

INVESTIGATION OF EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION ABOUT LEAN IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

Lean implementation and its sustainability are strongly linked with the organizational culture and working environment especially how employees interact with each other's and what's their attitude towards their jobs. Literature reveals that employee's behaviour towards lean implementation is controversial; some perceives this positive and others take this negative. This study aims at investigating varying employees' perceptions towards lean because of their position at work. Very commonly known lean tool 'Kaizen' (Continuous Improvement) has been selected for this purpose where data has been collected through a questionnaire ($\alpha=0.85$) from four textile organizations (N=339; white collars and blue collars employees working at the shop floor); level and maturity of lean implementation in each organization was done before conducting the study. It has been concluded that white collar work group perceptions about Kaizen implementation are more positive than blue collar employees. Moreover, employees with the lowest positive perception are likely to be more dissatisfied with their jobs. The study also identified the factors which contribute towards the development of negative perceptions. However, the study is limited to one lean tool (Kaizen) and its implementation in textile sector. The results of the study provide opportunity to understand perceptions about lean implementation and their relationship with job satisfaction and how perceptions can be improved for the purpose of achieving higher performance through rapid lean implementation.

KEYWORDS: *Lean Implementation, Kaizen, Employees' Perceptions, Change Management*

INTRODUCTION

Organizations adopt 'Lean Strategy' for cost reduction and quality improvement so that they could remain competitive in the market (Lodgaard *et al.*, 2016). Lean creates value for the customer through waste elimination which ultimately helps organizations to achieve their long term and short term objectives (Martinez-Jurado *et al.*, 2014; Hodge *et al.*, 2011; Belekoukias *et al.*, 2014). There are two main areas of focus for lean implementation, one is related to the philosophy of lean whereas second one is related to tools and techniques and their successful implementation procedures (Womack & Jones, 2010; Shah & Ward, 2003).

Previous studies related to lean clearly draw a line between soft and hard lean practices where different authors agree that these practices mutually interlinked with each other's in a complicated lean system which puts the synergistic impact on organizational performance (Shah & Ward, 2007). Organizations try to implement soft and hard practices simultaneously because both have their own impact and importance in achieving organizational

goals (Liker & Rother, 2011). However, this study will consider only one tool named 'Continuous Improvement (Kaizen)'. There is very limited literature available that discusses implementation of lean tools from workforce point of view in terms of their perceptions and implications (Hines *et al.*, 2004). Moreover, the implementation of lean with respect to employee's well-being has been found controversial (Antoni, 1996). This clearly indicates the need for further investigations.

Existing studies consider organizational culture as a major contributing factor towards successful implementation of lean strategy where employee's interaction creates and flourishes organizational culture (Losonci *et al.*, 2017; Bortolotti *et al.*, 2015). To achieve the desired performance goals, organizations need to implement lean practices through a positive cultural change where employees should be able to understand the philosophy of lean strategy, its purpose and most significantly what is their role in its implementation and sustainability (Fernando & Cadavid, 2007). Generally, behaviour of employees varies during the phase of lean implementation where managers should clearly identify their team's

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attitude towards their jobs so that a better working environment could be promoted (Mertinez-Jurado *et al.*, 2014).

It has been concluded that employees' attitude at work is dependent on both work and environment. Keeping in view, it's more appropriate to investigate the impact of lean tools on these factors so that employees' perceptions could be understood. Employee's perception about lean implementation has been a point of discussion among the researchers. Some argue that lean puts more burden on employees through extra work and reduces motivation level and finally employees feel themselves under constant stress (Womack & Jones, 2010; Seppälä, & Klemola, 2004; Mehri, 2006). On the other side, Harrison (1997) states that lean has positive impact on employees; whereas, Landsbergis *et al.*, claims that work standardization put physically and psychologically negative impact on employees (Landsbergis *et al.*, 1999).

Kaizen could be explained as the organization capability to improve its existing state through identification and elimination of waste through small improvements by involving all stakeholders (Jurburg *et al.*, 2016). Literature indicates that successful implementation of Kaizen has been a big challenge for organizations that further justify the need for investigating the reasons of failure and then develop strategies for its sustainable implementation (Lodgaard *et al.*, 2016; Garcia-Sabater & Marin-Gracia, 2011). Moreover, employee's involvement in Kaizen activities is the biggest challenge for organizations for developing a culture of continuous improvement thinking (Jurburg *et al.*, 2016; Jaca *et al.*, 2014). There is a need to explore how employees can be engaged positively in Kaizen activities.

In conclusion, for successful implementation of Kaizen culture, employees' perceptions should be investigated properly so that appropriate strategies could be adopted for further promotion of positive perceptions and elimination of negative perceptions. As discussed, different working groups take lean implementation differently, so there is a need to investigate how perceptions about lean implementation (Kaizen in this study) vary among different work groups and what are their impacts in terms of motivation and job satisfaction (Shadur *et al.*, 1995).

Lot of research has been conducted in textile industry

on technological aspects; however, there is no evidence of explaining implementation of lean practices (Kaizen) with reference to human perceptions and its underlying impacts (Wickramasinghe, 2016). Previously, it has been proposed by Seppälä and Klemola that organizations must measure the employees' perceptions after initiating the lean implementation process (Seppälä, & Klemola, 2004). In Pakistan, textile organizations are widely adopting lean practices for gaining competitive edge over their competitors by reducing wastes and finally reducing all kinds of costs based on the philosophy of 'Continuous Improvement'. There is a need to investigate employee's perceptions about Kaizen so that hindrances in the promotion of continuous improvement culture could be eliminated or minimized.

This study aims at identifying level of the implementation of lean tools (Kaizen in the given case) in selected organizations and then capturing perceptions of different working groups (white collar and blue collar) and its relationship with job satisfaction and work-stress.

METHODOLOGY

Setting and Sample

Four textile organizations who claimed the implementation of Kaizen had been selected for this study. Data was collected from white collar (production and production support) and blue collar (team leader, team member, mechanics and material handlers) employees working in different departments. White collar production support positions were related to support functions departments like quality, industrial engineering, supply chain and maintenance. Further detail is given in Table 1 below.

Previously, twenty four lean tools have been identified and their implementation levels were measured

Table 1: Summary of the case organizations

Industry characteristics	Details of the case organization
Industry Type	Discrete type manufacturing
Industry Sector	Textile Sector
Product	Apparel, Socks and Gloves
Volume and Variety	High volume and high variety
No of Employees	Greater than 1000 in each organization

through formal questionnaires, semi-structures interviews, documents and direct shop-floor observations (Shah & Ward, 2003; Nightingale & Mize, 2002; Doolen & Hacker, 2005).

Evaluation of Lean Tools Implementation

In the case organizations, maturity of lean tools implementation was measured through well-structured questionnaire using 5 point Likert scale and results are shared in table2, Moreover, similarly employee's perceptions were also captured through a well-structured 5 point Likert scale questionnaire (appendix A). Firstly, the areas of concern were highlighted through the literature and additionally focus group discussions were carried out with the employees so that a broader context could be covered. Employees belonging to different work groups representing different positions in their organizations in collaboration with the research team concluded the factors. Final data collection tool was developed in the light of all those recommendations.

Table 2: Lean tools implementation maturity level

Organization	Implementation level	Standard Deviation
Organization A	2.5 (High)	0.5
Organization B	2.1 (High)	0.5
Organization C	1.9 (Moderate)	0.6
Organization D	1.5 (Moderate)	0.6

Maturity of lean implementation is coupled with the size of organization and time spent by the organization (starting from when organization started its implementation). Implementation maturity has been measured against five key impact areas (shown in figure 1) where higher value represents higher level of implementation maturity in the respective area of concern. Fig. 1 shows that implementation level varies among all the organizations and even same organization has varying level of implementation maturity against different impact areas.

Lean tools implementation levels in organization B and C are almost the same whereas organization A and D have spent maximum and minimum number of years respectively on lean tools implementation. Box plots against each criterion show clearly varying level of implementation maturity in all organizations. It is observed that no organization has implemented pull production

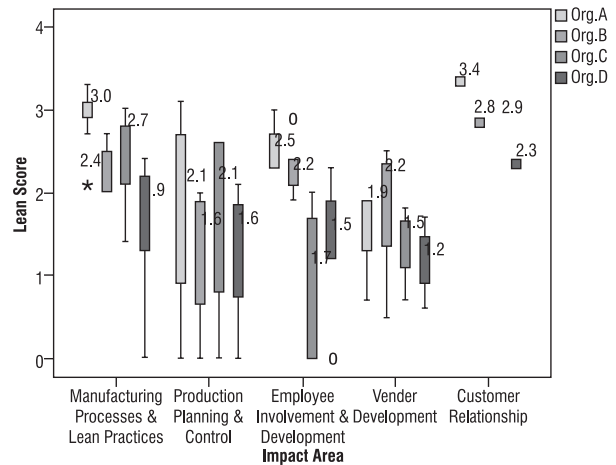


Fig. 1: Implementation levels among the organizations

system that's why a lot of variations have been found in 'production planning and control' impact area. In organizations C and D, lack of performance management system (PMS) implementation contributed towards high variability and low score under 'employee involvement and development' impact area. All organizations put little effort on vendor development except organization B. Vendor development initiatives help in developing long term relations with between the stakeholders. It has been further that export based organizations have higher focus on customer satisfaction.

Data Collection

Data was collected from four organizations where 339 replied to the survey. Respondents were categorized into white-collars and blue-collars work groups. Nature of the job helped us in further classifying the sub-categories. For example, production and production support positions were classified as white collars whereas positions like team leader, team member, mechanics and material handlers were classified as blue collar. Response rate varied from 71% to 98% where average response rate was 85% which is pretty good. White collars and blue collar participants were 27% and 73% respectively.

Data Analysis

As mentioned that data has been collected through a well-structured questionnaire where reliability of the data collection instrument was found good (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$). Firstly, frequencies of positive and negative perceptions were calculated about Kaizen (lean tool)

and comparison was made among the organizations and positions. Other factors like job satisfaction and level of work-stress were through mean values. Significance of variation among the responses about perceptions was found through deploying the ANOVA tests. Regression analysis has been deployed for the identification of predicting variables of job satisfaction and work-stress against each position separately. SPSS 20, statistical module has been used for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Organization Based Employees' Perceptions about Kaizen

Interestingly, employees' perceptions are found different among the employees of different organizations. Overall 48% employees consider this tool positively. Further, highest positive perceptions found in organization A (64%) whereas Kaizen is taken more negatively in organization B (55%). Where, 75% of employees in organization B think that they can lose their jobs after Kaizen implementation so this could be a major contributing factor in developing their negative perceptions. Moreover, the same organization has the highest turnover rate which is also considered as an indication of job dissatisfaction. In organization C and D perceptions about Kaizen are almost same where about 49% employees take this positive. So, employees' perception could be dependent on Kaizen culture maturity in the respective organization which is directly linked with the maturity of lean culture.

Work Group Based Kaizen Perceptions

Overall workgroup based analysis concludes that Kaizen perceptions are positive however white collar employees are relatively more positive as compared to blue collar employees with mean scores 3.37 and 3.07 respectively.

Position Based Employees' Perceptions about Kaizen

Results indicate that employee's workings on different positions perceive Kaizen in different ways and variations in their perceptions are significant, as shown in table 3. In general, team leaders and team members have been

found with more negative perceptions (lesser mean values against many response variables). Employees involved in both these categories are directly involved in production work and usually they are directly involved in the processes for making improvements. This might be the reason for their higher values of work-stress at job. Team members and mechanics showed their concerns regarding job security and this may be the reason team members look reluctant to incorporate new changes in their jobs. This leads towards the need for reviewing the job activities of team leaders, team members and mechanics as employees at these positions think that to do improvement as part of the job is an additional responsibility which makes them overloaded at work that ultimately converts into stress. Employees in the category of white collar, feel stress because of the implementation, standardization and expansion challenges as these activities are managed by white collar employees.

Position Based Job Satisfaction and Stress Analysis

Results indicate that white collar work group is more satisfied with their job as compared to blue collar. Again, it's clear that team leaders (3.07) and team members (3.07) are less satisfied with their jobs and feel themselves under stress as compare to other positions. Job retention score of team leader has been found lowest among all the other positions, this might be because of the fact that team leaders are the first layer of supervisory staff which is directly responsible for production activities like achieving daily production targets, monitoring team member's performance and support to solve their problems. It seems that such kind of activities overload the team leaders and develop a sense of stress and dissatisfaction at work.

Position Based Kaizen Predictive Variables in Job Satisfaction and StressRegression analysis has been used to identify the relationship between variables (job satisfaction and work-stress as dependant variables). Position wise results and discussion has been presented in the continuing section.

Production Managers

Table 5 indicates that in white collar work group employees at the position of 'production' are satisfied and motivated at their job and 'Kaizen makes their job

Table 3: Positions based perceptions about Kaizen

Items	Both work group			White Collar work group						Blue Collar work group						F-Test		
	All Positions (n=339)			Production (n=49)			Production Support (n=44)			Team Leader (n=77)		Team Member (n=116)		Mechanic (n=26)			Material Handler (n=27)	
	Mean	St. Dev		Mean	St. Dev		Mean	St. Dev		Mean	St. Dev	Mean	St. Dev	Mean	St. Dev		Mean	St. Dev
Your suggestions Implementation makes you happy	3.88	1.06		4.06	.83		4.02	.73		3.88	1.11	3.58	1.23	4.31	.84	4.15	.86	**
Good tool for Improvement of work	3.84	1.08		4.10	1.01		3.91	1.03		3.96	.95	3.47	1.28	4.23	.59	4.11	.58	***
Output of the work increase	3.68	1.03		3.92	.70		4.09	.64		3.60	1.22	3.41	1.00	3.65	1.32	3.96	.98	**
Output of the work increase	3.46	1.21		3.67	1.05		4.05	.81		3.19	1.37	3.15	1.25	3.85	1.12	3.81	.88	***
Your Seniors always Involve you to do some Kaizen	3.06	1.42		3.47	1.42		3.34	1.16		3.04	1.42	2.73	1.43	3.23	1.50	3.19	1.52	*
Suggestion always valued from top management	2.78	1.38		3.43	1.37		3.27	1.32		2.73	1.36	2.37	1.24	2.38	1.53	3.11	1.37	***
Not difficult to sustain the Improvements	2.76	1.16		2.67	1.16		3.23	1.01		2.86	1.17	2.63	1.19	2.62	1.17	2.63	1.04	ns
No Job loss due to Kaizen	2.72	1.28		3.22	1.31		3.16	1.18		2.71	1.30	2.34	1.13	2.46	1.42	3.00	1.27	***
Feel no stress to do Kaizen along job	2.63	1.23		3.14	1.21		2.86	1.41		2.49	1.14	2.35	1.14	2.38	.94	3.15	1.38	***
Not difficult to change the job according to improvement	2.54	1.09		2.67	1.16		2.66	1.22		2.52	1.10	2.28	.95	3.08	.93	2.78	1.19	**
No difficulty for collection & analyzing lot of data	2.54	1.10		2.57	1.12		2.68	1.01		2.51	1.14	2.56	1.14	2.08	.63	2.67	1.24	ns
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	3.08			3.36			3.39			3.04		2.81		3.12		3.32		

Table 4: Position based job satisfaction and stress analysis

Items	Both work group			White Collar work group				Blue Collar work group									
	All Positions (n=339)			Production (n=49)		Production Support (n=44)		Team Leader (n=77)		Team Member (n=116)		Mechanic (n=26)		Material Handler (n=27)		F-Test	
	Mean	St. Dev		Mean	St. Dev	Mean	St. Dev	Mean	St. Dev	Mean	St. Dev	Mean	St. Dev	Mean	St. Dev	Significance	
Work climate is safe & pleasant	3.48	1.21		3.88	0.99	3.70	0.98	3.45	1.15	3.31	1.38	3.19	1.33	3.52	1.09	.060	ns
You are motivated to do this work with high spirit	3.40	1.40		3.65	1.20	3.89	1.06	3.18	1.48	3.16	1.53	3.85	1.12	3.41	1.37	.011	*
Your job is interesting	3.40	1.30		3.63	1.03	3.52	1.05	3.26	1.33	3.18	1.41	4.00	1.20	3.48	1.42	.036	*
You are completely satisfied with your Job	3.35	1.35		3.63	1.11	3.73	1.04	3.27	1.46	3.10	1.45	3.50	1.24	3.37	1.39	.073	ns
Your Job makes you happy	3.30	1.39		3.67	1.05	3.57	1.02	3.16	1.51	3.03	1.51	3.77	1.27	3.30	1.35	.018	*
Mentally not disturb due to current job	3.14	1.36		3.51	1.04	3.50	1.11	2.82	1.36	3.11	1.45	3.00	1.55	3.04	1.43	.040	*
Mentally not feel stress due to overloading of work	3.04	1.31		3.63	1.01	3.30	1.13	2.78	1.43	2.79	1.32	3.12	1.21	3.22	1.34	.001	**
You have no plan to switch from this job in near future	2.95	1.28		3.12	1.22	3.43	0.97	2.64	1.28	2.86	1.38	3.31	1.16	2.81	1.30	.012	*
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	3.26			3.59		3.58		3.07		3.07		3.47		3.27			

easy' is common significant predictor in their satisfaction at work. This shows that this work group perceives that Kaizen make their job easy and this is linked with their job satisfaction. Employees working at this position are usually responsible to meet production targets. People feel their job interesting as their seniors make them involved in discussions and decision making. However, on the other side, they perceive the negative role of Kaizen in job loss. If workers are leaving the job because of Kaizen job culture, finally shortage of manpower will affect the attainment of production targets that causes stress at work among the managers. These results show that there is a need to promote a positive culture about Kaizen where workers are not feeling the fear of job loss.

Production Support

Overall workers at production support positions are satisfied with their jobs; however, they have concerns about doing Kaizen with their normal work activities. Work performance is increased due to Kaizen but sustainability of Kaizen implementation has been a real challenge. As employees working on these positions are directly responsible for implementation and sustainability so they feel stress because of this.

Team Leaders

Results conclude that team leader's job satisfaction is linked with their perception that work performance

Table 5: Job Satisfaction and Stress Predictors from Kaizen (white collars work Group)

Production Managers		Production Support	
You are completely satisfied with your Job	β	You are completely satisfied with your Job	β
Makes your job easy	.324	Feel no stress to do Kaizen along job	-0.45*
R ² 0.214		R ² 0.469*	
You have no plan to switch from this job in near future	β	You have no plan to switch from this job in near future	β
Makes your job easy	.333*	Output of the work increase	0.472*
R ² 0.245		R ² 0.297	
You are motivated to do this work with high spirit	β	You are motivated to do this work with high spirit	β
Makes your job easy	.551	Not difficult to sustain the Improvements	-.390*
Not difficult to change the job according to improvement	-.007**	Your suggestions Implementation makes you happy	.392*
R ² 0.386*		R ² 0.552**	
Do you feel your job is interesting?	β	Do you feel your job is interesting?	β
Your Seniors always Involve you to do some Kaizen	.605**	Not difficult to sustain the Improvements	-.408*
		Suggestion always valued from top management	.313
R ² 0.298		R ² 0.382	
Do you think your work climate is safe & pleasant?	β	Do you think your work climate is safe & pleasant?	β
Your Seniors always Involve you to do some Kaizen	.429*	Good tool for Improvement of work	.372*
R ² 0.260		R ² 0.230	
Mentally not stressed due to overloading of work	β	Mentally not stressed due to overloading of work	β
No Job loss due to Kaizen	-.498*	Good tool for Improvement of work	.315
Your suggestions Implementation makes you happy	.526**	Feel no stress to do Kaizen along job	-.128
Your Seniors always Involve you to do some Kaizen	.442*		
R ² 0.289		R ² 0.259	

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

β : Standardized Coefficient

Table 6: Job Satisfaction & Stress Predictors from Kaizen (Blue collar work group)

Team Leader		Team Member	
You are completely satisfied with your Job	β	You are completely satisfied with your Job	β
Not difficult to change the job according to improvement	.301*	Not difficult to change the job according to improvement	.185*
		Good tool for Improvement of work	.215*
		Feel no stress to do Kaizen along job	.153
R ² 0.347**		R ² 0.205*	
You are motivated to do this work with high spirit	β	You are motivated to do this work with high spirit	β
Output of the work increase	.197	Not difficult to change the job according to improvement	.184
R ² 0.265*		R ² 0.072	
Your Job makes you happy	β	Your Job makes you happy	β
Feel no stress to do Kaizen along job	.203*	Feel no stress to do Kaizen along job	.114
R ² 0.352**		R ² 0.067	
Mentally not disturb due to current job	β	Mentally not disturb due to current job	β
Not difficult to sustain the Improvements	.263*	Makes your job easy	.244*
Your Seniors always Involve you to do some Kaizen	.318*	Not difficult to change the job according to improvement	.202*
R ² 0.266*		R ² 0.206**	
Do you feel your job is interesting?	β	Do you feel your job is interesting?	β
Good tool for Improvement of work	.233	No difficulty for collection & analyzing lot of data	.308*
		R ² 0.192*	
R ² 0.151		Do you think your work climate is safe & pleasant?	β
Do you think your work climate is safe & pleasant?	β	No difficulty for collection & analyzing lot of data	.224*
Not difficult to change the job according to improvement	.371*	Suggestion always valued from top management	.003
R ² 0.438***		R ² 0.178*	
Mentally not stressed due to overloading of work	β	Mentally not stressed due to overloading of work	β
Not difficult to sustain the Improvements	.353**	Feel no stress to do Kaizen along job	.204*
R ² 0.251*		R ² 0.105	

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

 β : Standardized Coefficient

(outcome) is increased due to the implementation of Kaizen related activities and can be managed easily with job. Whereas the implementation and sustainability of change has been found to be linked with job stress at work. In general, team leaders are responsible for initiating the process of change and then implementing required interventions for performance improvement. There are no significant negative predictive variables, identified against this position.

Team Members

Team members feel that to do Kaizen with their normal job activities, improvements in job performance and changing the job as per the new requirements significantly contribute towards their job satisfaction (shown in table 6). Moreover, their job stress is significantly influenced due to ease at work due to Kaizen, data collection and analysis activities. Team members usually collect production and quality related data and analyse

Table 7: Job Satisfaction & Stress Predictors from Kaizen (Blue collar work group)

Mechanics		Material Handlers	
You are completely satisfied with your Job	β	You are completely satisfied with your Job	β
Output of the work increase	.741**	No Job loss due to Kaizen	.614*
Feel no stress to do Kaizen along job	-.587**	Suggestion always valued from top management	-.884**
		Good tool for Improvement of work	.791*
R ² 0.824**		R ² 0.610	
You are motivated to do this work with high spirit	β	You are motivated to do this work with high spirit	β
Feel no stress to do Kaizen along job	-.244*	Not difficult to change the job according to improvement	.421*
Suggestion always valued from top management	.540***	Good tool for Improvement of work	.718*
R ² 0.966***		R ² 0.661*	
Your Job makes you happy	β	Your Job makes you happy	β
Suggestion always valued from top management	.280*	Good tool for Improvement of work	.949*
Good tool for Improvement of work	.938*		
R ² 0.904***		R ² 0.603	
Mentally not disturb due to current job	β	Mentally not disturb due to current job	β
Your Seniors always Involve you to do some Kaizen	-.594	No Job loss due to Kaizen	.672**
		Good tool for Improvement of work	.656*
		Your suggestions Implementation makes you happy	.876**
R ² 0.545		R ² 0.729*	
Do you feel your job is interesting?	β	Do you feel your job is interesting?	β
Feel no stress to do Kaizen along job	-.389**	Your suggestions Implementation makes you happy	.119
Suggestion always valued from top management	.411**		
R ² 0.931***		R ² 0.471	
Do you think your work climate is safe & pleasant?	β	Do you think your work climate is safe & pleasant?	β
Output of the work increase	.570*	Suggestion always valued from top management	-.049
Not difficult to sustain the Improvements	.401*		
R ² 0.813**		R ² 0.459	
Mentally not stressed due to overloading of work	β	Mentally not stressed due to overloading of work	β
Good tool for Improvement of work	1.463*	Your suggestions Implementation makes you happy	.982**
		Your Seniors always Involve you to do some Kaizen	-.476*
R ² 0.609		R ² 0.678*	

*p<.05,**p<.01,***p<.001

 β : Standardized Coefficient

that for further documentation and recommendations. Work standardization helps team members by providing ease at work which ultimately translated into reduction in job stress and higher productivity.

Mechanics

Table 7 indicates that Mechanics perceptions of high output at the work due to Kaizen, significantly contribute

in their job satisfaction. They feel happy and motivated when their suggestions are valued from the top management; as a result of such attitude of management, they feel ownership. Possibly, due to low man machine ratio, they feel some stress to do Kaizen related activities along with their normal job activities. Generally, mechanics are found busy in their scheduled maintenance and break down activities that make them feel overburdened and unable to carry out Kaizen related activities with their

normal work.

Material Handlers

Data analysis concludes that 'Kaizen is a good tool for improvement' is a significant positive predictor of job satisfaction and motivation among material handlers. On the other side, participatory role of material handlers has been found as negative predictors; however, they feel that their suggestions being valued by the top management is negatively linked. Implementation of suggested improvements makes them happy. Material handler position do not think that they can loss their job due to Kaizen because this is positively predicted which ultimately eliminate the mental disturbance among this work group.

CONCLUSIONS

Implementation of lean is linked with cultural change where top management commitment and ownership of employees play a vital role. Employees' perceptions about lean have been a point of concern because sometimes it is perceived negatively. This needs further investigation especially, how people working in different work groups perceive it. This study was aimed at investigating how white collar and blue collar employees take the implementation of lean tool 'Kaizen'. Data were collected from the employees of four textile organizations belonging to different workgroups. It has been found that Kaizen has an overall positive perception among the employees; however, the level of positivity is lesser among blue collar employees as compared to that of the white collar. That might be considered as the reason for job satisfaction as white collar employees are more satisfied with their jobs as well. Furthermore, perceptions of team members have been found to be comparatively more negative as compared to that of working on other work positions. Organization based analysis indicated that comparatively perceptions of the employees of organization B are negative where blue collar employees' high turnover rate has been observed in this organization. This concludes that perceptions are linked with job satisfaction. Overall analyses have concluded that white collar workgroup are more positive about Kaizen implementation and consequently, have greater job satisfaction and lesser level of work-stress then that of the blue collar. Regression analysis has also been performed against each workgroup

where predictors for job satisfaction and work-stress with reference to Kaizen implementation have been identified and discussed in detail. Findings of this research are a source of information for policy makers, executives and practitioners for understanding underlying relationships among different factors. Negative perceptions highlighted by different workgroups can be used to understand causes and their effects so that sustainable implementation of Kaizen could be promoted for promoting 'continuous improvement culture' in textile organizations.

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