

Kaizen Equilibrium and Organization Behavior: A Conceptual Analysis

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Abstract

The Kaizen concept introduced to the world by Imai is a resource that can be used for improvement anywhere. The benefits of this concept are immense, especially for developing countries, as the investment costs considered zero or minimal. Thus, the concept has now spread to the East and the West with many academic studies. However, it is doubtful whether this concept has been used to the fullest as the concept is based on the Japanese socio-economic background. Furthermore, this concept emerges especially in a context where middle management is seen as the driving force. Similarly, a centralised thought pattern can be seen throughout East Asia. The mediation procedure is the way of thinking of Asians. That may be due to their inspiration from Buddhist philosophy from 5 B.C. onwards. This study aims to consider how the Kaizen concept adapts to different organisational structures. The study further explores what needs to be done at the middle management level to maximise the Kaizen concept. However, this study is limited to conceptualisation. Here especially, the triangular organisational structure model and the smooth curve are used for analysis. For in-depth analysis uses positive and negative skewness. This study revealed that the Kaizen concept is satisfied in different ways within tall, flat and symmetrical organisational structures. Accordingly, it became clear that the Kaizen concept in a symmetrical organisational structure would satisfy middle management. It was further demonstrated that the introduction of Kaizen as negative skew and positive skew in high and flat organisational structures, respectively, can satisfy it in middle management. Thus, it is clear that the concept of Kaizen has the potential to be more effective in introducing the organisational structure in particular than in general. However, since this conceptualisation is done more simply, I suggest that further mathematical analysis is appropriate for this.

Keywords: Kaizen, Organization behaviour, types of Organisations, Levels of Management.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Cambridge online dictionary points out that efficiency is "the good use of time and energy in a way that does not waste any" (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2021). Similarly, the Collins online dictionary defines efficiency based on time and energy (Collins English Dictionary, 2021). However, the meaning here should extend to minimising the waste of all inputs used in management. For example, Milcah Lukhanyu points out seven types of inputs under management concepts: man, materials, machinery, money, methods, management and moral values (Lukhanyu, 2013). In addition, Holstein highlights the five M inputs as man, materials, methods, machine and money (Holstein, 2008). Further, Kumar & Aithal mention that time is considered a resource in management (Suresh Kumar & Aithal, 2020). This means that the scope for maintaining efficiency is

broader than dictionary definitions. Also, efficiency is relevant throughout becoming an input, an output (Grönroos & Ojasalo, 2004). Because of its importance, research on improving the efficiency of an organisation has a long history (Witzel, 2002). As a result of these researchers, scholars have been able to add several theories to management regarding efficiency enhancement. Masaki Imai is one of the pioneers in developing the concept of improving the efficiency of an organisation.

Masaki Imai introduced the Kaizen concept to increase efficiency in the mid-1980s and became a vital component of the competition among Japanese companies (Suárez-Barraza *et al.*, 2011). The word, which is made up of two words, Kai (change) and Zen (for good), means continuous improvement (Palmer, 2001). Until then, Western management had identified

only two instances of the existence of an institution as maintenance and innovation. In such an environment, the Kaizen concept emerges as a new development opportunity between maintenance and innovation (Hashim *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, as a new approach that went beyond maintenance and innovation, the Kaizen concept attracted the attention of scholars and spread around the world (Singh & Singh, 2009). Thus, the lack of investment cost, and the ability to use it in any area, large or small, seems to have contributed to the spread of this concept worldwide (Omoush, Majd *et al.*, 2020).

Due to the practical significance of the Kaizen concept, it can be seen that many organisations are working to adapt to the Kaizen concept (Carnerud *et al.*, 2018). But the cultural environment in which the Kaizen concept was developed often appears to have been forgotten by scholars. As a result, it is unlikely that other countries will reap the same positive benefits of the Kaizen concept that Japan is experiencing. Given the above, this study aims to build a conceptual picture of the corporate culture in which the Kaizen concept can be successful.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Japanology, or the socio-cultural foundation of Japan, was developed based on the concept of 'Godai'. Go (five) dai (great) refers to great five. This concept comprises the five elements: earth, water, fire, wind and void. It is said that the origin of all creations in the world depends on those five elements. Therefore, nature, as well as human behaviour, can be analysed based on these five elements. This principle is considered the fundamental teaching of Buddhism, which came from India to China and later to Japan (Barton, 2016). However, as evidence has recently emerged, Buddhism originated in Sri Lanka (Dhammalankara Thero, 2010), it is possible to speculate that the concept of Godai also originated in Sri Lanka. In that sense, according to Buddhist philosophy, the four great elements are āpō (liquid nature/shedding nature/water), thējo (hot nature/fire), vāyō (air), and patavi (solid nature) (pittaka.lk, n.d.). Thus, it is clear that the concept of emptiness (Davis, 2013) has been added to the Great Elements that shaped Japanese culture. And, it is more accurate to suggest that what they have added to the Japanese culture is the essence of the Buddhist philosophy itself. Neil Fujita points out that religious factors are used to achieve the aspirations of Japanese society for unity (Fujita, 1994). He further explains that the concept of "Japaneseism" has been used for this endeavour. According to him, "Japaneseism" means creating a religious mentality that allows the coexistence of different religions to coexist peacefully and an environment that refuses to allow any religion or ideology to harm this peaceful coexistence.

Kazuo Inamori's application of some of the Buddhist teachings to business and management practices illustrates the impact of Buddhist philosophy

on business (Deegalle, 2010) in Japanese culture. Inamori was a Buddhist who was a very successful entrepreneur. He defined business training as 'religious training for genuine endeavours'. He also demonstrated his philosophy of life and its relevance to business practices (Deegalle, 2010). In addition, Japan is widely known as a country heavily dependent on the power of groupism. It is seen as the driving force behind Japan's post-war economic superpower. 'While the roots of the power of groupism are a legacy from an agricultural background', it is deeply rooted in Japanese culture. Leading sociologist Chi Nakane quoted Eiko Takamizawa and pointed out that Japanese society is a vertical society (Takamizawa, 2001). This means that its members have not placed hierarchical orders. As he further points out, Japanese society is structured based on frames. Institutions or groups such as i.e. (household), Mura (village), Kaisha (company) or Kuni (nation) can be identified as frames of Japanese society.

The Japanese describe one's identity through the frame a person belongs to. For example, an employee is identified not by his job attribute but by their organisation's name (framework). Another example is traditional Japanese families. When a Japanese woman marries a man, she becomes a member of her husband's family, and their own new nuclear family unit is not mandatory. Having her husband's family name, she has a stronger bond with her husband's family than her own. She is an "outsider" to her family and an "insider" to her husband's family. As a full member of the new family, she is given higher powers than sisters-in-law. This shows that framework membership takes precedence over individual attributes. Thus, Japanese society loses horizontal social ties, and vertical ties take precedence.

Bin Kimura points out that the word 'self' in Japanese means a mixture of shame and guilt (Kimura, 1931; Sugimura & Mizokami, 2012). Their common usage is 'we'. For example, the words "We and Japanese" are often used in conversations with foreigners. Also, the use of 'we' by the Japanese means more than the collection of Japanese individuals. Moreover, its meaning includes past, present, and future individuals (Kimura, 1931; Sugimura & Mizokami, 2012). Carley Dodd and other linguists believe that language not only records information but also shapes people's perceptions of reality (Dodd, 1982). For example, Eiko Takamizawa points out that Japanese sentences do not follow English sentences' 'subject and verb' order (Takamizawa, 2001). Instead, Takamizawa points out that the Japanese sentence starts with object and verb. This shows that the potential for groupism in Japanese culture is also reflected in language. Group harmony (wa) can be pointed out as another concept absorbed into the corporate culture through external culture (Bîrlea, 2021). Instead of making decisions based on individual authority, Japanese companies tend to take a holistic approach, and the group agreement

emphasises maintaining peaceful cooperation within the organisation.

Japan's emphasis on employee coexistence extends to the office layout. Encourages an open office layout (obeya-seido) that seeks to break down barriers between assistants to facilitate workplace communication and coexistence (Tam, 2020). On the other hand, Japan has the longest working hours in the world. Therefore, employee working hours are an essential factor. 'Karoshi' - 'death by overwork' is the philosophy here (Nishiyama & Johnson, 1997). The employee does not receive any additional benefits for this 'overwork'. Drinking with colleagues after work or nomikai is another corporate cultural feature. The background to this culture is the strengthening of camaraderie between bosses and employees. This concept is called Nominication. Because the drink (nomu) and the communication take place simultaneously (Yamauchi & Orr, 2011). The nenkou-joretsu system is another distinctive institutional, cultural feature (Haitani, 1978). Promotions and salaries are based on seniority. This concept has helped create a corporate environment that respects seniority and has also weakened the ability of employees to leave the company and move to another company.

The concept of Kaizen, which originated in the 1950s with Toyota in Japan (Singh & Singh, 2009) spread to the Western world by the 1980s (Kikuchi & Suzuki, 2018). However, it is doubtful whether the exact meaning of this concept was translated to the West as such. This suspicion is because the meaning of a word is intertwined with the culture in which it originated (Geng, 2010). In such a case, translating a word into another language blocks the possibility of translating the eternal meaning of the word, even if it is read on the surface (Baer, 2016). Ignoring this barrier, the Kaizen concept can also be seen being used worldwide. Kaizen translates as 'continuous improvement' (Chen *et al.*, 2001). What needs to be considered here is the inner meaning of the concept of Kaizen applied in Japanese culture.

In addition, there are instances where the Kaizen concept was defined in various ways. For example, Webley points out that Kaizen is an umbrella that covers a variety of uses, including customer orientation, overall quality control, quality circles, cooperative labour-management relationships, and the concept of making zero-defect products (Webley, 2010). Also, Brunet and New define Kaizen as pervasive and continuous activities, outside of their job role, in recognising the results that he believes contribute to an organisation's goals and achieving them (Brunet & New, 2003). Moreover, emphasising Barnwell, scholars point out that integrating the factory's social system and statistical quality control is an approach to quality (Macpherson, 2008). Further, this requires a broad discussion of the techniques of

quality circles and the support of all employees (Macpherson, 2008).

A cultural heritage that is unique to countries is seen to have an adverse effect on globalisation. As evidence of this, Yoshida points out that Japan's economic development was due to the fusion of Western management theory with the traditional overall orientation of the Japanese (Yoshida, 1995). This suggests that Japan's managerial success is due to their 'Japanesization' process (Wood, 1991). Placing the same meaning differently, Howard and Teramoto argue that non-Japanese management can be as effective as Japan, not by trying to imitate a foreign culture, but by intelligently adapting the basic principles used in Japan (Howard & Teramoto, 1981).

Middle managers are the driving force within the Japanese management framework. They will always perform essential functions that meet the functions of top management. They play various roles, including overseeing the general capabilities that underlie the company's technical competence, the leadership of product development teams, and direct (or indirect) interventions to develop day-to-day dynamic capabilities (Adner & Helfat, 2003). Furthermore, Goshal and Bartlett, 1994; Bergalman, 1983; Hedlund, 1994 point out that identifying and capturing strategic opportunities, and Nonaka, 1988 adding that creating knowledge is entrusted to the middle managers of Japanese institutions. Thus, it is clear that middle management has a critical role to play in Japanese management culture.

In addition, the Japanese management system itself is built on its knowledge system, known as the Omikoshi Management (Miller, n.d.). This knowledge system is rich in many concepts such as Gambare, Lifetime Employment, Nemawashi, Ringi System, Seniority based promotion and wage system, Groupism, Just-In-Time, job Rotation, etc. Such evidence proves that the Kaizen concept cannot be considered as a single concept and that it is a specific management domain with the genes of the same culture born on the whole of Japanese culture.

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study of the Kaizen concept is based on three concepts. The Kaizen concept put forward by Imai, the triangular concept put forward to show an organisational structure, the square image nature used to represent the management levels of institutions. In addition, Bell Shape (normal curve) curve used mathematical applications to prove the satisfaction of a process. In addition, it was assumed that the gap between the management levels of the organisation was equal. It should be noted that this conceptual study was limited to graphical analysis, and no mathematical analysis was performed. A brief review of Western and

Eastern ideologies was conducted to investigate the background to the emergence of the Kaizen concept.

Furthermore, six concepts have been associated with developing the argument of this paper viz., Kaizen Concept (K.C.), Levels of Management (L.M.), Pareto Concept (P.C.), Standard Normal Curve (SNC). These concepts, except the SNC, are directly discussed under organisation behaviour in management textbooks with different contexts and different points of view. However, considering their similarities and suitability to merge and discuss under the same context, they have been used to strengthen the argument. Bearing in mind the importance of understanding the philosophy in each concept, the essence of those concepts are discussed in the following sections.

The Kaizen Concept

The unpleasant experience of World War II in 1945 taught the Japanese an unforgettable lesson. August 6, 1945: the day Hiroshima was bomb blasted, saved nothing on the soil except their courage. With that experience, this strong nation woke up again in five years and was able to teach the world many lessons. Among those lessons was the Toyota Product System (TPS) that they introduced, a legacy that later became known worldwide as the Lean Management System. The Kaizen concept is another member of this Toyota production system. While satisfying all other positive factors, all of these concepts are generally aimed at minimising waste. Although we commonly use the word Kaizen as a single word, the word is a combination of two other words. It is made up of the single word kaizen from the two words Kai (change) and Zen (for the better) (Palmer, 2001). This means that continuous improvement within a standard system (Chen *et al.*, 2001). Continued improvement is a key strategy to optimise production in the modern competitive environment (Schroeder & Robinson, 1991). Kaizen defines it as an endless effort that leads to continuous improvement in an organisation (Malik & Tian, 2006). Imai Masaaki, the father of the Kaizen concept, declared in 1997: "The Kaizen philosophy assumes that our way of life-be it our working life, our social life, or our home life — should focus on constant-improvement efforts ... In my opinion, Kaizen has contributed greatly to Japan's competitive success." (Imai, 1997). Kaizen is not just an isolated concept but an umbrella concept. Kaizen forms an umbrella that covers many techniques, including Kanban, total productive maintenance, six sigma, automation, just-in-time, suggestion system and productivity improvement etc. (Imai, 1986).

And Kaizen is not an act but a process that, when done correctly, humanises the workplace, eliminates unnecessarily hard work (both mental and physical), teaching people how to do rapid experiments using scientific methods and how to eliminate waste in business processes. Teian, the book describes that

Kaizen is more than just a means of improvement because it represents the daily struggles occurring in the workplace and how these struggles are overcome (Nihon HR Kyōkai., 1997). Kaizen can be applied to any area in need of improvement.

Levels of Management

Employee layers, including the managers of any organisation, conceptually design in triangular form (Reilly, 1998). This conceptual figure described the hierarchy level, responsibility in each level, skills they need, and communication direction. Moreover, the shape of the triangular also designated the declining nature of numbers towards the top management.

The Standard Normal Curve

The standard normal curve is a particular case of the normal distribution, and thus as well as a probability distribution curve. Therefore, basic properties of the average distribution hold for the standard normal curve as well (Gordon, 2006).

4. Data Analysis

The Western ideology often speaks of two sides. This ideological aspect of theirs emerges when describing the job functions of an organisation. It can be seen that they divide the job task into two parts, namely maintenance and innovation. But the ideology of Asians is different. It can be seen that their ideology often takes three forms. This ideological difference among Asians can be seen in the socio-cultural context and the field of management.

An excellent example of this is the Kaizen concept introduced by Imai, a Japanese management philosopher. He sees the concept of maintenance and innovation as two extremes put forward by Western ideology. He identifies the middle path to be followed by abandoning these two extremes. This middle lane is called Kaizen in Japanese. It is said that maintaining the existing resources of an institution in that manner is maintenance. Accordingly, it was possible to maintain an institution in its current state. In this way, the maintenance of an existing institution has to be done until an innovation made. The innovation introduces this tremendous change. This can take a considerable amount of time. It may also require a significant investment. No matter how much time it takes, no matter how much investment is required, according to Western ideology, it will have to be tolerated until this time comes. Imai's Kaizen philosophy emerges for this time frame. His Kaizen philosophy does not exclude the concepts of maintenance and innovation. He also does not tolerate wastage of time between maintenance and innovation. That is the answer he gave to that waste of time. Instead of maintaining the status quo, it is expected to continue to improve. Introducing the Kaizen concept, Imai illustrates the following Figure 1.

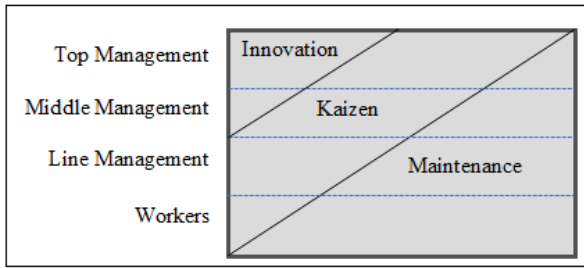


Figure 1: Improvement broken down into innovation and Kaizen
 Source: Singh & Singh, 2009

The square in the figure indicates the management level of an organisation. Also, the lowest level employees are included for this because they are also partnering in the Kaizen process. What he is trying to show here is a very reasonable philosophical ideology. The right side of the diagonal of the square in the image is called maintenance. The left part is named Kaizen and innovation. Taken as a whole, maintenance appears to be an issue that must be maintained from the lowest level worker to the top management. But the maintenance role decreases as it goes up. Also, Kaizen's role is common to all four layers. But there are differences in that role. It shows how the role of innovation is limited to upper and middle management. The emphasis here is on the fundamental teaching of Imai's philosophy. Many more philosophical theories can be based on this basic teaching. Imai has saved space for that. That is what this study sought to expose. In practice, organisations of various shapes can be seen. Examples include tall organisations, flat organisations, and symmetrical organisations, and so on. Accordingly, the role and responsibility of each management layer vary. It is essential to look at how the Kaizen principle works by focusing on those differences. At the same time, it is essential to consider how Kaizen satisfies the principle to the maximum. This study focuses on both.

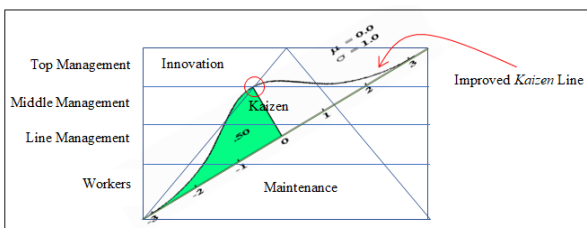


Figure 2: Maintenance, Kaizen, Innovations, and Levels of Management
 Source: Improved by the author

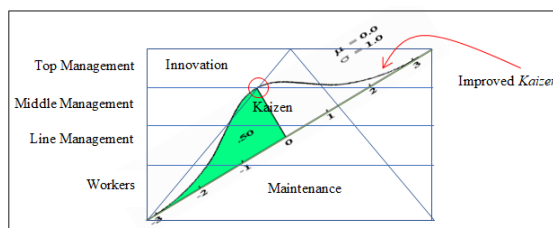


Figure 2 is based on Imai's primary teaching on the Kaizen concept. What has been done there is to make the upper line of the Kaizen concept a bell-shaped curve more reasonably. The new curve is called the 'improved Kaizen line' in the picture. That fair curve shows that central management coincides with the Kaizen concept at its peak. A circle in the picture marks that moment. It further illustrates the contribution of management levels of the organisation to the Kaizen process. Accordingly, it is clear that the lower grade employees contribute the least and the middle management bears the maximum contribution. It is further evident that line managers make a moderate contribution to the Kaizen process. At the same time, it is becoming clear that top management makes a minor contribution to the Kaizen concept of activism. However, further study is needed to contribute to the Kaizen process according to management levels. The impact of this on various organisational structures needs to be further investigated. To this end, an understanding can be gained by applying this principle to various organisational structures.

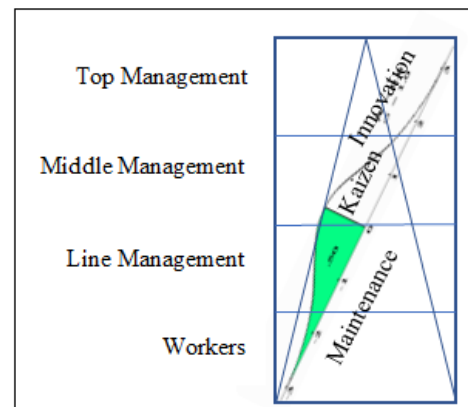


Figure 3: Tall Organization Structure and Kaizen
 Source: Improved by the author

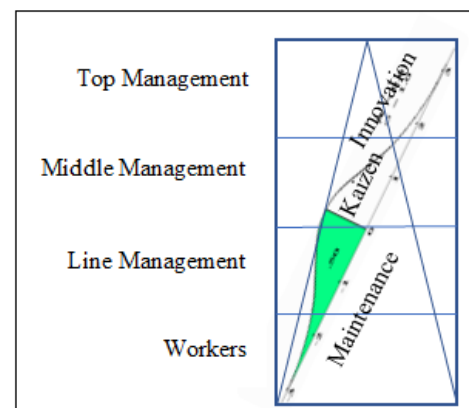


Figure 3 illustrates the satisfaction of the Kaizen process in a tall organisation structure. The square in the diagram represents the management levels, and the triangle represents the organisational structure. The workers have been included in the

management layers as they are partnering in the Kaizen process. Accordingly, four management levels are mentioned here. The diagonal of the square shows the right side as maintenance and the left side as Kaizen and innovation. In a bid to satisfy the Kaizen process reasonably, its maximum line has been introduced as a bell-shaped line. The behaviour of the Kaizen line indicates that it has a greater inclination towards the bottom of the organisational structure. However, the point at which Kaizen maximises the process has not yet left middle management. The figure illustrates how the Kaizen process reaches its maximum during the lower stages of middle management. Thus, it is clear that in an organisation with a tall organisational structure, most of the burden of the Kaizen process falls with line managers. It is further evidence that workers are not entirely exempt from this process either. The picture illustrates that the low weight of the Kaizen process to middle management has allowed them to focus on innovation.

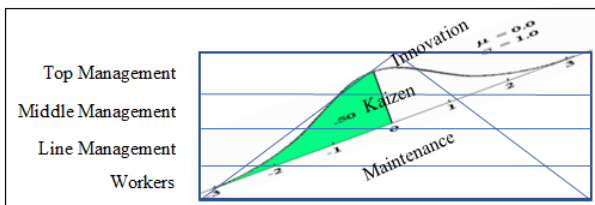


Figure 4: More Flat Organization Structure and Kaizen
 Source: Improved by the author

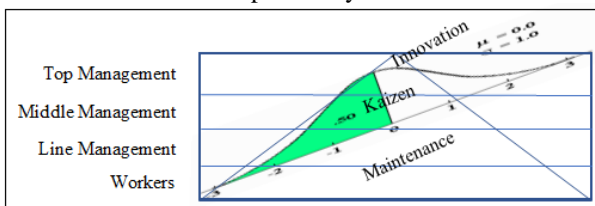


Figure 4 shows how the Kaizen process is satisfied in a flat organisational structure. The square of the figure represents the management levels, and the triangle represents the organisational structure. Based on Imai's principle, this image is divided into three parts. Here the right side of the diagonal of the square is considered as maintenance. On the diagonal, in the 'Bell-shape line' drawn under the triangle, the Kaizen concept is represented. The part beyond the maximum limit of that kaizen line symbolises innovation. The figure illustrates that the midpoint of the top management reaches the maximum of the Kaizen line. This confirms that the more significant burden of the Kaizen process falls on top management in a flat organisational structure. But that does not mean that middle management has the potential to be completely free of the Kaizen process. Central management must make a significant contribution to the success of the Kaizen process. Also, line managers and employees have to make a minimal contribution in comparison. Therefore, top management is less likely to contribute

to innovation as it contributes more to the Kaizen process.

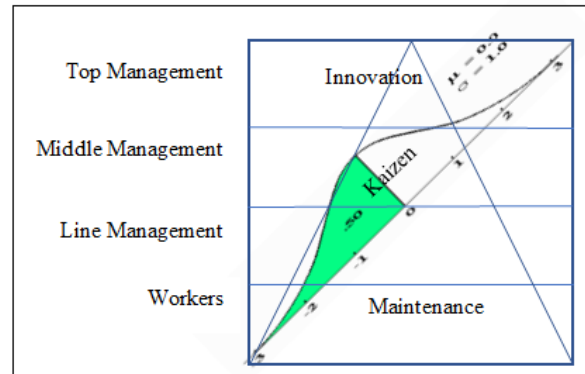


Figure 5: Symmetric Organization Structure and Kaizen
 Source: Improved by the author

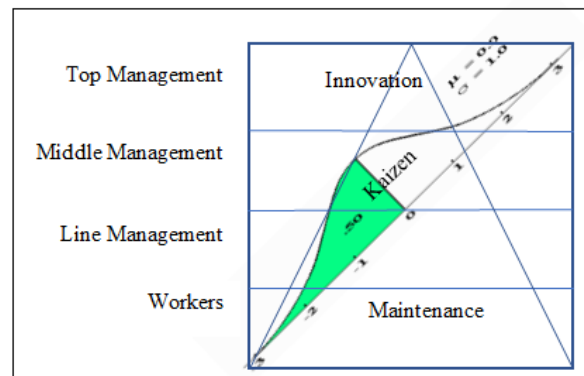


Figure 5 illustrates how the Kaizen concept is satisfied in a symmetrical organisational structure. The rectangle in the image represents the organisational structure, and the square represents the Levels of management. The right side of the diagonal of the square represents maintenance. According to Western thought, the left side of the diagonal of the square is shown as the innovation zone. As Imai points out, the region between maintenance and innovations is the Kaizen region. The Kaizen region is represented here as a bell shape line, the line of maximum satisfaction of the Kaizen concept. The figure further illustrates that Kaizen peaks in the middle of mid-management. Also, most of Kaizen's participation is done by middle-management, and the second part is relatively line management. It also makes it clear that top management does not have a significant role to play in Kaizen. This fine line, however, does not exclude lower-grade employees from the Kaizen process. Accordingly, top management seems limited to contributing more to innovation and lower employees to focus more on maintenance tasks in a symmetrical institutional structure. It can also be seen that most of the burden of

the Kaizen process falls on the middle and Line managers, respectively.

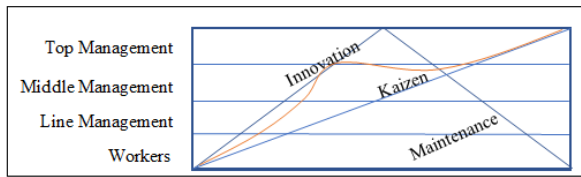


Figure 6: Kaizen Maximization in Flat organisational structure

Source: Improved by the author

Figure 6 shows how to satisfy Kaizen under the middle management of a flat organisation. It is challenging to maintain a further Bell-shape curve; in this case, you have to use a positive skew curve to satisfy Kaizen. There it is further possible to reach the maximum of Kaizen under middle management. Thus, there is scope for greater performance by shifting the application of the Kaizen concept to the functional part of the organisation. This situation is especially advantageous in a flat organisational structure. In such a case, the top management is allowed to save their time and labour for further innovation. Thus, it can contribute to the future prosperity of the organisation.

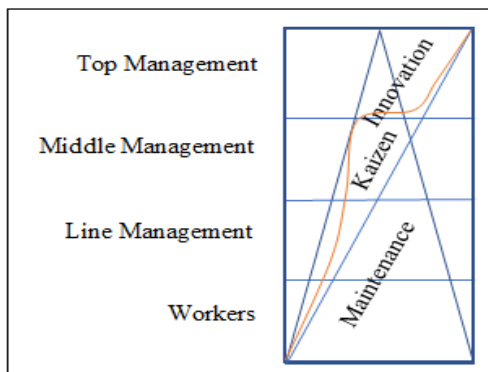


Figure 7: Kaizen Maximization in Tall organisational structure

Source: Improved by the author

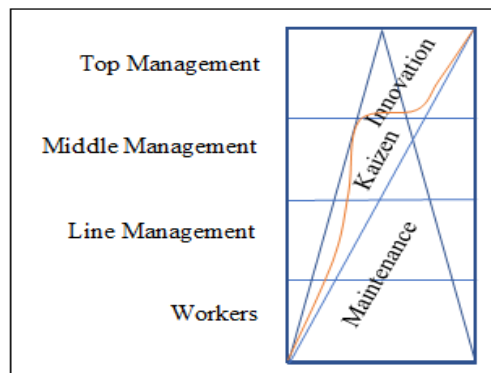


Figure 7 shows how Kaizen satisfies a tall organisational structure. That reveals that even in a tall organisation, Kaizen has the potential to maximise

under middle management. At that point, the Kaizen maximum line acts as a negative skew curve. In this way, the displacement of the Kaizen concept towards the driving force of the organisation has the potential to achieve the desired maximum performance.

5. DISCUSSION

This study sought to explore the possibility of further advancing Imai's Kaizen concept. The vision presented by Imai is profound. What he discovered was a principle that would be difficult for others to discover. Hence the scholars need to study how Imai's principle can be adapted to their fields. The principle of Kaizen cannot be changed, but its application can be improved in many ways. This study is such an attempt. The study only attempted to talk about the shape of the Upper Kaizen line presented by Imai. The upper line of the Kaizen principle presented by Imai was straight. In principle, there is nothing wrong with that, but when that principle of the straight line wants to be practised things could be difficult. According to Western ideologies, the Western Schools look at something in two ways. But Eastern School of thinking is different because they have a three-way vision. There is an idea of a middle path in their way of thinking. This pattern, which is unique to them, can also be seen in the socio-cultural form. Their language is not very straightforward and has a hidden meaning and what is expressed on the surface. It is difficult for anyone other than one inspired by this culture to understand what such statements mean. This middle ground can be seen not only in the socio-cultural system but also in politics. From the Sri Lankan point of view, for example, the policy of the Non-Aligned Movement in the 1970s and the Middle Path Declaration on Sustainable Development in 2012 can be cited (Sustainable Development Division, 2012). In addition to the x and y theories based on Western thought, the Z theory also provides evidence for the Japanese 'third eye'. That will enable management to go beyond the person-centred and product-oriented thinking that existed until then and develop management into a process-based system. In this way, a thought pattern of looking at something with a third eye can be seen in the Asian region. The main factor influencing this was Buddhist philosophy. This different thinking pattern is most prevalent in countries where Buddhist philosophy was well established in the past. Even under the influence of later Western thought, the people of these countries still seem to think in their original way. Evidence further states in writing the root causes of the influence of this thought pattern on Asians. That is to say, the pattern of thought did not come about by chance. It is a knowledge that they have worked hard for a long time. There is a philosophy as well as a process to achieve that cognitive effect. This inspiration from his ancestors led Imai to create a new vision with the third eye. Given the background of the wisdom of Asians (Karunadasa, 1991), it is possible to think so. This is not a racist thought but a statement made by seeing and understanding the truth.

This led to the study of the philosophy presented by Imai in general, tailored to the organisational structure and management layers of institutions. The maximum satisfaction of the Kaizen concept was also considered there. Accordingly, attempts were made to substitute Imai's teachings for tall, flat and symmetrical organisational structures. Also, this work aimed to replace the bell shape curve in the hope of reasonable satisfaction. Of the three organisational structures considered, we received three types of answers. First, it demonstrated the need to emphasise line managers and mid-level managers to satisfy the Kaizen process at a tall organisational structure. Second, it also showed that it was appropriate to shift more weight to line managers. However, this further proves that Kaizen is satisfied at the lowest level of middle management.

And further evidence suggests that there is no role in the Kaizen process for top management in a tall organisation structure. But when we take a flat organisational structure, we see a different situation. The top management of such an organisation has a vital role to play in the Kaizen process. The maximum satisfaction of the Kaizen process lies in the intervention of top management. But even in such a background, the task assigned to middle management does not seem to be free. Despite its flat organisational structure, middle management plays a significant role in satisfying the Kaizen concept. In such an institutional structure, line managers and the lowest level of employees receive relatively little value concerning the Kaizen process. It is also important to note that the top management of such an organisational structure, the greater the burden on the Kaizen process, and the less likely they are to contribute to the innovation process. That situation can sometimes adversely affect the future of the organisation. It can be seen that the symmetrical organisational structure is more competitive when it comes to satisfying Kaizen application. It appears that middle management has a more significant role to play in the Kaizen process. This responsibility is divided into line management more diminutive than the role of central management and even less to the lowest level of staff. The top management has very little responsibility in this regard compared to the overall role. This allows top management to focus more on the innovation process. Thus, it is clear that the organisational structure affects the satisfaction of Kaizen. It further explains that when incorporating the Kaizen concept into the management philosophy of an organisation, attention should be paid to the organisation's organisational structure.

5. CONCLUSIONS

To achieve the Kaizen concept's desired objectives, adapting its application to the organisational structure is necessary. When organisational structures are flat, tall and symmetrical, the use of Kaizen has to

be applied differently. The application must be focused on the operational core to maximise Kaizen's usage results. This situation is being adjusted according to the pattern of Western and Eastern thought. Even if the driving force in a Japanese company is the middle manager, it may not be so in another country. That is especially the case in the West. My argument in this paper is that Imai's vision could have gone much further. The new approach presented by this study requires a lot of mathematical additions. Depending on the organisational structure, the responsibilities and the powers of managers, a mathematical formula is needed to determine how to use the Kaizen concept to maximise expectations. Furthermore, the study was conducted conceptually. Therefore, there is a need for conceptual studies as well as practical studies from other perspectives.

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