

# **Critical Success Factors of Suggestion Program - Differences between Managerial and Operational Perspectives in a Brazilian Food Factory**

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**Abstract** It is imperative driving an organizational improvement programs in any organization to maintain its competitive advantage, and a strategy used by them is creating a suggestion program that involves members from top to down. This study is a case study applied in a Brazilian Food Factory to evaluate the current suggestion program called Kaizen through managerial and operation perspectives.

**Keywords:** Kaizen, Continuous Improvement, Lean, Suggestion Program, Perspectives.

## **1 Introduction**

Kaizen is a philosophy that has supported organization to win a competitive environment (Ortiz, 2010) and during times of crisis (Imai, 1954). Researches on literature reviewed four main criteria such as leadership commitment (Imai, 1954), operational commitment (Ruiz, 2019), education and training (Terra, 2007), and communication (Omatayo, 2018) for the success of a continuous improvement program. This study proposes evaluating the importance of those factors considering different perspectives of employees. It was applied into a Brazilian factory.

## **2 Research Methodology**

This case-study research investigates the improvement suggestion program incorporated by food factory. It employs both qualitative and quantitative methods: qualitative approach by gaining insights about Kaizen and continuous improvement programs based on literature review to rise fundamental factors of a successful program, and describing and contextualizing the current program following by organization; and quantitative work by collecting data using questionnaires and analyzing them using statistical techniques.

Two forms of 15 closed-ended questions were used to collect data containing statements about four successful criteria to a suggestion program - leadership commitment, operational commitment, education and training, and communication – one to production and logistics operators and another to managers and team leader. The answers were obtained during three-shift work. In total 84 questionnaires were fulfilled during 1st to 15th August 2019: 66 of operational workers and 18 of leaders.

A descriptive analysis was realized first and patterns between the two groups were found last using Minitab 1.7 software.

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### 3 Results

Our investigation revealed that, both groups rank factors differently, except for leadership commitment that was considered the most critical criteria to current organizational program of improvement. Operators better evaluated education and training factor; and leaders considered communication criteria with a higher performance.

Based on those differences, a gap analysis were realized considering manager's view as expectation (would be) and operators' ordering as perception. Communication is factor that had highest evaluation gap between operators and leaders. We suggest representing those factors as a house illustrated on Figure 1.

This study has few limitations. First, the questionnaires was applied in workplace, then some operators felt pressure to answer some questions afraid to leader responses; also leaders overlooked some questions for doubting their way of management. Secondly, there are others criteria, as not considered, such as investment and staff commitments (maintenance, HR), but are also important to a successful program. Finally, the suggestion program was in the process of restructuring.

As future works, we recommend replicate this study on other factories of the group, in terms of maturity of Kaizen program. It allows investigating similarities and differences between manager and operator's perspectives, comparing their results and generate knowledge to standardizing the improvement programs through organization.

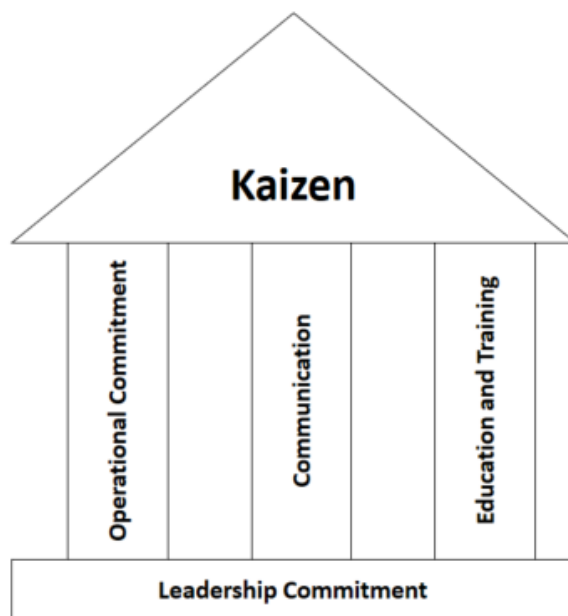


Fig. 1 Kaizen House

### 4 Conclusion

The presented studies shows a comparison between two groups – operators and managers – related to the improvement suggestion program current in a factory. In the paper, results suggest that people have different perception about the program. Therefore, to get more sustainable outcomes from kaizen programs, we suggest engaging all workers from all organization level to the main critical factors: communication, education and training, and operational and leadership commitment.

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