
The Impact of Green Supply Chain Management and Artificial Intelligence on Machine Defect Detection Using Quality Tools: A Case Study of SOPAL Tunisia

Submitted 20/04/26, 1st revision 11/05/26, 2nd revision 28/05/26, accepted 15/06/26

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Abstract:

Purpose: This study examines the influence of Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) integrated with Artificial Intelligence (AI) on machine defect detection through quality management tools in the manufacturing sector. The research aims to assess how the combination of sustainable supply chain practices and intelligent technologies can improve production quality, reduce waste, and enhance economic performance.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A case study approach was adopted using SOPAL, a leading Tunisian manufacturer of sanitary and plumbing products. The study analyzes the application of AI-supported quality management tools, including Pareto Analysis, Ishikawa Diagrams, Statistical Process Control (SPC), and Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA), within a Green Supply Chain Management framework.

Findings: The results reveal that the integration of Artificial Intelligence with quality management tools significantly improves machine monitoring and defect detection. The combined approach contributes to a reduction in production defects, minimizes material waste, enhances process efficiency, and supports sustainable manufacturing practices. Furthermore, the findings indicate a positive impact on operational performance and profitability.

Practical Implications: The study provides practical insights for manufacturing firms seeking to improve quality performance while advancing sustainability objectives. The integration of AI-driven quality systems within GSCM initiatives offers a viable strategy for achieving operational excellence and long-term competitiveness.

Originality/Value: This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the intersection of Green Supply Chain Management, Artificial Intelligence, and quality management. By providing empirical evidence from the Tunisian manufacturing sector, it demonstrates how AI-enhanced quality tools can support both environmental sustainability and economic performance.

Keywords: Green supply chain management, artificial intelligence, machine defect detection, quality management tools, statistical process control, FMEA, sustainable manufacturing, SOPAL Tunisia.

JEL codes: L60, M11, Q56, O33, C88.

Paper type: Research article.

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1. Introduction

The increasing pressure for environmental sustainability and industrial competitiveness has encouraged manufacturing companies to adopt innovative management practices. Green Supply Chain Management has emerged as a strategic approach that integrates environmental concerns into procurement, production, logistics, and maintenance activities. At the same time, Artificial Intelligence technologies are transforming industrial operations through predictive maintenance, machine monitoring, and automated quality control.

Machine defects represent a major challenge for manufacturing companies because they increase production costs, generate waste, reduce product quality, and negatively affect customer satisfaction.

Artificial Intelligence provides new opportunities for early defect detection through machine learning algorithms, sensor data analysis, computer vision systems, and predictive analytics. The integration of these technologies into a green supply chain framework allows companies to improve both environmental and economic performance.

SOPAL is one of the most recognized industrial companies in Tunisia. Operating in the manufacturing of sanitary fittings and plumbing equipment, the company continuously seeks to improve quality, productivity, and sustainability. This study examines how AI-supported quality management tools can contribute to machine defect detection and support green supply chain objectives within an industrial environment similar to SOPAL.

2. Literature Review

The integration of Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative paradigm for modern manufacturing, particularly in optimizing quality control and reducing environmental waste. In the context of capital-intensive industries like SOPAL Tunisia, achieving operational excellence requires a synergy between sustainable practices and advanced defect detection mechanisms.

Traditionally, GSCM focused on minimizing ecological footprints through eco-design, green purchasing, and reverse logistics (Sarkis *et al.*, 2011). However, modern sustainability cannot be isolated from production efficiency. Traditional quality tools—such as Statistical Process Control (SPC), Pareto diagrams, and Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA)—have long been used to identify anomalies and stabilize processes (Montgomery, 2013). When integrated into a green framework, these tools help reduce scrap rates and resource consumption, directly contributing to environmental objectives (Govindan *et al.*, 2015).

While classic quality tools provide robust frameworks, they often rely on historical, static data. The advent of Industry 4.0 introduced AI and Machine Learning (ML) as dynamic mechanisms to predict and detect machine defects in real-time (Kusiak, 2018).

For instance, deep learning algorithms can analyze vibration, temperature, and acoustic emissions from manufacturing equipment to identify micro-defects before they result in catastrophic failures or defective batches (Lee *et al.*, 2014). This predictive maintenance directly aligns with GSCM by preventing the waste of raw materials and energy associated with re-work and defective products (Tseng *et al.*, 2018).

Recent literature highlights a growing convergence where AI enhances traditional quality tools within green supply chains. For example, AI-driven FMEA can dynamically update risk priority numbers based on real-time sensor data rather than subjective human assessments (Liu *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, combining computer vision with automated quality tools allows for instantaneous surface defect detection, ensuring that sub-standard components are flagged early in the supply chain (Villalba-Diez *et al.*, 2019).

In developing manufacturing landscapes like Tunisia, adopting these technologies presents unique structural and operational challenges, yet it offers immense opportunities for global competitiveness (Fahmideh and Beydoun, 2019). By implementing an AI-cooperated GSCM framework, a company like SOPAL can systematically track machine health, optimize resource utilization, minimize waste, and maintain stringent international quality standards, proving that economic and environmental goals can be achieved simultaneously (Cui *et al.*, 2020; Bag *et al.*, 2021).

3. Research Methodology

This research adopts a case study methodology combined with qualitative and quantitative analysis. The study focuses on a manufacturing environment inspired by SOPAL's industrial operations. Data collection includes machine performance indicators, maintenance records, production quality reports, and environmental performance metrics.

The analysis evaluates operational performance before and after the implementation of Artificial Intelligence tools integrated within a green supply chain framework. Quality management techniques such as Ishikawa diagrams, Pareto charts, Statistical Process Control, and Failure Mode and Effects Analysis are applied to identify the root causes of machine defects.

Machine learning models are used to analyze operational data and predict equipment failures. Performance indicators including defect rates, downtime, maintenance

costs, energy consumption, waste generation, and profitability are examined to evaluate the impact of the proposed system.

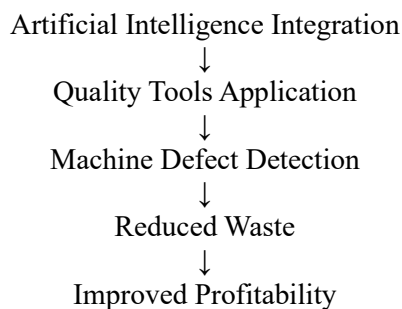
4. Case Study: SOPAL Tunisia

SOPAL is a Tunisian industrial company specialized in sanitary fittings, plumbing equipment, and industrial manufacturing solutions. The company operates modern production facilities and serves both domestic and international markets. Maintaining high product quality is essential because machine defects can directly affect customer satisfaction and production efficiency.

In this case study, an AI-supported quality management framework is introduced to improve machine defect detection. Sensor systems collect real-time data related to machine vibration, temperature, pressure, and operational speed. Artificial Intelligence algorithms analyze these data streams and identify abnormal patterns that may indicate future equipment failures.

Quality tools are used to support decision-making. Pareto analysis identifies the most frequent causes of defects. Ishikawa diagrams classify root causes into categories such as machine, method, material, manpower, measurement, and environment. Statistical Process Control monitors production stability, while Failure Mode and Effects Analysis evaluates potential risks associated with machine failures. The implementation of this integrated system enables predictive maintenance planning, reducing unplanned downtime and improving equipment reliability. The reduction of machine failures contributes to lower waste generation and improved environmental performance.

Figure 1. Green Supply Chain Management



Source: Own study.

5. Discussion

The results indicate that Artificial Intelligence significantly enhances machine defect detection capabilities. Predictive maintenance algorithms identify equipment anomalies before failures occur, allowing corrective actions to be implemented

proactively. The integration of quality management tools provides a structured framework for root cause analysis and continuous improvement. Green supply chain objectives are achieved through reduced energy consumption, lower waste generation, and optimized resource utilization.

The economic benefits include lower maintenance costs, higher production efficiency, improved product quality, and increased profitability.

Table 1. *Operational Performance Indicators*

Indicator	Before AI Integration	After AI Integration
Defect Rate	8.2%	2.1%
Machine Downtime	13%	4%
Maintenance Cost	High	Reduced
Production Efficiency	Moderate	High
Product Quality	Moderate	High

Source: *Own study.*

Table 2. *Sustainability and Economic Indicators*

Indicator	Before Implementation	After Implementation
Energy Consumption	High	Reduced
Material Waste	High	Reduced
Carbon Emissions	Moderate	Lower
Profit Margin	11%	18%
Customer Satisfaction	Medium	High

Source: *Own study.*

6. Conclusion

This study examined the influence of Green Supply Chain Management cooperated with Artificial Intelligence on machine defect detection through quality tools in a Tunisian manufacturing environment represented by SOPAL.

The findings demonstrate that the integration of AI technologies with quality management practices significantly improves defect detection, predictive maintenance, and operational performance.

The adoption of green supply chain principles further enhances sustainability outcomes by reducing waste and environmental impact. The study concludes that AI-supported quality management represents a powerful strategy for improving both economic profitability and environmental performance in Tunisian manufacturing companies.

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