanliness of the equipment and storage, regular cleaning procedures are established for all of its surfaces. A systematic cleaning schedule is created and coordinated with the many team members that are tasked with cleaning. The result is a neat and orderly workstation that improves safety and lowers the possibility of tool contamination or misplacement, making it a more effective and polished setting. Seiketsu is the standardization of step four, seeking to establish standard procedures whereby all workstations are cleaned and maintained at all times. For this, creating standard operating procedures in cleaning, labeling, and tooling is established to ensure there is uniformity. Such visual management includes color-coded bins, outlines for tools labeled very clearly, among others that help the employees maintain their system organized. Standardized procedures make it easy for all team members to adhere to organizational procedures, hence bringing uniformity and efficiency in workplace management.

Figure 3: Tool Labelling and Storage Example, illustrating an organized workspace with labelled tools and storage systems optimized for efficiency and accessibility.

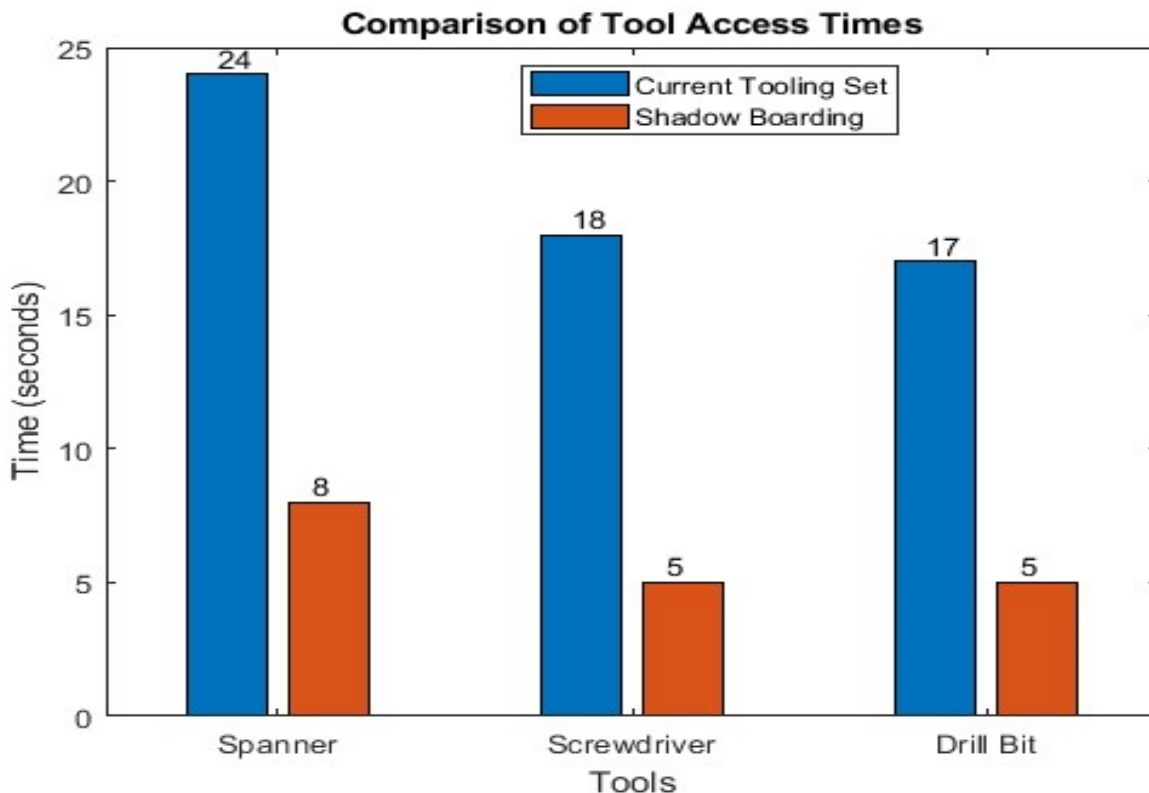


Last but not least, Shitsuke applies 5S practices to the daily activities of SLBL to ensure that adherence is sustained and continuous improvement is maintained. The employees are educated on the importance of 5S principles, and compliance is monitored through regular audits. The performance review of employees includes 5S metrics, and feedback is solicited from employees through a feedback system for continuous improvement of the workspace. This fosters a culture of efficiency and organization, which ensures adherence to 5S standards and continuous progress. Expected Benefits: The Manufacturing Department of SLBL is expected to benefit greatly from the 5S technique. Increased productivity, lower replacement, and easier access to tools are all benefits of all well-organized workplace. A neater and cleaner workplace would contribute to increased staff safety and morale, which is consistent with Sierra Leone Brewery Limited’s dedication to operational excellence.

Table 2: Comparison of Tool Retrieval Times (Current vs. Post-5S Implementation)

Tool	Current Tooling Set	Shadow Boarding
Spanner	24 seconds	8 seconds
Screwdriver	18 seconds	5 seconds
Drill Bit	17 seconds	5 seconds
Total Time	59 seconds	18 seconds

Figure 3: Tool Retrieval Time Comparison, a bar chart illustrating the reduction in tool retrieval times achieved with the implementation of shadow boarding. This visual comparison highlights the efficiency gains, showing a substantial decrease in retrieval times for each tool category



3.0. METHODOLOGY

To examine the application and results of the 5S technique at Sierra Leone Brewery Limited (SLBL), the research uses a case study methodology. The following is the structure of the methodology:

Case Study Design: Examines the practical implementation of the 5S technique by concentrating on SLBL's Manufacturing Department as a particular case. The mixed methods approach combines quantitative analysis (which measures tool retrieval times, cost savings, and productivity increases) with qualitative analysis (which describes the procedures, processes, and organizational culture

changes). Action Research: The study actively addresses identified inefficiencies using the 5S methodology while assessing its effects. The descriptive and analytical approach explains how the five S phases—sort, set in order, shine, standardize, and sustain—are implemented one after the other and evaluates the results in terms of operational efficiency, employee morale, and productivity.

4.0. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The 5S methodology that had been implemented in the Manufacturing Department by Sierra Leone Brewery Limited, abbreviated as SLBL, yielded significant improvements in both efficiency and productivity. Each aspect of the 5S program has contributed to this regard. The Sort (Seiri), which is the initial procedure of the 5S approach, involves sorting things out systematically to eradicate unused items, has been known to reduce clutter in workspace substantially. By removing the obsolete tools and the rarely used items, SLBL has created a more organized workspace where employees can focus on the essential tools and materials. This decluttering has helped employees to find the tools they need in a shorter time and minimize distractions from non-essential items and create a more focused work environment. Quantitatively, the impact can be seen in the cluster bar chart of Figure 3: how significantly the shadow boarding was reducing tool retrieval times - a difference of 59 seconds down to 18 seconds. Individual tool reductions in terms of spanners, screwdrivers, and drill bits all speak to the efficacy of this methodology in cutting waste and facilitating a workflow that's more streamlined. These improvements not only reduce the time spent in tool retrieval but also the operational cost, as more employees would be focused on core work and inventory needs for the less frequently used items.

5.0. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, SLBL's implementation of the 5S technique has contributed to notable gains in the Manufacturing Department's operational efficiency and productivity. In order to better organise the workplace, increase worker engagement, and improve workplace safety, each of these actions has been crucial. SLBL may continue to reap the benefits of these enhancements while creating a long-lasting operational excellence model and laying the groundwork for future productivity increases by adhering to 5S standards consistently. The Manufacturing Department of Sierra Leone Brewery Limited has had increased productivity and operational efficiency through the 5S technique, with both short-term and long-term benefits. Each stage—Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardise, and Sustain—has been instrumental in establishing a more efficient work environment that facilitates quicker tool retrieval, safer procedures, and higher staff morale. For example, shadow boarding to arrange tools and materials has meant dramatic reductions in tool retrieval times, instantly improving throughput and minimizing unnecessary movement.

6.0. Future Research

Future studies could examine the compatibility and synergy of other Lean Manufacturing approaches, such as Kaizen and JIT Production, with the 5S method in SLBL. Analyzing how employees perceive and interact with the 5S methodology over time may provide valuable information about the potential effects of these practices on performance, retention, and work satisfaction. A more comprehensive grasp of 5S's adaptability and advantages in various operational situations might be obtained by conducting a comparative analysis across several SLBL departments or between SLBL and comparable organizations.

Acknowledgement

The researchers extend their heartfelt gratitude to Sierra Leone Brewery Limited for their invaluable contributions to the successful completion of this study.

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Contributions

Ibrahim Dumbuya (PhD): Conducted data collection, performed data analysis, and prepared the initial draft of the manuscript.

Mohamed Jessie Koroma (M. Tech): Data analysis, reviewed the manuscript, and finalized the write-up.

Zachariyah B. Conteh (M.Sc.): Assisted in data collection.