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A model of the Kaizen organizational culture shaping process in the company

Abstract

Research background and purpose: Kaizen is a management method that has been known around the world for more than 40 years. As reported by the results of various studies, it is still relevant and in practice can bring a lot of benefits to a company, provided, however, that it is applied correctly. One of the basic conditions for the successful application of Kaizen is a cultural change. A cultural change of the organization towards a culture conducive to the application of Kaizen concept. Therefore the main article purpose is to present a model of the process of successfully creating a Kaizen organizational culture developed based on an extensive study of the literature on the subject and the results of empirical research.

Design/methodology/approach: In addition to literature studies, the research was conducted in manufacturing companies in Poland between 2022 and 2024 using quantitative methods (a convenience sample of 54 large and medium-sized manufacturing and service companies) and a case study method (four large manufacturing companies in the automotive, medical and aerospace industries).

Findings: As a result of the research procedure, a model of the process of creating Kaizen's organizational culture was developed, along with an indication of more than twenty methods of cultural change that can be used in this process.

Value added and limitations: The main added value of the survey results is knowledge, which, in addition to its academic value, in practice can be of great help to those interested in the topic. On the other hand, the main limitation of the survey may be the survey sample, conveniently selected and consisting mainly of manufacturing companies, which may affect the representativeness of the survey results and their limitation to the group of surveyed companies only. Therefore, in the future, the author intends to continue the survey to reduce these limitations.

Keywords: *Kaizen, Kaizen organizational culture, methods of changing organizational culture towards Kaizen culture, process of shaping organizational culture towards Kaizen culture, results of empirical research*

JEL Clarification: L20, L23, D23

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1. Introduction

Modern conditions make it very difficult for enterprises to function, especially in the recent post-pandemic period full of global turmoil. So, how are they supposed to cope with these conditions in order to effectively meet these difficult challenges?

One of the latest trends in management is the comprehensive use of new technologies and AI capabilities (Industry 4.0/5.0). However, is it enough? First, only large, wealthy companies can afford comprehensive digital solutions. Secondly, in the theory and practice of management, it is often still emphasized that people and their knowledge are the company's most valuable resource. Thirdly, customers and business partners still do not want to "talk to machines" but greatly value positive interpersonal relationships. Besides, modern technologies are not without flaws, and someone has to improve/eliminate these flaws in practice. It may be worth reaching for the reserves that every company naturally has and can realistically continue to develop and maintain a competitive advantage. Yes, but one has to do it professionally.

One of the management concepts that helps achieve excellent results in building employee engagement and using their knowledge and potential, translating directly into an increase in the company's competitiveness, is Kaizen. Kaizen, as a specific approach to management, originates from Japan and, like Lean Management (derived strictly from the Japanese company Toyota), over the past few decades, has strongly influenced the competitive landscape and the increase in the efficiency of companies around the world (Liker, 2022, p. 23). However, since this concept has been known and used in management worldwide for several decades, can it still be practical and valuable in today's highly innovative and changed times? The author proved it in one of his previous articles (Walentynowicz, 2023).

So if this is the case, why are so many companies not yet using the benefits of this concept (or the Lean concept), especially in Poland or Europe? After all, Far Eastern companies have built global competitiveness based on these concepts. Cultural barriers may be one of the main reasons (apart from ignorance). Barriers of Western Societies Cultures, Translating into Organizational Cultures of Enterprises (Walentynowicz, 2018).

Organizational culture strongly determines how the company operates and the ability to achieve the desired results (Czerska, 2003). Nowadays, the functioning of enterprises should be based on teamwork, cooperation, unrestricted communication between employees from different units (functional areas), a small distance of power, and a leadership style of management. Moreover, what is it like in Polish or Western companies? Under the influence of various conditions of national cultures or the fact that no one teaches employees and managers this, it is often the opposite. In such conditions, Kaizen (or Lean) has no right to function well (Grycuk, 2016). Therefore, if we want Kaizen (or Lean) to work correctly in the company and therefore bring many

positive results, its organizational culture must be modified in the desired direction (Cameron & Quinn, 2015; M. Alvesson & Svenigsson, 2008; Walentynowicz & Szreder, 2022). However, this is not an easy process, and in practice, it causes many problems for managers (Czerska, 2003; Walentynowicz, 2025).

This hypothesis, supported by many observations of cases of Kaizen/Lean application in practice and studies of literature publications, became the premise for writing this article (Dekier & Grycuk, 2013; Walentynowicz, 2018). Therefore, the main research problem is the question: how can the organizational culture be effectively shaped so that it becomes much more conducive to the application of Kaizen? In order to better understand the answer to this question, a subsidiary problem became the question of the attributes of this culture. Thus, the main purpose of the article is to provide readers with an answer to the formulated main research question in the form of a model developed primarily based on the results of empirical research. The results of the literature study were also not insignificant in its development. The author hopes that it (the model) will prove particularly useful to practitioners. The article is the result of many years of literature studies and empirical research by the author. Starting from the idea of the Kaizen concept and the possibility of its application in Polish conditions, through various types of barriers to its application in Poland, methods of motivating employees to engage in the processes of continuous improvement of the organization, attributes and methods of shaping an organizational culture conducive to Kaizen, to the final result in the form of a model for shaping this culture in the organization. In the empirical research, in addition to the method of surveying and categorized interviews, the methods of external observation and participant observation were used. As a result of this research, a model was created that the author recommends to practitioners to use. He also strongly recommends the use of the Kaizen concept itself, not only in the economic organizations in Poland or in Europe.

2. Kaizen culture. What is it and what attributes does it have?

Kaizen, as a management method popularized by M. Imai in the 80s and 90s of the twentieth century, and at the same time due to the growing popularity of Lean Management in the world[1], can be treated as:

1. A specific process of improving the organization (continuous improvement).
2. An organizational management system modelled on the Japanese model, leading to an increase in its competitiveness by improving the efficiency of its functioning in SQDC (security, quality, delivery and cost).

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[1]   As part of Lean Management, Kaizen is one of the fundamental assumptions of this concept, and it is treated as a set of specific principles and tools for improving the organization on a continuous basis (Liker, 2022; Womack & Jones, 2008).

In the first case, as part of Kaizen ("kai"—change, "zen"—for the better), we focus on continuously increasing the organization's competitiveness in small "steps" with the help of low-cost and common-sense solutions developed from the bottom up by the company's staff. A metaphor for such an approach would be "everyone, everywhere and every day" (Miller et al., 2014).

As part of the second approach, Kaizen will be similar to Lean Management in its form. Lean Management is a management concept in which managers and employees of the company are focused on achieving above-average organizational effects in the areas of added value offered by the organization to its customers (quality), its delivery and optimization of the costs of generating this value (cost). In Lean Management, management entities try to achieve this primarily by limiting the basic undesirable phenomena accompanying the functioning of any organization, namely organizational waste (in Japanese muda), excess (in Japanese muri), and irregularity (in Japanese mura), using various types of organizational methods developed directly at Toyota or taken from other management concepts (the so-called Lean toolbox). This is accompanied by appropriate principles of management, which were also developed at Toyota (Walentynowicz, 2013). In this form (as a management system), Kaizen uses principles and management methods similar to those used in Lean Management to achieve similar organizational goals (SQDC – security, quality, delivery and cost). After all, both systems originate from Japan, where the leader of this approach to management was/is Toyota (and then other companies from the automotive industry). Therefore, the executives of Western companies using these concepts see virtually no difference and often call them Lean or Kaizen interchangeably. However, the author of this study thinks there are differences in the assumptions and practice of these concepts. Lean should be treated as a management concept strictly modelled on the approach used in Toyota, with a recommendation for a more rigorous application of the principles and organizational tools developed in this company.

On the other hand, Kaizen does not require such a restrictive approach to the use of methods and techniques for improving the organization, despite Kaizen and Lean having similar goals (cf. Imai, 2006). The basic organizational methods used in Kaizen are 5S, standardization (standardized work), PDCA and visual communication. In addition, Kaizen is focused on eliminating/reducing muda. In addition, basic techniques supporting this process are used to solve individual and organizational problems, such as the Ishikawa diagram, genbutsu gemba, Pareto analysis, brainstorming, or "5 x why" analysis. Hence, the author believes Kaizen can be used in more different types of organizations than Lean Management, especially in service companies (Ortiz & Cárdenas, 2022). On the other hand, both concepts are accompanied by similar cultural assumptions.

Due to the volume rigors and the fact that the principles of Kaizen are widely presented in the literature on the subject (e.g. Imai 1986; Imai, 2006; Walentynowicz, 2016), this

study will not develop this topic. In the further part of the subchapter, the characteristic features of the Kaizen organizational culture will be presented – a culture that facilitates the successful use of this concept and, thus, the development and maintenance of the company's competitiveness at the right level.

They try to convey a lot about the Kaizen culture in a 2014 book entitled Kaizen culture. Building and maintaining a culture of continuous improvement J. Miller, J. Villafuerte and M. Wróblewski. According to these authors, "the Kaizen culture can be seen in an organization if people are appreciated and their development is prioritized, mutual trust is strengthened through a sense of common purpose and meaning, a positive vision of the future is created and presented, a long-term interest of all stakeholders is acted upon, an environment is created in which the visibility of problems, deviations from the norm and inconsistencies is not only allowed, but even encouraged, controlled failures are treated as experiments to be learned, a scientific approach to problem solving is followed, decisions are made on the basis of data and facts, strong convictions, assumptions and values are held but questioned in order to face reality, a feeling of humility is cultivated to always listen to different opinions and accept from them, appropriately, prudent, wise risks are taken, time is taken to carefully plan the procedure and reach a consensus, but then quick action is taken" (Trenkner & Truszkiewicz, 2015, p. 152).

The Kaizen culture can also be evidenced by the appropriate, required patterns of thinking and actions of people in the organization within this concept, called the "Kaizen decalogue" (Miler, 2017):

1. Problems create opportunities.
2. When a problem arises - ask "5 times why?".
3. Take ideas from everyone.
4. Think about implementable solutions.
5. Reject the established state of affairs.
6. Excuses that something cannot be done are unnecessary.
7. Choose simple solutions – without waiting for the perfect ones.
8. Use cleverness instead of money.
9. Correct mistakes regularly.
10. The upgrade is endless.

Analyzing in detail the features of the Kaizen-friendly culture, based on the main assumptions of this concept as a management system, it should be stated that the basic attributes of this culture are (cf. Imai, 2006; Liker & Houseus, 2007; Miller et al., 2014; Singh & Singh, 2015):

1. Strategic, process, marketing, leadership, human capital and win-win approach to organizational management.
2. External customer and their satisfaction come first.
3. High focus on eliminating the mud of the entire company staff and improving the entire organization in the spirit of SQDC.

4. The top management must have a high level of involvement in the operational matters of the organization.
5. Genbutsu-agenda management and decision-making style.
6. A high level of involvement of the operational management in the processes of continuous improvement of the organization and setting a positive example for subordinates in this area.
7. Openness to expertise and novelties, the right to risk and tolerance for mistakes in improving the organization.
8. Partnership approach to cooperating entities.
9. Real respect for people and their work (employees, customers and business partners).
10. Focus on real results and reward for them.
11. Appreciating positive effects, even the smallest ones.
12. Paying attention even to details in the organization's functioning that would go unnoticed in other companies. Striving for perfection.
13. High level of teamwork and cooperation between organizational units.
14. Open and open communication within the organization (including not hiding problems).
15. A high corporate social responsibility and care for the natural environment.
16. A perfectly organized and maintained working environment.

The most important attributes of the Kaizen culture are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. **Main attributes of Kaizen organizational culture**

Source: own study

As proven by many scientific studies, the successful application of the Kaizen concept in the company brings many benefits (Imai, 1986; Manos, 2007; Walentynowicz, 2013). However, for the power of this concept to fully materialize, a cultural change is essential in the organization.

3. Possibilities of shaping organizational culture in the light of the literature on the subject

According to the results of research by A. Brown (1995), T.H. Fitzgerald (1988), E. Ogbonny and B. Wilkinson (2003), organizational culture is very difficult to change in a permanent and effective way. But it is not impossible. As K.S. Cammeron and R. Quinn (2015), L. Clarke (1997), M. Czerska (2003), J. Kotter (1995), S.P. Robbins and T.A. Judge (2011) and Ł. Sułkowski (2001) observed, you can achieve good results in this process, you just need to know how.

So, how do you change your organizational culture effectively? Based on previous research (Walentynowicz, 2025), the author concluded that the primary methods of changing the organizational culture towards a culture conducive to Kaizen could be (cf. Alvesson, 2002; Beer, 2000; Balle, 2008; Balle, Balle 2012 and 2017; Clark, 1997; Czerska, 2003; Hines, 2010; Hofstede, 2007; Kotter, 1995; Mann, 2014; Piątkowski, 2009; Robbins & Judge, 2011; Rother, 2011; Shook, 2010; Sułkowski, 2001):

- modification of various types of organizational artifacts (physical – interior design, clothing and equipment; behavioral – patterns of behavior or rituals in the organization; language – ways of communication, organizational myths or legends),
- modification of various types of organizational artefacts (physical – interior design, clothing and equipment; behavioral – patterns of behavior or rituals in the organization; language – ways of communication, organizational myths or legends),
- modification of organizational regulations - in the form of new organizational standards or regulations for rewarding behavior consistent with new values, modification of the recruitment and promotion system for employees – adapting them to new cultural assumptions,
- modification of the periodic evaluation system – towards shaping attitudes and behaviors in line with the expected ones,
- modification of the employee motivation system – towards strengthening desirable behaviors (e.g. high quality, efficiency or organizational commitment) and reducing undesirable behaviors (absenteeism, accidents at work or organizational insubordination),
- modification of management system mechanisms – e.g. management styles or decision-making; ways of communication or enforcement of organizational

authority – in a direction more conducive to the new cultural assumptions of the organization,

- modifications and changes in the area of the organizational structure, processes and applicable procedures,
- broad promotion of new values or cultural assumptions – through various types of formal (official) or informal channels (directly manager-employee or employee-employee),
- training on new principles of organization functioning – aimed at creating new attitudes or behaviors among both managers and ordinary employees (this is where employees should be taught what muda, muri, and mura are),
- rewarding supporters of the new organizational culture – by promoting them to managerial positions or granting various types of benefits,
- getting rid of opponents of the new organizational culture – especially open opponents or those who do not want to fit into it,
- creating a set of new organizational values and promoting them widely – m.in. During the implementation of improvement projects (Lean/Kaizen projects) or training,
- broad and effective communication of the vision of change and the new organizational culture by members of the top management,
- a positive example of management – both the highest and lower levels of management (the so-called "top-down" example) in terms of compliance with new organizational principles and values (i.e., e.g. not applying the so-called double standards, personal involvement in organizational changes, in the functioning of Gemba[2], etc.),
- change of management styles – to leadership and participatory ones,
- change in decision-making styles – towards participatory (consultative), fact-based (and not influenced by information obtained "from behind the desk") and consensual (win-win), based on the long-term vision and strategy of the organization (from the Japanese language in the style of Nemawashi and Genbutsu Genba),
- coaching of managerial behaviors – teaching lower-level managers appropriate behaviors desirable from the point of view of the requirements of the new organizational culture,
- active inclusion of ordinary employees in the process of continuous improvement of the company – participation in improvement projects, proposing improvement solutions, implementing developed solutions,
- acquiring positive experiences through participation in the process of change or direct observation of the positive effects of this process,

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[2] Genba – in Japanese, the main area where added value for the end customer is created. In the Kaizen concept, it is the most important place in every organization.

- shaping employees' awareness of the purpose and meaning of what they do and learning methods to support their superiors in this direction (coaching) directly. This may concern standardized work (TWI training), the functioning of the 5S system, self-control, problem-solving skills or looking for proposals to improve the company,
- positive impact of group members on the individual (the so-called association effect), where, as a result of the activities carried out under points 18 and 19, individual employees become ambassadors of the new way of functioning of the organization and encourage others to join these processes,
- the facilitation effect of the company's staff participation in collective improvement programs of the organization (the so-called suggestion systems) or deliberate motivation in this direction is also important.

As seen, there are many potential ways to influence attitudes or behaviors or how people see and think in organizations. However, it is important to carry out these activities in a thoughtful and planned manner. The model developed by the author as part of the study of Lean/Kaizen organizational cultures in manufacturing companies in Poland, carried out in 2022-2024 using quantitative methods (a convenient sample of 54 large and medium-sized manufacturing and service companies) and the case study method (four large production companies from the automotive, medical and aviation industries) can help in the proper implementation of this process. The research was conducted together with the author's PhD student – Dr. Pamela Omiotek[3].

In the first phase of the study, the levels of occurrence of Lean/Kaizen organizational cultures were examined using the author's questionnaire (Walentynowicz, 2014) and the organizational effects that occur as a result of the progress of this process (rating of various attributes on a scale of 1 to 7). Then the respondents were asked about the methods (ways) they use in the process of creating these cultures in the surveyed companies. As a result of this study, a clear level of correlation was identified between the positive effects of the process of creating the Lean/Kaizen organizational culture and the general level of implementation of elements of the Lean/Kaizen concept, which, as proven by the results of other studies, have a very strong impact on the improvement of economic, financial and market results of enterprises (Manos, 2007; Miller & Villafuerte, Wróblewski, 2014; Walentynowicz 2013). As a result of this

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[3] The main thread of the research concerned the model of creating the Lean organizational culture as part of the doctoral thesis written under the author's of article supervision. Using the results of this research, in agreement with the main researcher, the author of article by analogy developed a model of the Kaizen organizational culture creation process. This was possible because these concepts are so similar that in practice it is difficult even for company management to identify the differences between them (as argued at the beginning of this article).

study, it was also identified that the greater the emphasis on this process and the more methods used by the managers of the surveyed companies in this process, the better the results (Walentynowicz & Omiotek, 2024). However, this process, unfortunately, has to take many years.

In the next phase, through personal visits to four companies, personal observation of the results of this process and many hours of interviews with managers representing these organizations, the results of the study carried out in the first phase were deepened and supplemented with elements not present in the previous phase of the study. In this way, as a result of literature studies, empirical research and logical inference, a model was created, the presentation of which is the main goal of this article.

4. A model of the process of building an organizational culture of a high level of employee involvement in the continuous improvement of the organization

The Kaizen model of the process of shaping the organizational culture has been developed due to empirical research and literature studies on the subject. As documented in the publication (Walentynowicz, 2023), nowadays, i.e. in the modern conditions of the digital economy, when there is a high focus on the implementation of technologies related to the concept of Industry 4.0/5.0 in enterprises, Kaizen is still a valuable concept for managing and developing an organization. Research shows that the culture of continuous improvement facilitates the implementation and subsequent improvement of the use of modern technologies in the company (Burggräf et al., 2020; Sundararajan, 2023; Wolniak & Grębski, 2024). So, how can we properly shape the culture of continuous improvement (Kaizen culture) so that it helps the company achieve multifaceted benefits in today's market conditions? A model of this process is presented in Figure 2.

The process of shaping the organizational culture towards the Kaizen culture, as well as the beginning of applying this concept in the organization, should begin with a thorough understanding of its assumptions and elements by the owners/managers of the company. This is very important for the subsequent successful application of the concept or effective cultural change because, as the results of many studies show, the level of involvement of the management in the processes of continuous improvement of the organization (participation in the steering committee, personal promotion of the concept, acceptance of individually developed solutions, participation in events celebrating results, or even direct participation in improvement projects) is a powerful determinant of engagement the rest of the company's staff in these processes (Alenezi, 2022; Walentynowicz, 2013). Moreover, without their right level of awareness, it is unlikely to be possible.
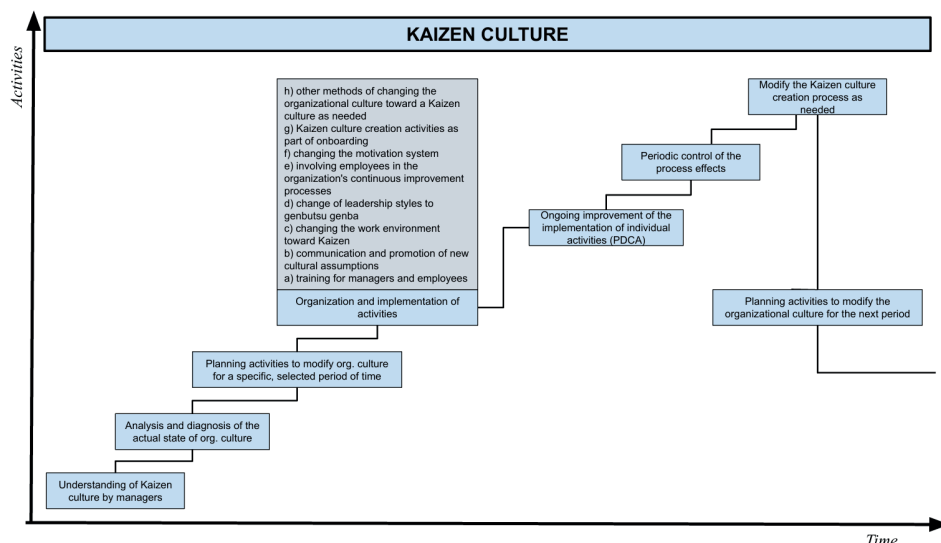
Figure 2. **A model of the Kaizen organizational culture shaping process**

Source: own work based on research results

Thanks to a deep understanding of the assumptions of this concept and its cultural assumptions, the company's management can properly analyze and diagnose the current organizational culture and plan appropriate actions to change this culture in the desired direction. Analysis and diagnosis can be made using methods existing in the literature, or managers can develop their own tools based on their knowledge. That is why the correct knowledge of the management about the assumptions and possible effects of this concept is so important. It can be obtained in various ways, from thorough studies of the literature on the subject, through participation in various types of training and conferences, benchmarking of solutions used in practice, to personal coaching of experts from consulting companies, or their assistance in implementing various organizational solutions in practice (e.g. an effective suggestion system).

Next, in a planned manner, managers should focus on activities that promote a new organizational culture and effectively change the existing one. This should be done in parallel with various Kaizen activities in the organization.

The spectrum of possible actions to change organizational culture toward a Kaizen-friendly culture was presented in the previous section of the article. This can be a good extension of the content presented in the model (for obvious reasons to a limited extent). On the other hand, the model presents a sequence of methods that are recommended to

be applied in this order to effectively achieve the desired results. The results of qualitative research (case studies) and logical inference indicate that this configuration will be optimal.

After the intellectual preparation of the top management and the diagnosis of the current organizational culture, it is worth applying the following measures:

- extensive ideological and competence training to Kaizen the remaining members of the company's management (especially operational managers);
- extensive ideological and competency training to Kaizen other members of the enterprise's workforce (especially core process employees);
- communication of the idea and the need to introduce Kaizen into the enterprise and the importance of involving all employees of the enterprise in continuous improvement processes to all employees;
- initiation of various types of Kaizen activities that change the work environment to improve the operational performance of the enterprise and facilitate Kaizen activities (team Kaizen projects, implementation of the 5S system, introduction of an effective suggestion system) (more on this topic: Walentynowicz, 2016);
- involving as many rank-and-file employees as possible in these activities,
- changing the system of motivating employees in a direction that promotes Kaizen activities;
- a real change in management styles toward leadership, participation and support, including genbutsu genba;
- education towards Kaizen and creating awareness of the importance of continuous improvement of the enterprise in newly hired employees.

This can be followed by other methods of changing the organizational culture towards Kaizen - extending the functioning of the system to other, non-manufacturing areas, supporting Kaizen activity with a system of KPIs and VPMs (Key Performance Indicators and Visual Performance Management), promoting a culture of mutual cooperation and solving organizational problems together, or, for example, celebrating results together. However, the most important of them is to change the attitudes and behaviors of managers towards setting an example of engaging in improvement activities, solving problems quickly and effectively, and using leadership management styles. Research shows that it is one of the basic factors of effective cultural change in Kaizen (Nejjari et al., 2024).

Further actions recommended by the model are based on the so-called "course correction" model (Czerska 2003, p. 37 et seq.). Individual activities modifying the existing organizational culture should be monitored and verified using the PDCA (Deming circle) method. In this way, individual activities will approach "perfection", and periodic control of the process (but not more than once a year) will lead to its further modification (by introducing further culture-modifying activities) or strengthening of effective methods in a planned manner. To facilitate the process of realization of Kaizen

activities and the process of implementation of activities that change the organizational culture in a planned manner, a group overseeing these processes, the so-called steering committee, can be established, which, together with the continuous improvement cell of the organization, will support these processes. For more on this topic, see (Walentynowicz 2024).

Standardized work is one of the basic methods of consolidating the Kaizen culture, or the organization's functioning in the Kaizen style. Kaizen organizational changes should be carried out in an organized manner. Mainly using the PDCA-SDCA (plan, do, check, apply - standardize, do, check, apply) method.

Analyzing the costs and benefits of the process carried out in this way, it should be concluded that the benefits will exceed the costs many times (according to the available information, often a dozen or several dozen times). Expenditures on training or implementation of the proposed solutions are often small (low-cost solutions, training with internal forces). However, the positive effects include not only solutions improving the functioning of the company from the technical or organizational side but, above all, a change in the awareness and attitudes of the company's staff towards greater flexibility of operation, openness to change, cooperation inside and outside the organization, and respect for customer value and focus on permanent increase of the company's market competitiveness. Moreover, this (including the need for permanent innovation and investment) is the key to the company's success.

5. Discussion and conclusion

In the literature on the subject, there are many articles promoting Kaizen and emphasizing the importance of the right organizational culture supporting the application of this concept in the organization (Trenkner & Truszkiewicz, 2015; Janiszewski, 2018; Lis & Bryke, 2024), but it clearly lacks publications, especially Polish ones, on how to effectively change this organizational culture (e.g. Neese & Kong, 2007; Walentynowicz, 2024). With the results of his research and this publication, the author wants to reduce this gap.

Thus, the main purpose of the article was to present a model for the formation of an organizational culture conducive to the application of the Kaizen concept in an enterprise in response to the basic research question posed. The model was developed mainly on the basis of the results of the empirical study. The results of the literature study were also very important in the preparation of this model.

Of course, the presented model is not the only one that can be a guidepost for organizational cultural change. Other models include the models of the so-called "course correction" presented in the literature on the subject (S.P. Robbins, G.W. Dyer, or M. Czerska (Czerska, 2003), the model of K. Lewin and J.P. Kotter (1995), or M. Balle's

model of Lean cultural change (Balle, 2008). However, these models are not aimed at changing the organizational culture toward a Kaizen-friendly culture.

Therefore, the proposed model, along with the indicated methods for modifying organizational culture strictly toward a Kaizen culture, can effectively fill this gap. Especially from the perspective of practice. In addition, the presented features of Kaizen organizational culture can help managers effectively understand and then shape this culture in enterprises. However, this process must unfortunately take many years.

In the author's opinion, the model also introduces potential for further scientific discussion on the subject.

The scientific limitation, however, is the lack of empirical validation of the proposed model and comparison with other such models found in the literature. The latter has not been done due to their apparent scarcity in this environment. Therefore, future empirical validation of the model could be beneficial, especially in terms of its applicability to different types of organizations (small/large; manufacturing/trade/ service; with different business environments). It could also be beneficial to compare the model with other models for shaping organizational cultures from management concepts of a similar nature (knowledge management, Total Quality Management and Lean Management). This could have the effect of verifying or developing the proposed model based on the method of analogy. At present, however, in the context of the cases studied and the different types of manufacturing companies, the model seems to meet expectations.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

While preparing this work, the author did not use any tool/service.

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