An Ethnographic View of Kaizen Culture in the Concept of Human Capital at the Top-Middle Management Level

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author HN designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author ALR managed the analyses of the study. Author NW managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Short Research Article

ABSTRACT

Research Purposes: This article aims to deepen the understanding of Kaizen culture in relation to the concept of human capital at the current middle-top managerial level.
Research Methods: This research led to the choice of using a qualitative method approach, ethnography.

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Research Originality: This research is the first to be conducted, and is expected to contribute to the development of human capital theory at the managerial level of companies.

Findings: From this Kaizen culture, they teach humans to make changes for the good in an efficient, processed manner and to make life goals more meaningful. To support the implementation of the Kaizen Strategy, we need standardization in the production process and work procedures in an organization, namely SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely).

Implications: We can apply to Kaizen culture not only at the individual level but also on a large corporate scale such as manufacturing, this is because it makes everything better and more efficient over time. From this Kaizen culture, humans are also taught to make changes with goodness in an efficient, processed manner, and to make life goals more meaningful. There are 10 Kaizen principles that can be applied so that a person's life goals become more developed and meaningful, namely continuing to improve one's abilities; Leave Old Bad Habits behind; Proactive; Always Correct Yourself; Want to develop yourself in your own way; Willing to listen to other people's opinions; Can utilize gathering moments more effectively; Want to ask yourself; and Live Economically and Efficiently.

Limitations: Kaizen culture using the SMART method cannot be short term, but takes the form of an accumulation of success in a long-term context.

1. INTRODUCTION

When we want changes in our lives, we often expect instant and drastic changes. We expect that these changes will immediately have a significant impact on our lives. However, because we focus too much on results, we often fail to commit to making long-term changes and the results are not optimal. So, what's the solution? Not by relying on motivation or strong intentions, but by instilling habits and continuous improvement. Things like this are known in the Japanese principle, namely "Kaizen".

Kaizen is a philosophy and culture originating from Japanese society in the form of a way of thinking for continuous improvement and progress in a person's life, both in the family, society and in the work environment. Kaizen is a process that takes place continuously, to always improve the quality and productivity of output so that it can bring dramatic results over time. The term kaizen comes from the Japanese words "Kai" which means change and "Zen" which means good. Thus, kaizen is continuous improvement and refinement that involves all members in the company hierarchy, both management and employees. Kaizen was first introduced by Taichi Ohno (1867-1930), former Vice President of Toyota Motors Corporation, which started from the idea of Sakichi Toyoda, the founder of the Toyota group [1].

Kaizen consists of two kanji letters "Kai" and "Zen". Kai means change and Zen means goodness [2]. Kaizen itself is a philosophy and culture originating from Japanese society in the form of a way of thinking for continuous improvement and progress in a person's life, family, community or work environment [3]. Kaizen is also known as continuous improvement or improvements/improvements that are carried out continuously [4]. Many companies around the world have successfully used kaizen principles to drive improvements in all process lines. Kaizen is also a practice of improving oneself with small, gradual actions which will then become habits and can lead to success. Many people think that Kaizen principles are used by companies to develop business, but actually Kaizen principles can also be applied to many aspects of our lives, especially self-development.

1.1 The Cultural Concept of "Kaizen"

The kaizen philosophy considers that our way of life, such as work life, social life or home life, should be focused on continuous improvement efforts. Kaizen is not dramatic and the kaizen process is implemented based on common sense and is low cost, ensuring gradual progress that rewards results in the long term. So kaizen is a low risk approach. The core elements of kaizen are the willingness to change, progress and prioritize quality, always providing consistent efforts, involvement of all employees, and communication. Discipline and teamwork are the main things in increasing employee morale to carry out the kaizen quality cycle. All employees must provide suggestions for improvement.

Kaizen is a comprehensive and integrated view that is characterized by customer orientation, overall quality control (Total Quality Management), cooperative relationships between managers and loyal employees when developing new products [5]. So, Kaizen is also part of the total participation in the TQM concept to foster employee enthusiasm in continuously improving quality.

A philosophy that is so united with strong determination can make all aspects of human life change for the better, and kaizen culture is present as the key to the success of Japan's development. Japanese society realizes that every day is a new challenge, namely improvements for better change. In contrast to cultures in developing countries like Indonesia, Indonesians generally do not have the courage to accept challenges because they are afraid of risks.

Kaizen is a form of organizational culture that aims to continuously improve employee performance towards better production processes, product quality, reduced operational costs and increased work safety [6]. Therefore, kaizen culture can not only be applied in large-scale companies, but can also be implemented for the development of company management teams at the middle-top level [7]. Several studies state that by implementing a kaizen culture, companies achieve major changes that can be seen over time, in every activity carried out by the company [8]. This is proven by the very rapid increase in productivity in companies, offices and company facilities. When implemented correctly, it will be easier for companies to identify areas where errors are occurring, and then find ways to correct them [9]. That way, reducing all types of errors will certainly increase employee productivity. Another benefit in implementing the kaizen culture is that everyone (managers) can find problems quickly, and concentrate on important and urgent problems to be resolved first, and everyone (managers or other employees) will participate in building new system for company progress [10]. The concepts most commonly used in conjunction with kaizen culture are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely (SMART).

The principles of kaizen culture in the company include: Focus on customers. The underpinning of kaizen is a long-term focus on customer needs. In Kaizen it is absolutely essential that all activities without change be directed at greater customer satisfaction. A company must provide high quality products and unmatched satisfaction; Make continuous improvements. Look for ways to improve within a company and don't stop once improvements are successfully implemented. Because the success achieved becomes a benchmark for the implementation of company activities that are oriented towards profitability, however today's standardization will change until there are employees who are able to find new ways that are more effective and efficient; Acknowledge the problem openly. Every company has problems. But by strengthening a culture of appropriate, constructive, non-confrontational and non-blaming support, each work team can raise its problems openly; Encourage openness. Companies that implement a kaizen strategy tend to have less functional compartmentalization, so that each employee has more freedom to communicate more lively which can encourage openness; Creating work teams. Every individual in the company becomes a team member of the work team, in addition employees will be associated with cross-functional teams; Manage projects through cross-functional teams. The best skills and ideas to manage the company efficiently, even in matters involving one's own discipline. The functions that a team should represent from the start are those that are affected by the project. Therefore the skill in team sourcing for cross-functional teams is to imagine; Develop appropriate relationship processes. The primary factor in kaizen is to emphasize the company management process which pays attention to and is driven to achieve the intended targets by establishing harmonious relationships through good communication, both between employees and consumers; Develop personal discipline. The application of personal discipline is necessary for the purpose of self-control, in general many people are not ready to sacrifice their family and social relationships for the sake of the office; Provide information to each employee. All staff must receive appropriate information regarding problems encountered by the company, especially marketing employees, so that each employee is able to think about solving problems within the company; and Make every employee capable. Making employees capable means providing skills and opportunities to apply the information provided. Through training in various skills, encouragement, responsibility for making decisions [11].

There are several factors that can influence the success of implementing kaizen culture in a company [12], including Teamwork. Teamwork

can be interpreted as teamwork or cooperation, teamwork or teamwork is a form of group work with complementary skills and commitment to achieving previously agreed targets to achieve common goals effectively and efficiently. It must be realized that teamwork is the fusion of various individuals into one person to achieve a common goal. This goal is not a personal goal, not the goal of the team leader, nor the goal of the most popular person on the team; Personal discipline. Discipline has nothing to do with violence or punishment. However, discipline is closely related to motivation. Basically, things that can motivate individuals can be grouped into two, namely by love or by fear. You can be motivated to do a job if you are aware of the various enjoyable things you can get after/while you do the job. You can also be motivated if you are aware of the various things that threaten you if you don't do the work you have to do. Generally, individuals will be motivated in the second way because various educational systems (formal or non-formal) have succeeded in conditioning them in this way. That is why most individuals associate discipline with violence or punishment. Personal discipline is a skill, which means it can be trained. Discipline can be analogous to a muscle, the more you train it, the better your discipline becomes; Improved morale (moral increase). Improving moral quality plays a very important role in kaizen culture, because a culture that is not supported by good moral quality can be said to be a failed culture. Kaizen culture is synonymous with moral aspects that have been maintained from the past until now. Culture that reflects adherence to the morals of individuals in the community who adhere to that culture; and Quality circles. People who are part of the quality control circle will feel a sense of ownership for the project. Higher output and lower rejection rates result in increased job satisfaction for workers, which in turn encourages them to contribute more. A quality control circle program also brings improved two-way communication between staff and management [13].

Implementing Kaizen culture in a company is not as easy as one might think, because it requires the involvement of all elements within the company. This begins by conducting a literature study to get an overview of the implementation of continuous improvement in a company and obtain the factors that influence its implementation and application. Factors that influence the implementation of quality management or the implementation of

continuous improvement in a company are management support, employee aspects, and appropriate company culture. Generally, the SMART method is a great way to implement kaizen. SMART is an abbreviation for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. Specific: The goal must be specific. What are the real goals of managers in a company? This needs to be a guideline in working every day. Measurable: Measurement. If you want to become a quality manager, then measure your performance achievements every period. Achievable: Is it possible for someone to achieve this goal? If not, adjust it to suit your range. Relevant: Why is work important? Does it align with other goals or objectives that are important to the company? Timely: related to when someone must complete a job.

1.2 Human Capital Concept

What is the true meaning of Human Capital? Does Human Capital really have a broader meaning than Human Resources which is known so far? If we take an understanding of Human Resources from literature and practice, we can see that people in companies are emphasized as resources. The definition of Human Capital itself emphasizes the understanding that humans are one of the main capital in a company with infinite value and quantity, which can be managed in a process, which ultimately results in value creations for stakeholders, such as shareholders, consumers, employees and society. Jac Fiz-enz, as one of the originators of the idea of Human Capital, in his book "The ROI of Human Capital" explains that employees, as part of the company's resources, absorb up to 40% of general and administrative costs [14]. Therefore, companies need to pay close attention to the return on investment from their human wealth management process as a very significant capital factor in their production process.

Human Capital aims to ensure that companies can generate continuous profits through services or products that always meet customer needs and to ensure that the human capital within the company is able to produce the products or services in question. Therefore, a management process is needed or known as the Human Capital Process [14]. There are four process categories in the Human Capital process, namely: Acquisition Process, which is a process carried out by the company to ensure that in implementing its business strategy, the company always has the required competencies, both in

quantity and quality. In this process, several Human Capital systems were designed and implemented, especially the human wealth planning system, assessment system and succession system; Development Process, is a process carried out by the company to ensure that all human assets that are already in place will have the opportunity to develop their competencies as high as possible. In this process, several Human Capital systems were designed and implemented, especially the learning and development system and leadership development system; Engagement Process is a process carried out by a company to ensure that its human resources, especially those who have high competence and performance, have a high level of engagement with the company. In this process, several Human Capital systems were designed and implemented, especially industrial relations and personnel relations systems; and the Retention Process is a process carried out by the company to ensure that all awards given by the company can manage the specific competencies required by the company and maintain the performance of each individual within the company. In this process, several Human Capital systems are designed and implemented, such as reward systems and performance management systems [14].

This harmony allows companies to continuously improve their competitive capabilities through the wealth of their people. Apart from that, a good Human Capital strategy must also consider the strategies of other functions within the company. In this way, companies can ensure that their investment in specific knowledge, skills and behavior can ultimately add value to the company's successful performance.

This paper aims to deepen the understanding of Kaizen culture in the concept of human resource development at the middle-top manager level, so that a deeper understanding of the literature on Kaizen culture emerges from a philosophical perspective using ethnographic methods. This research is the first to be conducted, and is expected to contribute to the development of human capital theory at the managerial level of companies. Another contribution from these findings is also useful for the development of human resource management philosophy, especially the formation of better character for middle-top managers in a company and being able to implement kaizen culture correctly based on the SMART concept (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely).

This article is divided into several sub-topics, such as an introduction which explains the background and objectives of this research. Theoretical framework which sets out the theoretical basis adopted in this research. The third section contains the research method used, namely qualitative. The fourth section discusses the results of the research that has been carried out and the theoretical findings of this research which are compared with other literature. The fifth section contains conclusions, limitations and suggestions given by the author for the continuation of subsequent research.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was conducted using qualitative-ethnographic methods. This research views Kaizen as part of cultural activities, as is the tradition in Japan, so ethnography is considered a more suitable approach to complete this study. The aim of this cultural exploration is an effort to explore the diversity of realities in an effort to develop a human resource management philosophy. Ethnography techniques also aim to interpret and understand how certain cultures can be practiced in an organization or society [15]. Thus, this approach brings researchers to go into the field and mingle with the series of activities of a manager in a particular organization and over a certain period of time. Later, the conclusions from this ethnographic study will involve three main things, namely: 1) from what people say, 2) from the way people act, and 3) from various literature about Kaizen Culture that has been left behind. Based on this, the researcher visited several Japanese culture experts in Yogyakarta to discuss the meaning related to Kaizen Culture and the concept of human capital in an organization at the middle-top manager level. This direct involvement of researchers is aimed at better understanding Kaizen cultural patterns in accordance with the context of the objectives of this research. The researcher also read several literatures that reviewed Kaizen Culture during an interview approach with Japanese cultural experts to record the environment and all kinds of aspects surrounding the Kaizen cultural tradition.

The research stages in this study progress gradually. The initial stage of the ethnographic research process was carried out by selecting a field situation, which was related to Kaizen traditions and culture. The next step is to determine the key informants who will be used in this research. This informant must have

education or expertise in studying Japanese culture, namely Kaizen. There are two criteria for determining informants, namely: 1) Someone who has lived in Japan for at least 5 years and has worked in a company or organization that applies kaizen culture as its work culture; 2) An expert in Japanese cultural education who has lived in Japan for at least 5 years and knows about Kaizen culture; and 3) Someone who has never lived in Japan, but has worked in a company that has implemented Kaizen culture for at least 5 years as its organizational culture. The next stage, conduct interviews with informants and make notes on the results of the interviews. The results of the interview will be used to carry out 3 stages of observation to obtain 3 analyses. The first observation is a descriptive observation to formulate domain analysis. Next, focused observations were carried out to obtain taxonomic analysis. Lastly, there are selected observations carried out to obtain a compensatory analysis. Once the stages have been completed, theme analysis is then carried out to determine the cultural findings. In the final stage, the researcher carried out the stages of writing the ethnographic report.

This stage of ethnographic analysis is carried out by testing systematically to determine the parts, the relationships between the parts, and the relationship as a whole. Domain analysis is words that are considered related to the background and formulation of the research problem. Taxonomic analysis is aimed at determining and sorting which domains need further observation, until cultural themes are found. The stage of this analysis is determining focus. The next analysis is component (compensatory) analysis, namely narrowing down and forming groups or categories from the encompassing terms and the semantic relationships of the taxonomic analysis. Where the steps are carried out by asking contrasting questions. The final stage, namely finding cultural themes that converge and are in accordance with the specific formulation of the problem. The analysis process and the (cultural) findings that have been obtained, then an ethnographic report is prepared [15].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kaizen is a culture that has long been used by companies in Japan and has provided very rapid changes and improvements in performance for these companies. Some people may be familiar with the word Kaizen (read: kai-seng). Literally

Kai = change and Zen = better. There are also people who call it Kaizen Teian, which means: "Kaizen" means "continuous improvement", while "teian" means "system". So, Kaizen Teian means a comprehensive company system that is carried out in the context of continuous improvement to achieve better conditions than today, so that it can bring new breath into every company or organization. Kaizen is very useful for companies that need to improve their efficiency, productivity and quality of work. The following are excerpts from interviews with sources who have lived in Japan for 7 years and have worked in companies or organizations that implement kaizen culture as their work culture. Listen to his statement regarding the importance of Kaizen culture in the organizational work environment in order to achieve SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely) goals.

"When I was in Japan and worked at a company there, I was really grateful, because at that time, my position was very good. Apart from that, there also has a work culture which for me is very important for the sustainability of the business, there implements the Kaizen culture within the company environment, every production process is always specifically recorded, the use of raw materials is very measurable, to maintain cost efficiency,,, even The managers there also have very relevant standards for achieving their production targets and uphold the quality of the goods produced. In fact, the work culture there is also very disciplined and punctual in every production activity in the company. However, I chose to leave because I wanted to return to Indonesia to gather with my family and relatives and start a small business..."

The interview excerpt above explains that CultureKaizen can be applied to make things better and more efficient over time. Companies use kaizen culture also to improve their processes by identifying areas where they can be more effective or efficient, then making small changes. These changes are often made at the individual level, but can also be implemented on a larger scale, such as in manufacturing companies.

By implementing a kaizen culture, managers not only focus on small changes that can improve efficiency, but also look for ways to make big and meaningful changes in the way the business operates [16]. Kaizen culture is not just about

making small adjustments, but it is about changing the managerial way of doing things to be more efficient and effective. The kaizen process also involves identifying areas where there are problems or opportunities for improvement, analyzing those problems and opportunities, developing solutions for them, implementing those solutions, and then evaluating their effectiveness.

Kaizen culture is very useful in the managerial environment, both short term and long term. Benefits in the short term, namely that it can help managers save money by eliminating waste and streamlining processes. Meanwhile, in the long term, managers can develop the business by improving customer service and maximizing company productivity [7]. Culture Kaizen helps business productivity by encouraging employees to think critically about their work, and how they do it every day. This means that employees are more engaged in their work, as they feel they are having an impact on the company's success through their contributions every day.To support the implementation of the Kaizen Strategy, standardization is needed in production processes and work procedures in an organization, namely SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely).

Specific,So that the planned goals or targets are achieved, make the goals specific and clear. Explain it in detail so that we can be more focused and motivated to achieve it. To make it easier, consider elements, such as what goals you want to achieve; Who will be involved in achieving these goals; Why the goal is to be achieved; Where to reach it; and when you want the goal to be achieved. Measurable, When determining project goals, a top manager must ensure that these goals can be measured. This aims to monitor and track each progress. Therefore, it is important for a top manager to determine specific tasks, such as what must be completed within a certain time frame. Achievable, indicates that the goals set by a top manager must be realistic, so that they can be achieved. So, pay close attention to all aspects related to achieving that target. A top manager can involve team members to set project goals. That way they can choose an area depending on their skills. Relevant, namely ensuring that the goals to be achieved are relevant or in line with the company's mission. At least, these goals describe one or more of the company's core values. To ensure project results meet expectations, try to ensure that each project goal

is consistent with the company's overall goals. Lastly, namely Time-bound goals, a top manager needs to have a clear work time span to be able to achieve the goal. Without this, a top manager will have difficulty knowing when and where to start. It is also necessary to create realistic and definite time frames, at each stage of the project. This aims to avoid never-ending marathon projects.

Using the SMART method is the right choice for companies that want to focus on achieving goals. This is why the method can be used for any project. Some of the advantages of the SMART method that can be obtained are that it allows top managers to focus more on the projects they are working on, clarifies the final vision of a project, ensures the project goes according to plan, makes a person or top manager more disciplined, and reminds them of the goals and priorities of working on a project. This is also supported by quotes from interviews with the second resource person who is an expert in Japanese cultural education who has lived in Japan for 6 years and knows about Kaizen culture, he said the following.

> *"As far as I have observed, by implementing a kaizen culture, a company will experience major changes over time. However, with a note that if this Kaizen culture can be implemented correctly. There are many real benefits that companies get after implementing this kaizen culture program, apart from the company's progress. Another benefit is that everyone can find problems quickly, they will also pay attention to being able to solve or find solutions to existing problems and immediately solve them correctly and on time."*

The statement explains more specifically, the aim of improving kaizen culture performance is to increase mutual understanding between employees regarding performance requirements; record and acknowledge the results of an employee's work, so that they are motivated to do better, or at least achieve the same as their previous achievements; provide opportunities for all employees to discuss their desires and aspirations and increase awareness of their current career or job; defining or reformulating future goals, so that employees are motivated to achieve according to their potential; and check the implementation and development plan in accordance with training needs, specifically the

training plan, and approve the plan if there are no things that need to be changed [12].

Kaizen culture can also be applied individually for a person's self-development in achieving various goals by starting from the smallest and simplest things first. There are 10 Kaizen principles that can be applied so that a person's life goals become more developed and meaningful, namely continued to improve your abilities; Leave Old Bad Habits behind; Proactive; Always Correct Yourself; Want to develop yourself in your own way; Willing to listen to other people's opinions; Can utilize gathering moments more effectively; Want to ask yourself; and Live Economically and Efficiently. Kaizen is a Japanese philosophy that focuses on achieving goals in work and social environments slowly and sustainably. Now, the Kaizen method can also be applied for self-development. By applying some of the Kaizen principles, various goals that have been stalled or have not even been achieved will be resolved. From this Kaizen method, humans are taught to make changes for the good in an efficient, processed manner, and make life goals more meaningful.

Our third source, thoughhaving never lived in Japan, but having worked in a company that implemented Kaizen culture as its organizational culture, explained that companies need to understand that in managing their business there are various methods or approaches that can be applied to produce more improvements. One of these methods is Kaizen.

> "Several years ago, the company where I worked actually implemented the kaizen method, because the owner was a native Japanese. That way I automatically work according to the rules applied, at first I didn't know that the method was kaizen, but when I studied it while I was working there, I just understood and knew that it was kaizen, I learned a lot of things at that company, I was invited to I share my opinion with my superiors in discussing a problem, and I feel like I am an individual and appreciated there..."

From this statement, we understand that when a company applies the basic principles of Kaizen correctly, many positive results in various aspects of the business will be obtained, such as 1) increasing teamwork, when implementing the Kaizen methodology the company needs to involve many people from the CEO to employees. That way, more people will be involved in finding small errors and gradually improving business processes. This method will ultimately lead to better teamwork; 2) utilization of existing resources, the Kaizen approach is about utilizing existing resources, including human resources within the company. The company will encourage employees to make improvements, thereby having a positive impact on the business; 3) increasing employee morale, Kaizen principles also prioritize that companies can create an environment where everyone will feel empowered to contribute. Therefore, the company will regularly involve employees in the improvement process. The company will also value their opinions, ask for feedback and suggestions, and encourage new ideas. This will make employees feel recognized, thereby increasing emotional relationships with employees. As a result, employees will feel more motivated and interested in their work; 4) increasing efficiency, Kaizen principles also do not allow companies to rely only on assumptions but on data. Apart from that, companies must also identify in depth the root causes of problems. That way, companies can make careful observations to find out inefficient business processes. So, companies can make better and more efficient business process improvements; and 5) increase productivity. Small improvements carried out continuously by employees will also encourage higher productivity. With continuously improved productivity, businesses can be superior to their competitors [9].

The first stage before starting the kaizen method is to have a high intention to participate. This means that a person's inner motivation will facilitate the next steps in implementing kaizen.As previously explained, kaizen is a principle of changing small habits for big results. Therefore, when developing something, management should focus on the small things around first. The reason is, even small and simple things can have a significant impact on the company. For this reason, discuss these ideas with all team members in order to carry out movements in a neat and structured manner. Top Management also needs to analyze the performance of all levels of employees regularly. Therefore, before expanding any company network, it would be a good idea for a manager (CEO) to apply the kaizen principle in detail. The performance analysis process is also based on evaluation references set by the company. In the evaluation process, a manager (CEO) must be

able to be firm and critical to increase fair behavior in his work area. The next step, if you want to apply the kaizen method, is that a manager (CEO) must be able to reduce the mindset that only recognizes perfection (results) but also appreciates every process of achieving the set goals. Because the kaizen principle also prioritizes healthy and supportive relationships between employees. One way to apply this scope is to make team members dare to submit suggestions without any pressure. After the submission of opinions goes smoothly, employees should support each other to reduce the risk of divided opinions which will have a negative impact on the company's human capital management system.

4. CONCLUSION

From the ethnographic stages that have been carried out, it was found that Kaizen culture can be applied not only at the individual level, but also on a large corporate scale such as manufacturing, this is because it makes everything better and more efficient over time. Kaizen culture helps business productivity by encouraging employees to think critically about their work, and how they do it every day. This means that employees are more engaged in their work, as they feel they are having an impact on the company's success through their contributions every day. To support the implementation of the Kaizen Strategy, standardization is needed in the production process and work procedures in an organization, namely SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely). Some of the benefits of the SMART method that can be obtained are that it allows top managers to focus more on the projects being worked on, clarifies the final vision of a project, ensures that projects go according to plan, makes a person or top manager more disciplined, and reminds them of the goals and priorities of working on a project.

When companies apply the basic principles of Kaizen correctly, many positive results in various aspects of business will be obtained, such as improving teamwork; effective and efficient use of existing resources; increasing employee morale; and increase company productivity. From this Kaizen culture, humans are also taught to make changes with goodness in an efficient, processed manner, and to make life goals more meaningful. There are 10 Kaizen principles that can be applied so that a person's life goals become more developed and meaningful,

namely continuing to improve one's abilities; Leave Old Bad Habits behind; Proactive; Always Correct Yourself; Want to develop yourself in your own way; Willing to listen to other people's opinions; Can utilize gathering moments more effectively; Want to ask yourself; and Live Economically and Efficiently.

Even though it is very good for increasing company productivity, sometimes the kaizen method also fails to be implemented by companies. Therefore, the following is the weakness of this research, namely that it only carries out a qualitative cultural philosophical test about kaizen through sources who generally provide positive explanations of the implementation of kaizen culture, even though there are also organizations that experience problems. Failure to implement a kaizen culture is because the company is not yet fully committed to placing and responding to kaizen as the basis of strategy. Therefore, future research also needs to carry out similar research development but by observing the suitability of the kaizen strategy with company strategy, so that subsequent findings can fill in this gap. It should be remembered that seeing the success of implementing kaizen culture using the SMART method cannot be seen in the short term, but in the form of an accumulation of success in a long-term context.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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