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Kaizen Practices of a Courier Company: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the implementation of Kaizen practices, specifically the 5S methodology and the Kanban system, within a courier company in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. Through a qualitative case study approach, the researchers conducted interviews with 23 employees and performed direct observations of daily operations. The statistical tool used for analyzing the results was thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. It was used to systematically analyze the qualitative data collected through interviews by identifying and interpreting key themes and patterns. The findings reveal that the integration of 5S methodology contributed to a more organized, efficient, and standardized work environment, particularly in sorting, workspace zoning, and parcel handling. The Kanban system supplements these practices by visualizing workflows, prioritizing tasks, process clarity, workforce orderliness and delivery accuracy, contributing to higher job satisfaction and customer service. Despite challenges in workforce performance, operations, and external factors, the company has implemented strategies such as improving human resource management and operational processes. This research sheds light on how Kaizen can be adapted and scaled in the courier industry, offering insights into its practical applications and limitations. The study concludes with recommendations to strengthen visual management tools, institutionalize standard operating procedures (SOPs), and integrate employee feedback mechanisms to further enhance operational efficiency and sustain Kaizen practices.

Keywords: 5S, continuous improvement, courier industry, Kaizen, Kanban system

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Today's chaotic business world presents a whirlwind of challenges for businesses competing in the 21st century. To thrive in this environment, customers demand high-quality, affordable, and readily available products, placing immense pressure on companies to deliver exceptional service. In this environment, courier companies, in particular, need to leverage the best management practices, strategies, and tools available to stay ahead. Decades of research in economics and business management highlight the power of continuous improvement as a key driver of competitive advantage (Janjic et al., 2019).

One of the developments in the last few years is the rise in e-commerce which has significantly transformed consumer shopping habits. The convenience of online platforms, offering a vast array of products, price comparisons, and one-click purchases, has shifted consumer preference away from traditional brick-and-mortar stores. This shift has fueled a massive demand for efficient and reliable courier services to deliver these online purchases directly to customers' doorsteps. But as the e-commerce industry flourishes, courier companies face intensifying competition. They must constantly strive for higher levels of efficiency, speed, and cost-effectiveness to stay ahead.

Moreover, in today's dynamic and competitive environment, building a thriving business with loyal customers and consistent profits necessitates continuous improvement. The use of innovative approaches, such as Kaizen, is therefore crucial for optimizing operations and ensuring exceptional customer service (Pandey, 2023). Implementing such specific practices becomes a powerful tool for achieving long-term success (Martin, J. and Imai, M. n.d.). This continuous improvement philosophy aligns directly with Sustainable Development Goal 9 (SDG 9) established by the United Nations, which emphasizes 'industry,' 'innovation,' and 'infrastructure.' With its focus on ongoing refinement, employee engagement, and resource efficiency, Kaizen significantly contributes to achieving these global objectives."

With busier lifestyles and a desire for convenience, the need for delivery services typically rises. The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened this demand as individuals prioritize contactless transactions and safety measures. Delivery services have become essential for both businesses and individuals, especially in countries like the Philippines (Subido et al., 2021). With this surge in online commerce came a corresponding rise in demand for courier services. To respond to the needs of the times, these companies have evolved beyond their traditional role of mail and parcel delivery, transforming into strategic partners for businesses – both local and international – to effectively reach a wider Filipino customer base. This trend is

expected to continue, with a 2019 study predicting that third-party logistics providers, who manage deliveries for other businesses, would capture a significant portion (40%) of the overall Philippine logistics industry by 2024 (Payo Asia, 2023).

Nueva Vizcaya, the locale of this study, is one of the ten fastest-growing provinces in the Philippines according to the Philippine Statistics Authority report for 2022. With its positive economic growth, Nueva Vizcaya's economy increased by 13.1% in 2022, which is the highest growth rate since 2019. This signifies a significant improvement as it even surpassed the economic level of the province before the pandemic, with a growth of 4.8% compared to 2019. The industries of mining and quarrying, accommodation and food service activities, and transportation and storage recorded the fastest growth among the 16 industries in the province. This is further supported by the report of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) which states that the growth was driven by strong performance in the mining, tourism, and logistics sectors.

With this robust economy, Nueva Vizcaya has also seen a rise in e-commerce activity where courier companies take the lead in delivery goods and services right to the doorsteps of consumers.

Courier Industry

The e-commerce boom has significantly increased the demand for reliable and efficient business-to-consumer courier services. Online shops and retailers heavily rely on effective delivery methods to get goods directly to their customers, underscoring the critical need for dependable courier services.

Courier services provide premium, secure, and timely delivery, offering a faster and more reliable alternative to standard mail. In today's fast-paced world, where speed is paramount, standard delivery is insufficient, prompting companies to develop more specialized services using new technologies (Kidwai & Maqbool, 2023).

To meet this growing demand, various courier companies have emerged, specializing in e-commerce deliveries. The chosen courier company is a delivery company focused on e-commerce businesses, operating in Southeast Asia and founded in Indonesia. It caters to the needs of e-commerce businesses, offering them a variety of services such as cash-on-delivery options, flexible packaging solutions, and nationwide coverage. With a network of over 1,000 branches in the Philippines alone, the courier company is constantly growing and looking to support businesses of all sizes. This year, they have expanded their reach by adding more trucks and even incorporating other methods like land, sea, and air freight – all to serve more areas, especially those in remote Philippine locations (Zoleta, 2023).

While courier services have become essential in today's time, building a successful courier service requires dedication and effort in a competitive marketplace. While sole proprietorships offer a low barrier to entry, attracting and retaining clients can be challenging. However, with a well-defined strategy and unwavering commitment, offering courier services can be a rewarding and profitable venture (James, 2023).

Moreover, continuous improvement is key to survival in today's competitive market. Kaizen culture fosters this by encouraging constant learning and innovation at all levels.

Kaizen

Kaizen is a Japanese term which means “change for the better” or “continuous improvement.” This philosophy emphasizes ongoing, incremental improvements that involve all employees within the organization, which can result in major improvements (Hargrave, 2024). Originally developed in the manufacturing sector, Kaizen has been successfully implemented in various industries, including health care, as a broad concept with a wide range of interpretations. Its core principles aim to achieve several goals such as to reduce defects, eliminate waste, increase productivity, enhance worker engagement and accountability, and foster innovation. Kaizen stands in contrast to radical or top-down approaches to change. It emphasizes collaboration and a commitment to ongoing progress. The philosophy's broad applicability extends beyond specific industries such as manufacturing, services, government organizations and non-governmental organizations, and can be implemented at individual and organizational levels (Daniel, 2021).

Kaizen is a philosophy that emphasizes making small, ongoing refinements to processes. It encourages a culture of continuous effort, where employees are constantly looking for ways to improve. By implementing these small changes on a regular basis, Kaizen helps organizations achieve better results. Notably, its simplicity and minimal investment requirements make Kaizen a viable approach for businesses in any field (Kumar, 2019).

Additionally, Kaizen goes beyond just improving efficiency. It aims to create a work environment where employees feel fulfilled and take pride in their accomplishments. As mentioned, this is achieved through small, ongoing improvements that eliminate waste and ensure every step adds value. As a powerful tool for continuous improvement, Kaizen is ideal for organizations of all types looking to refine their processes. Its effectiveness will only grow in the future as more companies leverage it to achieve their goals (Sutrisno et al., 2022).

Kaizen promotes collaboration for continuous improvement, involving employees at all levels and utilizing cross-functional teams. Sustainability is key as practices evolve alongside company growth, always striving for better methods (Graupp, 2024). Kaizen is built on the concept of never-ending improvement, transcends industries. It is not just about achieving results; it is about constantly optimizing how things are done. This focus on streamlining processes, eliminating waste, and tackling problems like quality and efficiency has made Kaizen widely accepted across various sectors. From manufacturing giants to logistics companies, construction firms, healthcare providers and even service industry, Kaizen empowers organizations to continuously improve their work systems (Syaputra & Aisyah, 2022).

Specifically, the Kaizen methodology encompasses a variety of techniques and practices, including 5S, Kaizen events, 5 whys, total preventive maintenance (TPM), just-in-time (JIT) system, suggestion system, kaizen costing, quality control circles (QCC) or quality circle (QC), total quality management (TQM), Toyota production system (TPS), kanban system, elimination of the seven kinds of wastes, and poka-yoke (error proofing) (Nderi, 2012). Due to their direct impact on efficiency and organization, this study will solely examine the application of 5S and Kanban systems within the courier company, representing the most relevant Kaizen practices for optimizing delivery services.

The 5S method, focusing on sorting, organizing, cleaning, standardizing, and maintaining the workplace, fosters a clean, safe, and efficient environment. By implementing 5S, waste (muda) is significantly reduced, and potential problems become easier to spot. Standardization, a key component, helps stabilize processes, making them simpler to analyze and improve. This is achieved not through rigid rules, but by establishing a foundation for waste elimination. These interconnected 5S elements, when integrated into Kaizen, collectively minimize errors, injuries, and overall waste (Walker, 2011).

Meanwhile, the Kanban system has recently been effectively implemented in numerous manufacturing, assembly, and supply chain systems. Its primary goal is to enhance unit productivity by minimizing process idle time. When applied correctly, it is a highly cost-efficient method (Wakode et al., 2015). The principle of Kanban involves creating visual indicators that enable operators to determine the quantity of goods to produce and when to halt or switch tasks. It also guides operators on the steps to take when encountering issues and identifies whom to contact for assistance (Triana & Beatrix, 2019).

A study by Shemealash (2019) found that Kaizen implementation can take over 3 years, impacting 11–40% of a company's processes. However, by embracing Kaizen throughout the organization, companies can build a lasting advantage and achieve superior performance, especially in unpredictable environments (Mui & Muthuveloo, 2020). Implementing Kaizen, a philosophy of continuous improvement, is a commitment to constantly refine an organization. It involves streamlining operations, reducing costs, and ultimately achieving a stronger market position. While the improvements might be gradual, their long-term benefits are substantial. For Kaizen to succeed, however, both management and employees need to embrace a willingness to adapt and change (De Vera, 2024).

While numerous studies have examined Kaizen's effectiveness and efficiency in various sectors, limited research has been conducted regarding its impact on courier companies (Nderi, 2012). Existing literature often focuses on manufacturing sectors, neglecting the specific challenges and opportunities presented by the fast-paced customer-centric world of e-commerce courier services. This lack of research hinders understanding of the potential benefits and challenges of implementing Kaizen within this dynamic service environment.

Conducted during the first semester of the academic year 2024–2025, this study aims to contribute to the current body of knowledge about Kaizen's applicability in the courier sector. It will further facilitate the collection of evidence as to the perceived benefits and challenges in the implementation of Kaizen practices in the courier industry. By addressing this research gap, the study seeks to provide valuable knowledge that will enable courier companies to make informed decisions for ongoing improvement and success. Ultimately, the study can significantly impact understanding and applying Kaizen in the courier sector to enhance business performance, competitiveness, and customer satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes two theoretical frameworks to understand the implementation of Kaizen practices, specifically 5s and Kanban, within the courier industry:

Figure 1

5S: Sort, Set in order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain

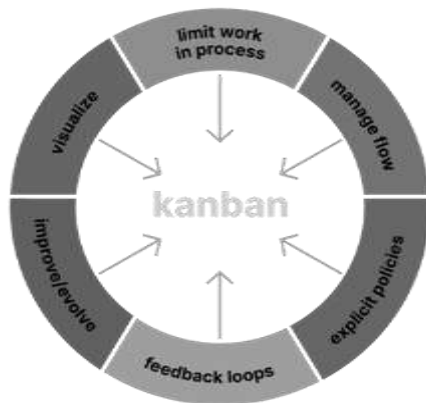


Source: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainability/lean-thinking-and-methods-5s>

The 5S methodology, a fundamental principle of Kaizen, provides a structured approach for creating a more organized, efficient, and safe work environment. This system is built on five pillars, each with a clear purpose: Sort (Seiri) eliminates unnecessary items, ensuring only essentials remain. Set in Order (Seiton) meticulously organizes remaining items for easy access and retrieval. Shine (Seiso) establishes cleaning routines to maintain a clean and organized space. Standardize (Seiketsu) creates consistent work practices for maintaining the 5S system, ensuring everyone follows the same protocols. Finally, sustain (Shitsuke) fosters continuous improvement through regular assessment and employee feedback, guaranteeing the long-term effectiveness of the 5S system. By implementing these steps, organizations can cultivate a work environment that promotes efficiency, safety, and ultimately, long-term success.

Figure 2

Kanban System

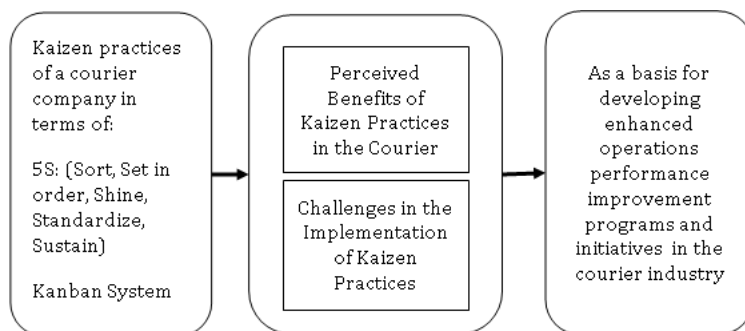


Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/gmYgws4CVA8AiNA8>

The Kanban system provides a structured pathway for continuous improvement within any process. It functions by visualizing the workflow, exposing any roadblocks or delays that hinder progress. By setting limitations on the number of tasks undertaken simultaneously, Kanban fosters focus and efficiency, ensuring teams complete tasks swiftly. This emphasis on completion creates a natural cycle of improvement, as completed tasks reveal new capacity and motivate teams to continually refine their processes for optimal flow. Furthermore, Kanban facilitates data collection, allowing teams to analyze metrics and make informed decisions that enhance the workflow's effectiveness. This iterative approach, characterized by ongoing review and adaptation, guarantees the system's continued relevance and effectiveness in a dynamic environment.

Conceptual and Analytical Framework

Figure 3



Research Paradigm

The IPO (Input Output Process) framework was used to analyze the study. The input of the study is the Kaizen practices of a courier company in terms of 5S: sort, set in order, shine, standardize, sustain. The researchers conducted an interview with the courier company employees to determine the perceived benefits and challenges in the implementation of Kaizen practices, the result of which served as a basis for the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data. The output of the study serves as a basis for developing enhanced operations performance improvement programs and initiatives in the courier industry.

Statement of Objectives

This study aimed to determine the Kaizen practices in a courier company. The study was conducted during the semester of the academic year 2024-2025.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the Kaizen practices of the company in terms of the following?
 - a. 5S: Sort, Set in order, Shine. Standardize, and Sustain
 - b. Kanban System
2. What are the perceived benefits of the implementation of Kaizen practices?
3. What are the challenges in the implementation of Kaizen practices?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore and understand the Kaizen practices implemented by a courier company. Qualitative research approach is well suited for investigating organizational practices and processes by collecting and analyzing the respondents' opinions and experiences within a specific context. The study employed interviews with all levels of employees in the company who are involved in the implementation of Kaizen practices. These interviews were guided by a predefined set of open-ended questions to allow respondents to answer based on their complete knowledge, understanding and experiences about the Kaizen practices, perceived benefits, and encountered challenges. Furthermore, observation was conducted to enable researchers to understand how Kaizen practices are integrated into the daily operations of the company. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify recurring themes, patterns and insights related to the kaizen practices of the company in terms of 5s and Kanban system, perceived benefits and challenges in the implementation of Kaizen practices.

Research Environment

The study was conducted at a branch of a courier company located in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya—a first-class municipality that serves as the capital and educational center of the province. Bayombong covers a land area of approximately 163.36 square kilometers, accounting for 3.39% of the province's total land area. According to the 2020 Census, it had a population of 67,714, which represented 13.61% of Nueva Vizcaya's total population and 1.84% of the Cagayan Valley region's population. The municipality benefits from relatively advanced infrastructure and heightened economic activity, which contributes to a growing demand for courier and logistics services. According to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Nueva Vizcaya ranked second in the Philippine Statistics Authority's Provincial Product Account list of the fastest-growing provinces and was recognized as a key contributor to the region's logistics sector.

There are at least 14 courier companies operating in Nueva Vizcaya, providing delivery and logistics services to various municipalities across the province. For the purposes of the study, a courier company branch in Bayombong was selected as the primary site for data collection and analysis. This selection was based on the company's wide regional coverage, competitive pricing, and rapid expansion within the local logistics industry. Furthermore, the courier company maintained a strong presence in both urban and rural areas, making it a relevant and accessible subject for research. Its increasing popularity among online sellers and small to medium-sized enterprises further supported its selection as a representative courier service within the evolving logistics landscape of Nueva Vizcaya.

Research Participants

The participants of the study were all 23 employees of a courier company branch in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. This study targeted all the employees of the branch to provide a comprehensive view of the implementation process and its impact. The selection procedure involved a universal approach, where every employee, regardless of their role or seniority, was invited to participate. This included delivery drivers, customer service representatives, warehouse staff, and management. The study used an interview and an observational method to gather data from each employee, ensuring a thorough analysis of how Kaizen principles are integrated into various aspects of the company's operations. By involving all employees, the study aims to capture diverse perspectives and experiences, thereby enhancing the accuracy and richness of the findings related to the effectiveness and challenges of Kaizen practices. The courier company is a company that provides fast pick-ups and delivery services. The company primarily handles the delivery of parcels.

Due to the company-wide impact of 5S and Kanban systems, this study included all company employees. This approach ensures researchers capture a holistic view by considering every employee's interaction with these practices. Additionally, involving all employees provides diverse perspectives on how well the systems function and helps pinpoint areas where communication or standardization might need improvement.

Research Instrument

The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with employees of the courier company branch in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. This approach combines structured and unstructured elements, offering flexibility while maintaining focus. This allows the researchers to develop relevant and meaningful open-ended questions to cover a range of topics and make sure that important information is not missed about the understanding of Kaizen practices within the company.

The open-ended questions were based on the studies of Adzrie and Vincent (2020), entitled "Assessment on 5S Approach Strategy for Small Medium Enterprise (SME): A Case Study in Sabah," Mojarro-Magaña et al. (2018) entitled "Impact of the Planning from the Kanban System on the Company's Operating Benefits" and Mekonnen (2017) entitled "Assessment of Kaizen Implementation Practices and Challenges in the Case of Tikur Abbay Shoe Share Company."

The interview guide explored topics such as the Kaizen practices in terms of 5s and Kanban system, perceived benefits, challenges, and overall impact. On-site observations were conducted with company approval to gain a firsthand perspective on Kaizen practices. Thematic analysis was used to identify key themes from interviews, exploring topics like implementation methods, perceived benefits, challenges, and overall impact.

Data Gathering Procedure

Upon the validation and approval of the research instrument by the research adviser, panelists and instructor, the researchers distributed the informed consent form (ICF) to the respondents stipulating their consent to participate in the study. Upon the approval of the respondents, the interview was conducted.

Data gathered was then analyzed using thematic analysis for conclusions.

Treatment of Data

To analyze the qualitative data gathered on how the courier company utilizes 5S and Kanban, responses were clustered into themes and interpreted following the six-phase analysis process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), as cited by Byrne (2022). The steps involved in this process are: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a summary of the data gathered from the courier company employees. The collected data was initially analyzed and then organized by the researchers, grouping similar responses from the employees. This approach made it easier for the researchers to identify the company's practices, challenges, and benefits.

Section 1. Kaizen Practices of the courier company in terms of 5S (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Sustain, Standardize)

KAIZEN PRACTICES IN TERMS OF SORT

Responsibility for Sorting. This theme highlights that the primary responsibility for sorting parcels is undertaken by the riders, emphasizing their direct involvement in managing parcels and how sorting is embedded in their daily workflow. This hands-on approach underscores the critical role riders play in ensuring parcels are correctly sorted before delivery. One respondent stated, "*Kaming mga riders yung nagsosort* (We, the riders, are the ones who sort)," reinforcing their active participation in the sorting process and the importance of rider accountability. Riders possess intimate knowledge of their delivery zones, allowing them to sort parcels in a way that optimizes delivery routes, reduces errors, and minimizes delays. This not only improves efficiency but also strengthens accountability for accurate and secure deliveries. The responsibility of sorting aligns with Moore and Newsome's (2018) findings that riders spend significant time organizing parcels and planning routes. The participants' responses, which indicated that they were directly responsible for sorting parcels prior to delivery, aligned with the researchers' observations. This consistency between observed practices and participant responses highlights the active role riders play not only in delivering parcels but also in organizing and managing the flow of packages.

Location-Based Sorting and Delivery System. This theme highlights the company's systematic approach to sorting parcels, where riders scan and sort based on geographic locations, such as streets or *puroks*, with designated zones for each rider. One respondent explained, "*Chinecheck namin yung area na nakalagay sa parcel tapos binibigay namin sa naka assign* (We check the areas indicated on each parcel, then give it to the rider assigned to that area)," demonstrating the use of zonal sorting in daily operations. This method ensures parcels reach the correct location and allows riders to focus on specific areas, improving delivery accuracy and reducing confusion. The use of designated zones emphasizes clear organization and efficiency. In Gras's (2021) study, parcels were also grouped by destination to streamline distribution, aligning with participants' accounts of sorting by area and assigning specific riders. Researchers observed the same process at the branch, where riders formed a circle after unloading to distribute parcels by zone, confirming that this system improves accuracy and minimizes time spent locating items.

Handling High-Value and Fragile Items. A significant number of respondents emphasized the careful handling of high-value and fragile items. As one rider explained, "*Sinisiguro namin naka separate siya at nadedeliver na agad* (We make sure they are separated and delivered immediately)." Riders separate fragile items during sorting and delivery, placing them in separate sections or crates to ensure safe handling, reduce damage risk, and enhance customer satisfaction. This aligns with Uzir et al. (2021), who stressed proper handling as essential for customer satisfaction and brand reputation. Delivery staff must also show empathy and reassure customers if damage occurs. Participants echoed this, confirming fragile and high-value parcels are carefully handled. Researchers observed that these responses matched actual branch practices, highlighting riders' commitment to safe handling and the importance of consistent operations in maintaining service quality and customer trust.

Handling of Return Parcels. Persons assigned to return-to-sender parcels described a clear process where items are promptly scanned and delivered the same day. One rider explained, "*Binibigay sa kin iniscan ko siya within the day then ideliver na siya within the day* (It is given to me, then I scan it within the day, then it will be delivered within the same day)." This shows that return parcel handling is a priority, with specific personnel managing the task to ensure prompt and efficient processing. A dedicated team of specialized personnel manages returns, efficiently handling scanning, sorting, and timely delivery for a quick and streamlined process. This aligns with Banck and Ferguson (2022), who describe a system where return parcels are unloaded, assigned, and processed by responsible staff according to specific procedures. The respondents in this study supported this approach, reporting that return-to-sender parcels are separated and assigned to specific personnel for proper handling. Researchers observed that participant responses matched actual branch practices, confirming that returns are managed by designated staff. This alignment highlights the specialized nature of return handling and its role in supporting efficiency and a positive customer experience.

KAIZEN PRACTICES IN TERMS OF SET IN ORDER

Workspace Zoning. This theme highlights the way delivery riders divide their work area into specific zones for different teams. This method helps them sort parcels more easily and work more efficiently. One rider shared that their hub is divided into two groups: Team Baba, which handles areas like

Bonfal, and Team Gitna, which covers SMU, District IV, Don Mariano, and Salvacion. In the workspace, Team Baba stays at the back while Team Gitna works at the front. This setup shows a clear and organized way of arranging the teams, where each rider has a specific spot inside the hub. It also follows the idea explained by Theo (2023), who said that zoning means dividing workspaces into areas that serve different purposes, such as group work, individual tasks, or rest. This is helpful in flexible workplaces where workers don't have assigned desks. Both the riders' answers and the researchers' own observations showed that this kind of setup helps make parcel sorting faster and more organized. By having separate zones, riders are less likely to make mistakes like mixing up parcels. It also helps them know exactly where to go and where to place their parcels, which saves time and makes the process smoother. Overall, zoning supports a workplace that is clear, consistent, and always improving..

Optimized Space Management and Accessibility. This theme focuses on how riders use their workspace efficiently and make tools easy to access. One rider shared that they follow specific instructions for setting up items like PCs, shelves, and crates, which are clearly labeled (e.g., RTS for Return to Sender, damage for damaged items). This shows how the space is arranged to support fast and organized sorting. The findings are supported by Singh et al. (2023), who explain that having an organized workstation, with unnecessary items removed and essentials properly arranged, can improve productivity. Similarly, Titu et al. (2010) found in a case study that using the 5S method—where each tool or item has a set place—makes work easier and more efficient. The researchers observed that riders apply these principles by using every part of the hub effectively. They sort parcels into sacks, separate high-value items, and place RTS parcels in labeled crates. This keeps important deliveries from getting mixed up and helps riders find items faster. Tools like scanners are also used efficiently, allowing for quick parcel updates. Overall, this practice shows that riders treat their sorting area as a well-organized work zone. Everything has a clear place and purpose, which reduces confusion, saves time, and supports a smoother delivery process.

Defining Roles in Organization and Maintenance. This theme explains how clear roles are given to certain people to keep the workplace clean, organized, and running smoothly. In this setup, the supervisor and admin are mainly responsible for overseeing the organization and maintenance of the space. One rider mentioned, "The supervisor then delegates it to us," showing that tasks are assigned in an orderly way, allowing riders to focus on their own duties and know who to approach for any concerns. This clear structure helps ensure that no task is missed and that everyone understands their role. The supervisor checks that everything is in place and that the workspace is ready for the day. This system follows what Roth et al. (2017) emphasized—clear authority should match clear responsibilities. Similarly, Duodu et al. (2019) found that employees value good organizing practices, which help businesses with daily operations. Researchers observed that before riders start sorting parcels, the supervisor leads a team huddle where important reminders and assignments are given. This daily routine keeps everyone on the same page and helps set a professional and organized tone for the workday. By doing this regularly, the organization avoids confusion, builds consistency, and encourages teamwork. In short, giving clear roles and responsibilities—especially to leaders like the supervisor—helps maintain order, improves team coordination, and supports smooth daily operations.

KAIZEN PRACTICES IN TERMS OF SHINE

Shared Responsibility for Cleanliness. The practice of shared responsibility for cleanliness reflects a collective approach to maintaining a clean work environment, fostering a culture of teamwork and accountability where both assigned personnel and voluntary efforts contribute. This dual structure, through designated roles and proactive employee behavior, ensures consistency, responsiveness, and a shared commitment to keeping the workspace clean. One response noted, "*Lahat naman kami naglilinis. Nagtutulungan. Kapag may basura nililinis aga* (We are all cleaning up and helping each other. If there is trash, we clean it up right away)," reflecting employees' view of cleanliness as a collective responsibility and their awareness of its impact. Moreover, two respondents shared, "*May mga nakaassign na personnel, pagkatapos namin magsort at wala na lahat ng parcel dito naglilinis na sila* (There are assigned personnel, they start cleaning up after we finish sorting and there are no more parcels left here)," indicating a clear structure in cleaning duties alongside willingness to go beyond assigned tasks. This approach shows employees understand their roles and are motivated to contribute proactively, reinforcing a workplace culture that values initiative and adaptability. Shared responsibility for cleanliness supports operational efficiency and enhances morale and accountability. The responses are supported by Pyrek (2020), whose shared accountability model in healthcare settings led to a 40% reduction in infections and improved employee awareness and satisfaction, resonating with the respondents' emphasis on collective responsibility. The researchers observed that participants' reports on cleanliness and shared responsibility were consistently reflected in workplace practices, with employees actively maintaining the sorting area, disposing of waste promptly, and supporting one another, alongside assigned cleaning staff ensuring systematic upkeep. This alignment highlights a workplace culture where order is maintained through structured tasks and individual commitment to a clean, efficient environment.

Clean and Orderly Workspace Management. This theme covers various strategies for tidying and organizing the workspace, including employees taking responsibility for designated areas and performing tasks like sweeping floors, tidying shared spaces, and systematically managing parcels to maintain a clutter-free, efficient environment. One respondent shared, "*After nila mag dispatched, magwawalis yung admin. Tamang pagsako ng parcel nila, mga balik, mga hindi nadeliver, mga ideddeliver bukas* (After dispatch, the admin sweeps the floor. They also properly sack the parcels—those returned, not delivered, and to be delivered tomorrow)." Another noted, "*Marami, parang paglilinis ganon, pagaayos ng mga parcel, iayos sa tamang lalagyan* (There are many, like sweeping, arranging parcels, and putting them in the right place)." These statements highlight the multiple ways employees contribute to tidiness, emphasizing order, organization, and accessibility in the workspace. Maintaining a tidy workspace prevents disorder and promotes operational flow and a healthier environment, enhancing productivity and job satisfaction. This aligns with Duru and Shimawua's (2018) study on Edo City Transport Services, which found that a clean, orderly workspace boosts employee morale and performance by ensuring spaces are clean, tidy, and arranged for easy movement and comfort. The researchers observed that participants' responses matched actual practices, with employees sweeping floors, sorting parcels by status—returns, undelivered, and next-day deliveries—and placing them in designated areas. These consistent routines demonstrate how tidiness and organization are maintained through practical, task-oriented strategies embedded in daily workflows.

KAIZEN PRACTICES IN TERMS OF STANDARDIZE

Responsibility for Standardization. This theme focuses on the important role of supervisors in creating and maintaining standard processes in the workplace. Supervisors are responsible for making sure that everyone follows the same procedures, which helps keep the work organized, consistent, and efficient. One rider shared, “Our supervisor is the one who gives instruction,” showing that the supervisor leads and monitors how tasks are done. Standardization means having clear rules or steps that everyone follows. This helps workers know exactly what to do, reduces confusion, and improves teamwork and work quality. When everyone follows the same process, tasks are done more smoothly and consistently. Grant (2020) supports this idea, explaining that standardization involves agreed-upon rules that help ensure services or products meet certain quality levels. This matches the riders’ experience, where following the supervisor’s instructions leads to better and more organized work. The researchers also saw this in action. Supervisors were observed giving instructions, checking on sorting tasks, and making sure procedures—like parcel arrangement and cleaning—were followed. This shows that supervisors play a key role not just in planning the work but also in keeping daily operations consistent and efficient. Overall, assigning the responsibility of standardization to supervisors helps build a structured and dependable work environment where tasks are done correctly and consistently every day.

Continuous Monitoring and Standardized Procedures. This theme highlights the organization’s strong focus on using standard operating procedures (SOPs) and regular supervisor-led meetings to make sure all tasks are done in a consistent and organized way. One rider explained, “You just need to follow our standard delivery procedure. We have SOPs in place,” showing how these rules guide their daily work. These SOPs cover important steps like how parcels are shipped and delivered, with flowcharts showing each part of the process—from handling seller orders to final delivery. There are also specific guides posted in the workplace for tasks like handling high-value parcels, checking 9 AM deliveries, identifying problem parcels, and managing returns. These clear instructions help workers do their jobs quickly and correctly. Yurii et al. (2021) support these findings by stating that using standardized procedures can improve customer service, help employees work better, and make business operations more efficient. These benefits also help businesses grow and compete in the market by building trust and ensuring smooth processes. The researchers observed that riders followed these SOPs closely, proving that standard procedures are a regular part of their routine. Supervisors also held regular meetings to check performance, review procedures, and address issues. These efforts show how the organization maintains consistency by combining clear guidelines with active supervision. In summary, the use of SOPs and continuous monitoring helps create a well-organized, efficient workplace where everyone understands their tasks and performs them in a consistent way.

Technology-Based Task Coordination. This theme highlights how digital tools—like mobile apps and scanners—help organize, assign, and track tasks in the workplace. These technologies improve coordination, help finish tasks on time, reduce mistakes, and make communication easier. They also support standard procedures by giving employees a consistent way to follow company rules. One rider shared, “We use Messenger, DingTalk, and our company’s app,” showing that these digital tools are part of their daily work. Messenger and DingTalk are used for communication and teamwork, while the company’s own app helps with tracking parcels, checking assignments, and following procedures. DingTalk is a platform that helps teams communicate, collaborate, and manage tasks. The company’s app is designed specifically for logistics work. It allows workers to track parcels in real time, see what tasks are still pending, and follow standard company processes. The study by Izzah et al. (2021) supports these findings, showing that technology is very useful in logistics, especially for tracking parcels and improving task coordination. In this study, participants use technology to keep workflows smooth and consistent. Researchers also saw that digital tools were used regularly to check progress, assign tasks, and help teams stay on schedule. These tools made it easier to apply company procedures and reduced the chance of errors. Overall, both the researchers and participants agree that using technology is essential to keeping the workplace organized, consistent, and efficient.

KAIZEN PRACTICES IN TERMS OF SUSTAIN

Leadership and Oversight. This theme highlights the crucial role of supervisors and administrative staff in consistently maintaining sustain practices within the delivery workspace. One respondent said, “*Araw-araw yun chinecheck ng supervisor namin at ineensure ni admin na kompleto lahat buong araw* (Our supervisor checks on us daily, and the admins ensure everything is completed throughout the day),” showing leadership’s key role in accountability. Another shared, “*Ineensure ng mga admin na bago kami umalis sinasabi nila mga duties and responsibilities namin* (The admins ensure that before we leave, they tell us our duties and responsibilities),” demonstrating clear direction and oversight. This leadership fosters expectations, monitors performance, and builds responsibility, aligning with the Sustain principle. Eduzor (2024) supports that strong leadership shapes culture and performance. Researchers observed supervisors actively monitoring workplace conditions and reminding staff of tasks, confirming engaged leadership that cultivates discipline. The Systems and Processes theme reflects organized routines promoting cleanliness, consistency, and order, such as system-assigned tasks and posted checklists. One respondent noted, “*Naka-assign sa system. May checklist naman nakadikit sa mga board* (There are assignments in the system, and a checklist posted on boards),” while another said, “*May designated time lang din, eto oras ng arrival, eto oras ng sorting, eto oras ng labas niyo at may report kami pagkatapos ng araw* (There is a designated time for everything: arrival, sorting, dispatch, and we have an end-of-day report).” These practices ensure clear communication, discipline, and accountability. Entirely Safe (2022) supports that effective systems improve efficiency and decision-making. Researchers saw posted checklists and flowcharts, consistent task timing, and clear guides, confirming system-based assignments and routines are actively followed, supporting sustained operational success.

Systems and Processes. This theme reflects the structured routines and organized procedures implemented within the branch to promote cleanliness, consistency, and operational order. Respondents identified various systematized practices, such as posted checklists and system-based task assignments. One respondent stated, “*Naka-assign sa system. May checklist naman nakadikit sa mga board* (There are assignments in the system, and there is a checklist posted on the boards),” while another shared, “*May designated time lang din, eto oras ng arrival, eto oras ng sorting, eto oras ng labas niyo at may report kami pagkatapos ng araw* (There is a designated time for everything: arrival, sorting, dispatch, and we have an end-of-the-day report).” These responses show how the organization embeds operational structure into daily routines through system-generated assignments and visual tools to ensure

clarity and accountability. Time slots for each phase of the workday help streamline operations, while end-of-day reports reinforce responsibility. Entirely Safe (2022) supports this, emphasizing that systems are essential for improving efficiency, quality, and communication, ultimately contributing to long-term organizational performance. Observations confirmed that these systems were actively implemented, with posted checklists, time-bound sorting routines, and a visible delivery process flowchart guiding employees. These tools help standardize operations and create a predictable work rhythm, ensuring that system-based procedures are consistently followed in daily tasks.

Motivation and Discipline. This theme emphasizes the role of structured consequences—both rewards and penalties—in promoting accountability, discipline, and compliance with sustain practices. Riders explained that cleaning and organization tasks are not optional but mandated through clear rules and scheduled routines to ensure consistent order across the workplace. As one participant stated, “*Mandated kasi yan, may mga rewards and punishments kami para dyan. So technically, kailangan talaga naming ifollow* (That's mandated. We have rewards and punishments for it, so we really need to follow it),” showing how motivation is reinforced through a balance of incentives and discipline. Another added, “*Kapag hindi kami nakapag ayos may penalty kasi kami, kaya dapat after namin magsort magkalat, malinis at maayos yung workplace* (If we don't tidy up, we have a penalty, so after we sort and scatter things, we need to clean and organize the workplace),” highlighting the importance of discipline in maintaining cleanliness. This balance ensures employees remain engaged and uphold workplace standards, supporting smooth operations. Kumari et al. (2021) further support this approach, showing how reward systems positively influence employee motivation and job performance. Researchers observed that riders consistently maintained their stations after sorting, with a displayed tarp labeled “Delivery Penalty Remarks – Valid for Dispute” outlining penalties for specific infractions. This visible reminder reinforced expectations, and riders were seen complying even without direct supervision, demonstrating how structured consequences foster accountability and consistency.

1.2 Kanban System

KAIZEN PRACTICES IN TERMS OF KANBAN SYSTEM

Visualizing Workflow. This theme focuses on how visual tools help improve communication, task management, and clarity in the workplace. The company uses systems like digital trackers, posters, tarpaulins, and mobile devices to show the progress of tasks from start to finish. These tools help team members understand their responsibilities and access real-time information easily. One respondent explained, “It is all in our system. We monitor every movement of our parcels,” showing how digital tools are used for tracking. Another rider mentioned, “The visuals are the instructions we do every day. The charts show who does what,” emphasizing how posters and charts guide daily tasks and clarify team roles. These visual tools help workers stay focused, organized, and better coordinated. They reduce delays and avoid misunderstandings by making task instructions and updates clear to everyone. Somanath et al. (2024) support this idea, stating that visualization tools give important insights, especially in complex environments. Similarly, Triana and Beatrix (2019) found that using cellphones, posters, and tarpaulins helps workers stay informed, manage tasks, and avoid delays. The researchers observed that employees regularly used visual aids—like posters and digital systems—to track progress, follow instructions, and know their roles. These tools helped create a smoother and more organized work process. Overall, the study shows that visualizing workflow improves teamwork, keeps operations clear, and supports consistent and efficient work.

Limiting Work in Progress. This theme highlights the practice of limiting work in progress (WIP), a key part of the Kanban System, which helps keep work efficient and employees focused. By controlling how much work is taken on at once, workers can prioritize current tasks and avoid delays from handling too many items. One respondent said, “We only take out what we can handle,” showing the importance of managing task volume. Another added, “We have a quota, and the items we scan determine how many we deliver today,” illustrating how set limits help organize daily work and prioritize tasks. Limiting WIP helps teams finish tasks more reliably, reduce bottlenecks, and maintain steady progress. This makes work more predictable, supports consistent productivity, and helps meet deadlines. Geeks for Geeks (2024) explains that WIP limits are important in Kanban because they improve workflow, increase efficiency, and help identify problems. By setting limits and visualizing work, teams can work more smoothly and productively. Researchers observed that workers follow WIP limits through quotas and scanning systems, managing how many items they handle each day. This allows them to focus on manageable amounts of work, prioritize better, and avoid delays. Overall, limiting WIP promotes efficient use of resources and smoother workflow. The researchers agree that this practice is actively used and helps maintain control over tasks and workflow efficiency.

Continuous Flow and Efficiency. This theme highlights continuous flow, which means keeping tasks moving smoothly and without interruption through all stages—from parcel arrival, sorting, to dispatch. This steady movement helps keep operations organized and ensures deliveries happen on time. Continuous flow improves overall efficiency, time management, and service quality. By reducing waiting times and completing tasks like unloading, sorting, and dispatching in order, courier riders can maximize productivity within limited working hours. One respondent stated, “The order in which I scan is the same order as how I organize it in a sack,” showing that organizing tasks systematically reduces handling time, prevents errors, and makes the workflow faster and more efficient. Sotnik et al. (2024) support this by explaining how agile methods like Kanban help improve task flow, reduce bottlenecks, and optimize operations, leading to better efficiency and productivity. This matches the respondents' experiences with timely deliveries and smoother task progression. Researchers observed this continuous flow during field visits. After supervisors held team meetings to assign tasks and give reminders, riders started work promptly and moved through their tasks without confusion. Using tools like scanners and labeled crates, along with clearly divided work zones, helped avoid delays and unnecessary movement. The researchers see this as a sign of strong team discipline and a mature system. The consistent use of these practices, along with good teamwork, shows that continuous flow is well-established in daily operations. This organized flow not only increases productivity but also reflects a workplace culture focused on efficiency and operational awareness.

Task Prioritization and Flexibility. This theme highlights how riders adapt and make strategic decisions to manage deliveries efficiently. Prioritizing tasks is important in a fast-paced courier setting to keep work flowing smoothly. One rider mentioned, “We prioritize the bulky items first, especially the

larger ones,” showing a strategy to maximize space. Another said, “Pending deliveries are prioritized,” meaning urgent tasks are handled first to avoid delays. Flexibility is also shown in how riders support each other when someone is absent. A participant explained, “We are responsible for our assigned barangay. If a teammate is absent, we take over their area and deliver their parcels.” This practice ensures continuous service without disruption. These findings are supported by Melhem (2023), who stated that prioritizing tasks improves employee performance and that having clear guidelines helps workers decide what to focus on first. Ganesh (2023) also noted that cross-trained employees increase flexibility and help organizations manage workforce shortages or sudden demands. These ideas align with the Kanban system’s goal of improving workflow and adapting to changes. Researchers observed that riders consistently prioritized larger and pending deliveries. They organized parcels to optimize routes and ensure timely deliveries. When teammates were absent, others took over their routes smoothly, showing strong teamwork and flexibility within the group.

Communication and Coordination. This theme highlights the importance of effective communication and coordination in the workplace, emphasizing their integral role in maintaining operational workflow, minimizing errors, and ensuring overall efficiency. Respondents shared that communication—through memos, direct messages, and meetings—is essential for relaying updates from supervisors and informing receivers about parcel movements. As two participants noted, “*Usually memo lang yung binibigay samin, nirerely lang samin ng supervisor* (We usually receive memos, which our supervisor relays to us)” and “*Iniinstruct lang kami palagi ng supervisor kaya may meeting* (We are always being instructed by the supervisor, that’s why there’s a meeting),” showing that established communication channels are effectively utilized. Another rider added, “*Sakin bago ako umalis dito sa hub, itetext ko na yung mga receivers na may paparating na parcel* (For me, before I leave the hub, I will text the receivers that a parcel is on the way),” indicating proactive communication with customers. These responses underscore the value employees place on timely and clear information sharing to maintain workflow efficiency. This aligns with the findings of Ylitalo (2023), which emphasized that enhanced communication, cooperation, and coordination significantly reduce delays and improve delivery success. Observations confirmed these practices, with supervisors conducting morning briefings to align riders, and riders using their phones to scan parcels and inform recipients. This consistency between reported and observed behavior illustrates how effective communication and coordination are embedded into daily operations, supporting a well-organized and responsive delivery process.

Section 2. Perceived Benefits of Kaizen Practices

Improved Organization and Efficiency. This theme highlights the significant impact of sorting, organization, and visual tools on improving the speed and accuracy of parcel deliveries. Respondents consistently emphasized that systematic sorting, especially by location such as barangay or purok, allows for faster and more efficient deliveries. One rider shared, “*Pag maayos yung pag sosort mo mas mabilis talaga yung pag deliver* (When the sorting is organized, deliveries are much faster),” while another noted, “*Mas napadali trabaho pag naka segregate ng maayos yung mga parcel per barangay* (It becomes easier to deliver parcels when they are properly segregated by barangay).” These practices reduce delays, minimize route complexity, save fuel, and streamline the overall workflow. Another respondent added that organized sorting makes it easier to find parcels for pick-up, saving time and improving efficiency. The consistent use of sorting practices also allows riders to start and finish earlier, as noted in, “*Maaga kami makakasimula at matatapos kase lagi namin ginagawa and proper sorting ng parcel na per purok.*” The use of visual aids was similarly highlighted, with one rider stating, “*Mas mabilis makapagdeliver kasi nakikita nila yung mga nakapaskil mas mareremind sila sa mga dapat nilang gawin,*” suggesting that posted guides and reminders reinforce task clarity and consistency. These responses align with Mehta and Dave’s (2024) study, which emphasized the 5S methodology—particularly sorting—as key to enhancing service quality and operational efficiency, and with the Kanban system’s role in improving workflow through visual management. Observations confirmed these findings: riders sorted parcels by barangay, followed consistent routes, used posted standard operating procedures, and began deliveries earlier due to quicker preparation. These practices demonstrate how Kaizen principles such as 5S and Kanban positively influence operational performance by promoting organization, consistency, and time efficiency in a competitive courier service environment.

Process Clarity and Defined Roles. The respondents indicated that the Kanban system is an effective tool for communicating workflow and responsibilities, primarily through visual aids that serve as daily reminders of proper delivery procedures. One respondent shared, “*Araw-araw namin itong nakikita about sa tamang paraan ng pagdedeliver, kaya araw-araw rin kaming napapaalalahanan,*” highlighting how frequent exposure to these visuals reinforces standard practices. Others noted that standardized processes reduce confusion and prevent task overlap, as seen in comments like “*Hindi na kami malilito sa proseso ng trabaho namin kase may sinusundan kaming standard*” and “*Wala nang pagsasapawan sa trabaho dahil may kanya-kanya na kaming assigned na lugar,*” showing that clear role assignments contribute to a smoother, more organized workflow. The Kanban system enhances task clarity by visually displaying what needs to be done and who is responsible, helping employees stay focused and consistent. This aligns with Damij and Damij’s (2021) study, which emphasized that Kanban visual tools streamline task allocation and operational flow by reducing reliance on verbal instructions and increasing task visibility. These findings were further supported by the researchers’ observations, which confirmed that visual materials like charts and posters were prominently displayed in the hub. Riders interacted with these daily, using them as practical guides to follow standard delivery steps, ultimately ensuring efficient, well-coordinated operations.

Workplace Orderliness. The respondents emphasized that the implementation of 5S and Kanban systems has significantly improved workplace organization and visual appeal, fostering a cleaner, clutter-free environment that enhances productivity. One respondent shared, “*Mas maganda na siya tingnan mas organized na siya, hindi na siya magulo* (The workplace is better now, it is more beautiful to look at, it is more organized, and it is not messy),” while another noted, “*Kapag malinis maaliwalas tignan* (If it is clean then it looks more pleasant),” reflecting how visual cleanliness contributes to a more pleasant and functional workspace. Another added, “*Gumaan sa paningin at gumaan yung trabaho* (The workplace is better in the eyes and the work got easier),” emphasizing how physical order can reduce mental strain and make tasks more manageable. These responses suggest that the 5S and Kanban systems positively impact both the aesthetic and operational aspects of the workplace, leading to easier navigation and increased efficiency. This aligns with Adzrie and Vincent’s (2020) findings that the 5S methodology improves organizational cleanliness and workflow through systematic

organization. The researchers' observations confirmed these perceptions, noting that parcels were neatly arranged in designated areas, with delivery equipment and administrative materials stored in clearly defined spaces, reinforcing the role of 5S and Kanban in creating a structured, efficient, and visually appealing work environment.

Employee Well-being and Job Satisfaction. The respondents perceived that the implementation of 5S and Kanban systems positively impacted employee well-being and job satisfaction by creating a more organized, efficient, and motivating work environment. A respondent shared, "*Mabilis kang matapos at the same time may oras ka pa sa pamilya mo* (We finish quickly and will have more time for our family)," suggesting that operational efficiency contributes to better work-life balance. Another noted, "*Mas mabilis pag maayos talaga at mas satisfied ako sa trabaho kapag ganun* (It is faster when everything is organized and I feel more satisfied with my work that way)," while others emphasized that a clean, orderly workplace boosts motivation and satisfaction. One rider said, "*Mas satisfy ako nung meron mga visual aids kasi mas napapadali yung Gawain* (I am more satisfied when there are visual aids because they make the tasks easier)," highlighting how Kanban's visual tools enhance clarity and reduce task-related stress. These responses collectively suggest that Kaizen practices not only streamline workflow but also foster a more pleasant and empowering work environment, leading to improved morale, reduced stress, and greater engagement. This aligns with Ichdan's (2024) findings that Kaizen boosts productivity and employee engagement through process efficiency and active participation. The researchers' observations confirmed these insights, noting that riders departed earlier due to efficient sorting, returned home sooner, and consistently maintained clean, organized workspaces. Visual aids posted in key areas further supported smooth workflows and reinforced a culture of clarity and satisfaction, underscoring the role of 5S and Kanban in enhancing both operational performance and employee well-being.

Section 3. Challenges in the Implementation of Kaizen Practices

Workforce Performance. Workforce performance is a major challenge in implementing Kaizen practices. Almost half of the respondents reported issues related to employee behavior and attitude, such as late arrivals, lack of discipline, and insufficient knowledge and skills. These observations were confirmed by the researchers, who noted that employees are crucial in Kaizen because they are involved in daily tasks, can identify problems, suggest improvements, and help sustain changes through active participation. One rider commented on the challenge of sustaining practices: "Sometimes, we arrive late which causes problems. If you arrive late, then you'll finish and arrive late here." Researchers observed that late arrivals made it difficult for some riders to follow routines or attend meetings, and other riders had to cover their tasks to avoid delays. Although teamwork helped maintain operations, this disrupted assigned roles and showed a lack of discipline, which contradicts Kaizen's goal of consistent routine and order. This highlights the need for better time management and punctuality to support long-term operational consistency. Issues were also seen with the "shine" practice, related to workplace cleanliness. A rider said, "Some riders don't know how to clean up their mess, so they just leave it behind." Researchers witnessed some untidy areas, indicating a lack of responsibility among some riders. While riders might be rushing to deliver parcels, this shows the need to reinforce cleanliness and orderliness in the workplace. These recurring challenges underline the importance of human capital to organizational success. Addressing these issues requires effective human resource management strategies, such as increasing employee engagement and fostering a positive work environment. This focus on human capital aligns with Mazzocato et al. (2016), who emphasized that employee engagement is key for successful Kaizen implementation. Their findings also highlight that lack of understanding and support among employees can hinder improvement efforts, which is consistent with the challenges found in this study.

Operational Challenges. Issues such as mishandling parcels and limited space for large parcels were frequently mentioned by participants. One respondent noted, "When it comes to large parcels, they take up a lot of space and slow down our sorting and delivery process." This statement highlights how insufficient space and poor handling of bulky parcels create bottlenecks, slowing down sorting, increasing employee stress, and reducing efficiency in meeting delivery deadlines. The researchers also observed similar issues during their visits, noting that the lack of adequate storage for large parcels led to disorganized sorting areas. This disorganization disrupted workflow, caused longer processing times, and lowered overall productivity. These findings suggest that operational inefficiencies significantly affect the smooth flow of work and employee performance. For example, misplaced or missing parcels cause delays and frustration for both employees and customers. To address these problems, better training, clearer procedures, and advanced technology are needed to improve the sorting and delivery process. Supporting these results, Martinez and Berna (2023) emphasize the combined use of Six Sigma's data-driven methods and Kaizen's continuous improvements as effective ways to solve operational challenges. Similarly, Martin and Imai (1986) argue that many operational problems can be prevented by applying systematic techniques like 5S (sort, set in order, shine, standardize, sustain). These approaches align with the study's findings, underscoring the importance of organized procedures and active employee involvement in overcoming everyday inefficiencies.

External Factors. External factors, especially weather conditions like rain, have been identified as significant challenges affecting operational processes. Respondents noted that rain makes cleaning difficult, causing delays before work can begin and reducing overall efficiency. One participant stated, "When it rains, it's hard to clean. Because of this, we get delayed every morning. Instead of arriving or heading out, we have to clean up first." This illustrates how weather disrupts morning routines and delays the start of operations. The researchers' observations confirmed that adverse weather conditions often interfere with regular workflows, leading to slower operations. This shows how external environmental factors can unexpectedly affect employee productivity and the smooth running of daily tasks. Supporting these findings, Fekadu et al. (2020) emphasize that unpredictable weather and other external conditions can cause significant operational delays. Their study highlights that without flexible and proactive strategies to manage these disruptions, the effectiveness of continuous improvement practices like Kaizen may be weakened.

Human Resource Management. A significant portion of respondents perceived that human resource management plays a critical role in addressing employee tardiness, compliance, and communication gaps. Many emphasized the importance of promoting accountability through strategies like regular supervisor guidance and small penalties for lateness. One respondent shared, "*Dito sa kompanya, pagdating sa pagiging late, may penalty na piso* (For

the company, when it comes to being late, they impose a one-peso fine for every late),” highlighting a simple but consistent tactic that encourages punctuality. Researchers observed that such enforcement made employees more mindful of attendance, supporting the view that even minor disciplinary actions can positively influence behavior and reduce workflow disruptions. Another respondent noted, “*Sila yung nag-eexplain sa mga bagay na hindi namin maintindihan tapos sa mga dapat at hindi dapat gawin* (They (supervisors) explain the things we don’t understand and what should or shouldn’t be done),” a point confirmed during observations where supervisors were seen guiding new employees on app usage and visual tools. This approach not only improves clarity and onboarding but also benefits current employees struggling with certain procedures, ensuring alignment with operational standards. These findings suggest that addressing human resource challenges directly improves operations by minimizing delays and enhancing compliance. Organizations that proactively foster responsibility and clarity among employees are more likely to maintain smooth workflows and long-term improvement. This supports Tidd and Bessant’s (2020) assertion that encouraging employee participation in resolving operational issues is essential to innovation and the success of continuous improvement practices like Kaizen.

Strategic Operational Improvement. More than half of the respondents reported adopting strategies to improve operational efficiency. These practices focus on increasing workforce accountability, addressing bottlenecks during busy times, and ensuring accurate sorting of items. One participant said, “When we have late team members, we are the ones who work on their tasks,” showing the team’s shared responsibility in keeping operations running smoothly. The frequent mention of these strategies highlights the importance of teamwork and following procedures to solve operational problems. The use of visual tools, like those in the Kanban System, helps communicate standards and maintain steady workflows. These findings align with Martinez and Berna’s (2023) study, which emphasizes how small changes in workflow, clear communication, and accountability can improve efficiency and reduce delays. This shows that ongoing improvements in procedures are key to enhancing overall operational performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made:

First, the courier company implements Kaizen through various practices under each 5S principle. For example, assigning someone to be responsible for sorting, handling of high-value items and fragile items, location-based sorting and delivery system are all part of the “sort” practices. To ensure efficiency under “set in order,” the courier company uses workspace zoning, role-specific station assignments, and dynamic task rotation. “shine” practices focus on shared responsibility and routine cleaning integration, while “standardize” practices emphasize technology-based coordination and continuous monitoring. Lastly, the “sustain” practice is upheld through shared responsibility, and the provision of necessary tools and resources. These Kaizen practices in terms of 5S foster an environment in the courier company where tasks are performed more efficiently, with fewer delays and errors. A cleaner, more orderly, and disciplined workplace benefits workers, which increases productivity, job satisfaction, and fosters a culture of continuous improvement.

The Kaizen practices within the courier company, specifically in terms of the Kanban System include visualizing workflow, visual workflow tools, limiting work in progress, continuous flow and efficiency, task prioritization and flexibility, and communication and coordination. These Kaizen practices in terms of Kanban System streamline operations while ensuring a responsive and collaborative workflow.

Second, the perceived benefits of the implementation of Kaizen practices in the courier company include improved organization and efficiency, enhanced process clarity and defined roles, increased workplace orderliness, and boosted employee well-being and job satisfaction. These perceived benefits demonstrate how the Kaizen approach optimizes operational processes while positively impacting the work environment. Specifically, the implementation of Kaizen practices has resulted in greater operational efficiency, clearer processes, better organization within the workplace, and higher employee satisfaction.

Third, workforce performance issues, operational challenges, and external factors like environmental conditions occasionally hinder the smooth application of Kaizen practices. These challenges highlight the need for continuous assessment and adjustments in order to sustain the improvements brought about by Kaizen practices. The courier company addresses these challenges by using strategies such as human resource management and strategic operational improvements. These strategies concentrate on improving workforce capabilities, streamlining processes, and adapting to external factors to maintain operational efficiency and guarantee the sustainability of Kaizen practices. By taking proactive steps to resolve these challenges, the courier company demonstrates its commitment to continuous improvement and operational excellence.

Recommendations

To Managers

1. Fully implement the Kaizen approach across all levels of the courier company to drive continuous improvement, enhance operational efficiency, and maintain a competitive advantage in the industry.
2. Continue reinforcing daily briefings and operational reminders to maintain employee accountability and ensure alignment with company procedures.

- Invest in improving the handling and storage of large parcels to address operational bottlenecks. This could include redesigning the sorting area to better accommodate bulky items and providing specialized equipment or tools for handling heavy parcels. By addressing space constraints and inefficiencies, the company can reduce delays, minimize employee stress, and enhance delivery performance.

To Employees

- Engage in peer support by helping new or struggling co-workers learn effective practices and maintain operational standards.
- Riders continue following the location-based sorting and delivery system, as this method has proven to improve efficiency and delivery speed. Consistently adhering to these sorting practices ensures accurate and timely deliveries.

To Future Researchers

- The researchers propose that future studies examine Kaizen practices in other service-based industries such as healthcare, education, or finance, to gain broader insights into how Kaizen is adapted across various industries.
- This study was primarily qualitative in nature. Hence, the researchers further propose that future studies use quantitative methods, such as collecting numerical data through surveys, experiments, or performance metrics, to measure the impact of Kaizen practices on the business performance of the courier industry.

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