

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

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.

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

Keywords: Human capital management; Human capital; Kaizen culture; Business sustainability.

1. INTRODUCTION (ARIAL, BOLD, 11 FONT, LEFT ALIGNED, CAPS)

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,

26 society and in the work environment. Kaizen is a process that takes place continuously, to
27 always improve the quality and productivity of output so that it can bring dramatic results
28 over time. The term kaizen comes from the Japanese words "Kai" which means change and
29 "Zen" which means good. Thus, kaizen is continuous improvement and refinement that
30 involves all members in the company hierarchy, both management and employees. Kaizen
31 was first introduced by Taichi Ohno (1867-1930), former Vice President of Toyota Motors
32 Corporation, which started from the idea of Sakichi Toyoda, the founder of the Toyota group
33 (Waluyo, 2006).

34

35 Kaizen consists of two kanji letters "Kai" and "Zen". Kai means change and Zen means
36 goodness (Lina & Ullah, 2019). Kaizen itself is a philosophy and culture originating from
37 Japanese society in the form of a way of thinking for continuous improvement and progress
38 in a person's life, family, community or work environment (Marin-Garcia et al., 2018). Kaizen
39 is also known as continuous improvement or improvements/improvements that are carried
40 out continuously (Simmons, 2018). Many companies around the world have successfully
41 used kaizen principles to drive improvements in all process lines. Kaizen is also a practice of
42 improving oneself with small, gradual actions which will then become habits and can lead to
43 success. Many people think that Kaizen principles are used by companies to develop
44 business, but actually Kaizen principles can also be applied to many aspects of our lives,
45 especially self-development.

46

47 **The Cultural Concept of "Kaizen"**

48

49 The kaizen philosophy considers that our way of life, such as work life, social life or home
50 life, should be focused on continuous improvement efforts. Kaizen is not dramatic and the
51 kaizen process is implemented based on common sense and is low cost, ensuring gradual
52 progress that rewards results in the long term. So kaizen is a low risk approach. The core
53 elements of kaizen are the willingness to change, progress and prioritize quality, always
54 providing consistent efforts, involvement of all employees, and communication. Discipline
55 and teamwork are the main things in increasing employee morale to carry out the kaizen
56 quality cycle. All employees must provide suggestions for improvement. Kaizen is a
57 comprehensive and integrated view that is characterized by customer orientation, overall
58 quality control (Total Quality Management), cooperative relationships between managers
59 and loyal employees when developing new products (Arsyad et al., 2021). So, Kaizen is also
60 part of the total participation in the TQM concept to foster employee enthusiasm in
61 continuously improving quality.

62

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

69

70 Kaizen is a form of organizational culture that aims to continuously improve employee
71 performance towards better production processes, product quality, reduced operational
72 costs and increased work safety (Kregel, 2019). Therefore, kaizen culture can not only be
73 applied in large-scale companies, but can also be implemented for the development of
74 company management teams at the middle-top level (Janjić et al., 2019). Several studies
75 state that by implementing a kaizen culture, companies achieve major changes that can be
76 seen over time, in every activity carried out by the company (Abdulmouti, 2018). This is
77 proven by the very rapid increase in productivity in companies, offices and company
78 facilities. When implemented correctly, it will be easier for companies to identify areas where

79 errors are occurring, and then find ways to correct them (Hailu et al., 2020). That way,
80 reducing all types of errors will certainly increase employee productivity. Another benefit in
81 implementing the kaizen culture is that everyone (managers) can find problems quickly, and
82 concentrate on important and urgent problems to be resolved first, and everyone (managers
83 or other employees) will participate in building new system for company progress (Gonzalez-
84 Aleu et al., 2018). The concepts most commonly used in conjunction with kaizen culture are
85 specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely (SMART).

86
87 The principles of kaizen culture in the company include: **Focus on customers.** The
88 underpinning of kaizen is a long-term focus on customer needs. In Kaizen it is absolutely
89 essential that all activities without change be directed at greater customer satisfaction. A
90 company must provide high quality products and unmatched satisfaction; Make continuous
91 improvements. Look for ways to improve within a company and don't stop once
92 improvements are successfully implemented. Because the success achieved becomes a
93 benchmark for the implementation of company activities that are oriented towards
94 profitability, however today's standardization will change until there are employees who are
95 able to find new ways that are more effective and efficient; Acknowledge the problem openly.
96 Every company has problems. But by strengthening a culture of appropriate, constructive,
97 non-confrontational and non-blaming support, each work team can raise its problems openly;
98 Encourage openness. Companies that implement a kaizen strategy tend to have less
99 functional compartmentalization, so that each employee has more freedom to communicate
100 more lively which can encourage openness; Creating work teams. Every individual in the
101 company becomes a team member of the work team, in addition employees will be
102 associated with cross-functional teams; Manage projects through cross-functional teams.
103 The best skills and ideas to manage the company efficiently, even in matters involving one's
104 own discipline. The functions that a team should represent from the start are those that are
105 affected by the project. Therefore the skill in team sourcing for cross-functional teams is to
106 imagine; Develop appropriate relationship processes. The primary factor in kaizen is to
107 emphasize the company management process which pays attention to and is driven to
108 achieve the intended targets by establishing harmonious relationships through good
109 communication, both between employees and consumers; Develop personal discipline. The
110 application of personal discipline is necessary for the purpose of self-control, in general
111 many people are not ready to sacrifice their family and social relationships for the sake of the
112 office; Provide information to each employee. All staff must receive appropriate information
113 regarding problems encountered by the company, especially marketing employees, so that
114 each employee is able to think about solving problems within the company; and Make every
115 employee capable. Making employees capable means providing skills and opportunities to
116 apply the information provided. Through training in various skills, encouragement,
117 responsibility for making decisions (Wellington, 1998).

118
119 There are several factors that can influence the success of implementing kaizen culture in a
120 company (Ayu & Trarintya, 2022), including Teamwork. Teamwork can be interpreted as
121 teamwork or cooperation, teamwork or teamwork is a form of group work with
122 complementary skills and commitment to achieving previously agreed targets to achieve
123 common goals effectively and efficiently. It must be realized that teamwork is the fusion of
124 various individuals into one person to achieve a common goal. This goal is not a personal
125 goal, not the goal of the team leader, nor the goal of the most popular person on the team;
126 Personal discipline. Discipline has nothing to do with violence or punishment. However,
127 discipline is closely related to motivation. Basically, things that can motivate individuals can
128 be grouped into two, namely by love or by fear. You can be motivated to do a job if you are

129 aware of the various enjoyable things you can get after/while you do the job. You can also
130 be motivated if you are aware of the various things that threaten you if you don't do the work
131 you have to do. Generally, individuals will be motivated in the second way because various
132 educational systems (formal or non-formal) have succeeded in conditioning them in this way.
133 That is why most individuals associate discipline with violence or punishment. Personal
134 discipline is a skill, which means it can be trained. Discipline can be analogous to a muscle,
135 the more you train it, the better your discipline becomes; Improved morale (moral increase).
136 Improving moral quality plays a very important role in kaizen culture, because a culture that
137 is not supported by good moral quality can be said to be a failed culture. Kaizen culture is
138 synonymous with moral aspects that have been maintained from the past until now. Culture
139 that reflects adherence to the morals of individuals in the community who adhere to that
140 culture; and Quality circles. People who are part of the quality control circle will feel a sense
141 of ownership for the project. Higher output and lower rejection rates result in increased job
142 satisfaction for workers, which in turn encourages them to contribute more. A quality control
143 circle program also brings improved two-way communication between staff and
144 management (Gunawan et al., 2022).

145
146 Implementing Kaizen culture in a company is not as easy as one might think, because it
147 requires the involvement of all elements within the company. This begins by conducting a
148 literature study to get an overview of the implementation of continuous improvement in a
149 company and obtain the factors that influence its implementation and application. Factors
150 that influence the implementation of quality management or the implementation of
151 continuous improvement in a company are management support, employee aspects, and
152 appropriate company culture. Generally, the SMART method is a great way to implement
153 kaizen. SMART is an abbreviation for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and
154 Timely. Specific: The goal must be specific. What are the real goals of managers in a
155 company? This needs to be a guideline in working every day. Measurable: Measurement. If
156 you want to become a quality manager, then measure your performance achievements
157 every period. Achievable: Is it possible for someone to achieve this goal? If not, adjust it to
158 suit your range. Relevant: Why is work important? Does it align with other goals or objectives
159 that are important to the company? Timely: related to when someone must complete a job.

160

161 **Human Capital Concept**

162

163 What is the true meaning of Human Capital? Does Human Capital really have a broader
164 meaning than Human Resources which is known so far? If we take an understanding of
165 Human Resources from literature and practice, we can see that people in companies are
166 emphasized as resources. The definition of Human Capital itself emphasizes the
167 understanding that humans are one of the main capital in a company with infinite value and
168 quantity, which can be managed in a process, which ultimately results in value creations for
169 stakeholders, such as shareholders, consumers, employees and society. Jac Fitz-enz, as
170 one of the originators of the idea of Human Capital, in his book "The ROI of Human Capital"
171 explains that employees, as part of the company's resources, absorb up to 40% of general
172 and administrative costs (Fitz-enz, 2009). Therefore, companies need to pay close attention
173 to the return on investment from their human wealth management process as a very
174 significant capital factor in their production process.

175

176 Human Capital aims to ensure that companies can generate continuous profits through
177 services or products that always meet customer needs and to ensure that the human capital
178 within the company is able to produce the products or services in question. Therefore, a
179 management process is needed or known as the Human Capital Process (Fitz-enz, 2009).

180 There are four process categories in the Human Capital process, namely: Acquisition
181 Process, which is a process carried out by the company to ensure that in implementing its
182 business strategy, the company always has the required competencies, both in quantity and
183 quality. In this process, several Human Capital systems were designed and implemented,
184 especially the human wealth planning system, assessment system and succession system;
185 Development Process, is a process carried out by the company to ensure that all human
186 assets that are already in place will have the opportunity to develop their competencies as
187 high as possible. In this process, several Human Capital systems were designed and
188 implemented, especially the learning and development system and leadership development
189 system; Engagement Process is a process carried out by a company to ensure that its
190 human resources, especially those who have high competence and performance, have a
191 high level of engagement with the company. In this process, several Human Capital systems
192 were designed and implemented, especially industrial relations and personnel relations
193 systems; and the Retention Process is a process carried out by the company to ensure that
194 all awards given by the company can manage the specific competencies required by the
195 company and maintain the performance of each individual within the company. In this
196 process, several Human Capital systems are designed and implemented, such as reward
197 systems and performance management systems (Fitz-enz, 2009).

198

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

204

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

214

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

222

223

224 **2. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

225

226 This research was conducted using qualitative-ethnographic methods. This research views
227 Kaizen as part of cultural activities, as is the tradition in Japan, so ethnography is considered
228 a more suitable approach to complete this study. The aim of this cultural exploration is an
229 effort to explore the diversity of realities in an effort to develop a human resource
230 management philosophy. Ethnography techniques also aim to interpret and understand how
231 certain cultures can be practiced in an organization or society (Spradley, 2006). Thus, this
232 approach brings researchers to go into the field and mingle with the series of activities of a

233 manager in a particular organization and over a certain period of time. Later, the conclusions
234 from this ethnographic study will involve three main things, namely: 1) from what people say,
235 2) from the way people act, and 3) from various literature about Kaizen Culture that has
236 been left behind. Based on this, the researcher visited several Japanese culture experts in
237 Yogyakarta to discuss the meaning related to Kaizen Culture and the concept of human
238 capital in an organization at the middle-top manager level. This direct involvement of
239 researchers is aimed at better understanding Kaizen cultural patterns in accordance with the
240 context of the objectives of this research. The researcher also read several literatures that
241 reviewed Kaizen Culture during an interview approach with Japanese cultural experts to
242 record the environment and all kinds of aspects surrounding the Kaizen cultural tradition.
243

244 The research stages in this study progress gradually. The initial stage of the ethnographic
245 research process was carried out by selecting a field situation, which was related to Kaizen
246 traditions and culture. The next step is to determine the key informants who will be used in
247 this research. This informant must have education or expertise in studying Japanese culture,
248 namely Kaizen. There are two criteria for determining informants, namely: 1) Someone who
249 has lived in Japan for at least 5 years and has worked in a company or organization that
250 applies kaizen culture as its work culture; 2) An expert in Japanese cultural education who
251 has lived in Japan for at least 5 years and knows about Kaizen culture; and 3) Someone who
252 has never lived in Japan, but has worked in a company that has implemented Kaizen culture
253 for at least 5 years as its organizational culture. The next stage, conduct interviews with
254 informants and make notes on the results of the interviews. The results of the interview will
255 be used to carry out 3 stages of observation to obtain 3 analyses. The first observation is a
256 descriptive observation to formulate domain analysis. Next, focused observations were
257 carried out to obtain taxonomic analysis. Lastly, there are selected observations carried out
258 to obtain a compensatory analysis. Once the stages have been completed, theme analysis is
259 then carried out to determine the cultural findings. In the final stage, the researcher carried
260 out the stages of writing the ethnographic report.
261

262 This stage of ethnographic analysis is carried out by testing systematically to determine the
263 parts, the relationships between the parts, and the relationship as a whole. Domain analysis
264 is words that are considered related to the background and formulation of the research
265 problem. Taxonomic analysis is aimed at determining and sorting which domains need
266 further observation, until cultural themes are found. The stage of this analysis is determining
267 focus. The next analysis is component (compensatory) analysis, namely narrowing down
268 and forming groups or categories from the encompassing terms and the semantic
269 relationships of the taxonomic analysis. Where the steps are carried out by asking
270 contrasting questions. The final stage, namely finding cultural themes that converge and are
271 in accordance with the specific formulation of the problem. The analysis process and the
272 (cultural) findings that have been obtained, then an ethnographic report is
273 prepared(Spradley, 2006)
274

275 **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

276
277 Kaizen is a culture that has long been used by companies in Japan and has provided very
278 rapid changes and improvements in performance for these companies. Some people may be
279 familiar with the word Kaizen (read: kai-seng). Literally Kai = change and Zen = better. There
280 are also people who call it Kaizen Teian, which means: "Kaizen" means "continuous
281 improvement", while "teian" means "system". So, Kaizen Teian means a comprehensive
282 company system that is carried out in the context of continuous improvement to achieve
283 better conditions than today, so that it can bring new breath into every company or
284 organization. Kaizen is very useful for companies that need to improve their efficiency,
285 productivity and quality of work. The following are excerpts from interviews with sources who

286 have lived in Japan for 7 years and have worked in companies or organizations that
287 implement kaizen culture as their work culture. Listen to his statement regarding the
288 importance of Kaizen culture in the organizational work environment in order to achieve
289 SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely) goals.

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

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

305
306 By implementing a kaizen culture, managers not only focus on small changes that can
307 improve efficiency, but also look for ways to make big and meaningful changes in the way
308 the business operates (Dinka, 2021). Kaizen culture is not just about making small
309 adjustments, but it is about changing the managerial way of doing things to be more efficient
310 and effective. The kaizen process also involves identifying areas where there are problems
311 or opportunities for improvement, analyzing those problems and opportunities, developing
312 solutions for them, implementing those solutions, and then evaluating their effectiveness.

313
314 Kaizen culture is very useful in the managerial environment, both short term and long term.
315 Benefits in the short term, namely that it can help managers save money by eliminating
316 waste and streamlining processes. Meanwhile, in the long term, managers can develop the
317 business by improving customer service and maximizing company productivity (Janjić et al.,
318 2019). Culture Kaizen helps business productivity by encouraging employees to think
319 critically about their work, and how they do it every day. This means that employees are
320 more engaged in their work, as they feel they are having an impact on the company's
321 success through their contributions every day. To support the implementation of the Kaizen
322 Strategy, standardization is needed in production processes and work procedures in an
323 organization, namely SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely).

324
325 **Specific**, So that the planned goals or targets are achieved, make the goals specific and
326 clear. Explain it in detail so that we can be more focused and motivated to achieve it. To
327 make it easier, consider elements, such as what goals you want to achieve; Who will be
328 involved in achieving these goals; Why the goal is to be achieved; Where to reach it; and
329 when you want the goal to be achieved. Measurable, When determining project goals, a top
330 manager must ensure that these goals can be measured. This aims to monitor and track
331 each progress. Therefore, it is important for a top manager to determine specific tasks, such
332 as what must be completed within a certain time frame. Achievable, indicates that the goals
333 set by a top manager must be realistic, so that they can be achieved. So, pay close attention
334 to all aspects related to achieving that target. A top manager can involve team members to
335 set project goals. That way they can choose an area depending on their skills. Relevant,
336 namely ensuring that the goals to be achieved are relevant or in line with the company's
337 mission. At least, these goals describe one or more of the company's core values. To ensure

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

344
345 Using the SMART method is the right choice for companies that want to focus on achieving
346 goals. This is why the method can be used for any project. Some of the advantages of the
347 SMART method that can be obtained are that it allows top managers to focus more on the
348 projects they are working on, clarifies the final vision of a project, ensures the project goes
349 according to plan, makes a person or top manager more disciplined, and reminds them of
350 the goals and priorities of working on a project. This is also supported by quotes from
351 interviews with the second resource person who is an expert in Japanese cultural education
352 who has lived in Japan for 6 years and knows about Kaizen culture, he said the following.

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

360 The statement explains more specifically, the aim of improving kaizen culture performance is
361 to increase mutual understanding between employees regarding performance requirements;
362 record and acknowledge the results of an employee's work, so that they are motivated to do
363 better, or at least achieve the same as their previous achievements; provide opportunities for
364 all employees to discuss their desires and aspirations and increase awareness of their
365 current career or job; defining or reformulating future goals, so that employees are motivated
366 to achieve according to their potential; and check the implementation and development plan
367 in accordance with training needs, specifically the training plan, and approve the plan if there
368 are no things that need to be changed (Ayu & Trarintya, 2022).

369
370 Kaizen culture can also be applied individually for a person's self-development in achieving
371 various goals by starting from the smallest and simplest things first. There are 10 Kaizen
372 principles that can be applied so that a person's life goals become more developed and
373 meaningful, namely **continued to improve your abilities; Leave Old Bad Habits behind;**
374 **Proactive; Always Correct Yourself; Want to develop yourself in your own way; Willing**
375 **to listen to other people's opinions; Can utilize gathering moments more effectively;**
376 **Want to ask yourself; and Live Economically and Efficiently.** Kaizen is a Japanese
377 philosophy that focuses on achieving goals in work and social environments slowly and
378 sustainably. Now, the Kaizen method can also be applied for self-development. By applying
379 some of the Kaizen principles, various goals that have been stalled or have not even been
380 achieved will be resolved. From this Kaizen method, humans are taught to make changes for
381 the good in an efficient, processed manner, and make life goals more meaningful.

382
383 Our third source, though having never lived in Japan, but having worked in a company that
384 implemented Kaizen culture as its organizational culture, explained that companies need to
385 understand that in managing their business there are various methods or approaches that
386 can be applied to produce more improvements. One of these methods is Kaizen.

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

394 From this statement, we understand that when a company applies the basic principles of
395 Kaizen correctly, many positive results in various aspects of the business will be obtained,
396 such as 1) increasing teamwork, when implementing the Kaizen methodology the company
397 needs to involve many people from the CEO to employees. That way, more people will be
398 involved in finding small errors and gradually improving business processes. This method
399 will ultimately lead to better teamwork; 2) utilization of existing resources, the Kaizen
400 approach is about utilizing existing resources, including human resources within the
401 company. The company will encourage employees to make improvements, thereby having a
402 positive impact on the business; 3) increasing employee morale, Kaizen principles also
403 prioritize that companies can create an environment where everyone will feel empowered to
404 contribute. Therefore, the company will regularly involve employees in the improvement
405 process. The company will also value their opinions, ask for feedback and suggestions, and
406 encourage new ideas. This will make employees feel recognized, thereby increasing
407 emotional relationships with employees. As a result, employees will feel more motivated and
408 interested in their work; 4) increasing efficiency, Kaizen principles also do not allow
409 companies to rely only on assumptions but on data. Apart from that, companies must also
410 identify in depth the root causes of problems. That way, companies can make careful
411 observations to find out inefficient business processes. So, companies can make better and
412 more efficient business process improvements; and 5) increase productivity. Small
413 improvements carried out continuously by employees will also encourage higher productivity.
414 With continuously improved productivity, businesses can be superior to their competitors
415 (Hailu et al., 2020).

416
417 The first stage before starting the kaizen method is to have a high intention to participate.
418 This means that a person's inner motivation will facilitate the next steps in implementing
419 kaizen. As previously explained, kaizen is a principle of changing small habits for big results.
420 Therefore, when developing something, management should focus on the small things
421 around first. The reason is, even small and simple things can have a significant impact on
422 the company. For this reason, discuss these ideas with all team members in order to carry
423 out movements in a neat and structured manner. Top Management also needs to analyze
424 the performance of all levels of employees regularly. Therefore, before expanding any
425 company network, it would be a good idea for a manager (CEO) to apply the kaizen principle
426 in detail. The performance analysis process is also based on evaluation references set by
427 the company. In the evaluation process, a manager (CEO) must be able to be firm and
428 critical to increase fair behavior in his work area. The next step, if you want to apply the
429 kaizen method, is that a manager (CEO) must be able to reduce the mindset that only
430 recognizes perfection (results) but also appreciates every process of achieving the set goals.
431 Because the kaizen principle also prioritizes healthy and supportive relationships between
432 employees. One way to apply this scope is to make team members dare to submit
433 suggestions without any pressure. After the submission of opinions goes smoothly,
434 employees should support each other to reduce the risk of divided opinions which will have a
435 negative impact on the company's human capital management system.
436

437 **4. CONCLUSION**

438

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

452

453 When companies apply the basic principles of Kaizen correctly, many positive results in
454 various aspects of business will be obtained, such as improving teamwork; effective and
455 efficient use of existing resources; increasing employee morale; and increase company
456 productivity. From this Kaizen culture, humans are also taught to make changes with
457 goodness in an efficient, processed manner, and to make life goals more meaningful. There
458 are 10 Kaizen principles that can be applied so that a person's life goals become more
459 developed and meaningful, namely continuing to improve one's abilities; Leave Old Bad
460 Habits behind; Proactive; Always Correct Yourself; Want to develop yourself in your own
461 way; Willing to listen to other people's opinions; Can utilize gathering moments more
462 effectively; Want to ask yourself; and Live Economically and Efficiently.

463

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

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479 **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

480

481 Author 1 designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol, and wrote
482 the first draft of the manuscript.

483 Author 2 managed the analyses of the study.

484 Author 3 managed the literature searches.

485 All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

486

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